

**A dissertation submitted to the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy in
partial fulfillment of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Far-right Ecologism: Environmental Politics and the Far Right in Hungary and Poland

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Vienna, Austria, September 2021

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Abstract

The widespread mainstreaming of the far right around the world has prompted greater engagement of these actors with a range of topics and policy domains, including the environment. However, this engagement is not only conditioned by the vote-winning strategies. Whereas increasing the political presence entails expanding the influence over as many policy domains as possible, far-right's environmental agenda is also conditioned by the substantive ideological link between far right and ecologism. Building on the nationalist bent of early green thought and the perceived nexus of pristine nature and cultural purity, Far-Right Ecologism (FRE) has ideologically adopted the “green” elements of other ideologies, such as conservatism and fascism, nationalism, and populism. By focusing on Hungary and Poland as representatives of the post-socialist, Eastern European realms, this thesis explores ideological morphology of far-right ecologism, its key proponents among the far-right parties, as well as their policy preferences and proposals. Not only are Hungary and Poland interesting as case studies because of having right-wing populists in power and the far right in opposition, but also because of the historical intersection of environmental concern with nationalism in the region. This thesis specifically focused on the far-right actors in the two countries: political parties in opposition and far-right movements.

The thesis builds on a range of data-collection methods: document analysis of electoral manifestos, ideological declarations and party news, social media and public speeches, policy proposals; 51 qualitative interviews (24 from Hungary, 27 from Poland) and ethnographic research with the far right. For the data analysis, this thesis employed the qualitative text analysis paired

with the discourse-historical approach of critical discourse analysis. The findings point to a distinctive ideological morphology of Far-Right Ecologism, building on the broader right-wing ideological pool, with its core components: manicheanism, naturalism, organicism, and peripheral elements: nostalgia, autarky, spirituality, and authority. While the policy contribution of FRE to environmental politics in Hungary and Poland is somewhat limited, the increasing acceptance of anthropogenic climate change (particularly in the Hungarian case) paired with calls for energy autarky and encroachments in biodiversity protection and animal welfare call for a more serious engagement with this ideological conglomerate.

Keywords: Far-Right; Ecologism; Hungary; Poland; Ideology; Eastern Europe; Organicism; Naturalism; Manicheanism; Nostalgia; Autarky; Spirituality; Authority

Acknowledgements

For a doctoral student, any time can be a difficult time. However, the last two years were exceptionally difficult, not only for us who took the task of completing a doctoral thesis but for many people around the world. Yet, somehow the journey to writing the very last page of a document entitled “The Doctoral Dissertation,” created already in September 2017, actually happened. Because of that, I am indebted to many people who, in their different ways, ensured this thesis actually gets finished. I extend my gratitude to my supervisor, Alexios Antypas, who made sure the sometimes absurdly difficult process of data collection, analysis, and writing is brought to completion without any (major) emotional breakdowns. I am also thankful to Alan Watt, whose insightful feedback helped me advance this work to the next stage. Bernhard Forchtner’s extensive support, timely feedback on every single chapter, and above all, unmatched sincerity and overall approach to mentorship should be an inspiration to aspiring academics and PhD supervisors.

For the financial support and an outstanding academic environment from which I learned a lot: thank you, CEU. To the professors at the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy, to our wonderful Györgyi, Kriszta, Tunde, and Viktoria. Thank you, my current and former CEU-colleagues and peers: Olea, Siobhan, Judit, Ana, John, Masa, Gina, Marta, Mariann, Noemi, Anna, Ariadne, Vadim, Sergi, Attila(s), Eric, Kyle, Anastasia(s), Varvara, Eszter, and others who made sure I feel welcome every step of the way. A list of friends outside the department and outside of CEU who, in their own ways, helped me complete this work is at least twice as long.

Finally, this doctoral research would not have been completed without the support of the people who I am proud to call my family and friends. My wife, Sofija (and her family), who was patient enough to listen to my endless late-night ramblings about the seemingly world-changing

idea I had just come up with, but also to be there, in every sense of the word, for all these years; my brother, Marko, whose wit paired with an authentic sense of empathy and a willingness to intellectually probe my ideas and thoughts helped me understand “the meaning of life” in my work; my parents, Vojo and Nada, who were not only willing to know all about my dissertation, but persistently acted as what they have always been for me – a foundation. Four years is an eventful period in anyone’s life: people get married (!), friendships get founded, renewed, and broken, dreams and priorities get changed as people leave and enter our lives. One of those who unfortunately left this world (although not my life) is my grandmother, Dara, whose love and care genuinely molded me as a person. One of those who is about to enter my life is my beloved unborn – it is to them this thesis I dedicate.

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Introduction

As the unremitting pandemic, climate change, and the rise of authoritarianism continue to shape the world we live in, rethinking the causes and consequences of these crises becomes ever more important. As a part of this rethinking process, radical and sometimes openly antidemocratic and arguably misanthropic solutions about our common future, come to the fore. The perceived sense of crisis provides fertile soil for odd political bedfellows, which utilize the anxiety to advance their ideological agenda. Thus, far-right ecologism may appear as a prime example of these “odd bedfellows” (Galbreath and Auers 2009: 334), although such a rendition would obfuscate the profoundness of the intersection between the two ideologies. It is exactly this intersection, and its contemporary application in Hungary and Poland that this thesis seeks to examine.

Problem Statement

The far-right's incursions in environmental politics have probably been as old as both the far right and the environmental thought. That environment is generally perceived as being an issue much closer to the left is mainly a consequence of the luring discontinuity between the conservationist traditions prevalent before the Second World War and the mass environmental movement that emerged on the social demand for democratization in the late 1960s and 1970s (see Hay, 2001; Gale, 1983). However, in its contempt towards consumerism and the soulless technocracy, nationalism seeks to advance the agenda of most environmentalists, by seeking to replace such a decaying society with an autarkic community built on romanticizing pristine nature

as home (see Smith 1998: 58). What additionally complicates this conundrum is the unwelcome baggage of sociology and geography, namely the tendency to genetically essentialize the collectivities on the basis of the physical environment in which they dwell. As the historical concatenation points, the more infamous concomitants of this biologism, such as eugenics, ableism, and the obsession with purity have provided ingredients for some of the greatest purges of humankind. To think that these and other, more established remnants of this logic have evaporated in their entirety from the social thought is rather absurd. Thus, to explore the political morality undergirded by Far-Right Ecologism will also entail an uneasy experience of coming to terms with the contemporary offsprings of sociobiological organicism.

Eastern European, post-socialist space has provided ample material for the explorations of this ideological intersection. On the one hand, the far-right trajectories in the post-socialist areas of East-Central Europe and the V4 region point to a rather distinctive articulation of the people and the nation, established on national myths and tragedies epitomized in the “detached” spaces-territories of the national being. The lament for “grand” (and great) kingdoms – polities of contention, continues to cast a shadow of troubling disputes between the countries in the region. In Hungary and Poland, the political forces articulating authoritarian, nativist, and populist ethnonationalism have amassed immense electoral support, ranging from 50 to 68 percent of the popular votes. Moreover, nowhere is the blurry conceptual marker between right-wing populism and the far right been more pronounced, yet still very intricately entangled, as in Hungary and Poland. The mere existence of the far right in opposition (Jobbik and Mi Hazánk in Hungary, Ruch Narodowy in Poland) to right-wing populism (Fidesz in Hungary and PiS – Law and Justice in

Poland) points to the contextually-tense and ideologically convoluted relationship between the far right and national conservatism dominating the political landscape in the post-socialist settings. Unlike some other nationalisms in the region (Slovak, Romanian), Hungarian and Polish nationalisms have developed in conjunction with the Hungarian-Polish national friendship. However, all these contextual commonalities cannot befuddle notable discrepancies between the two nationalisms, pointing also to the uneven playground and the idiosyncrasies the notion of "post-socialism" brings.

Likewise, the environmental history and political ecologies of Hungary and Poland and Eastern European, post-socialist spaces are equally profound, both in their content and the intersections with ethnonationalist sentiments. In fact, it could be argued that the beginnings of the mass environmental movements that emerged in the 1980s bore a distinctive nationalist undertone (see DeBardeleben 1991:8). Nevertheless, there is a relative paucity of explorations of such intersections in the context of the two countries (with the notable exception of Harper 2006), often tempered under the common frame of anticapitalism. This warrants further explorations of how the history of environmental activism becomes cogently mobilized by the far right in their attempt to permeate the purportedly “green” ideological space.

Even though the first environmental movements appeared in Hungary around 1984 (Pickvance 1998), the breakthrough in mass mobilization was the construction of the Gabčíkovo–Nagymaros dams in the late 1980s (Kopecek and Hlousek 2010). While this cross-border project with Slovakia fueled nationalism, among other things, it would be difficult to claim that the far-right representatives had any substantial say in the Danube Circle (*Duna Kör*), the environmental

organization founded to prevent the construction of the dam. Like in other countries of the socialist bloc, the environment presented a policy domain for the articulation of grievances against the communist system. The post-socialist era led to the well-known professionalization of environmentalism, watering down the potential once generated by the mass environmental movement. Nevertheless, this transition did not lead to the purging of hard-core nationalists from environmental organizations. The first green party in Hungary was founded in 1989 by Zoltán Medveczki, a staunch nationalist although not associated with any radical- or extreme-right organizations. The common feature of post-socialist environmentalisms was the danger of “multi-national corporations in an ethnicized landscape – a narrative which resonates among a relatively homogeneous Magyar population” (Snajdr 2009: 219). Thus, nationalism became palliated by the anti-capitalist sense of resentment, a sentiment that the far right has effectively operationalized in post-socialist realms.

The Polish environmental movement in the 1980s was less “nationalist” than the Hungarian. The Polish Ecological Club (*Polski Klub Ekologiczny*, PKE), founded in 1980, was the first major organization dealing with the environmental protection in the country. The movement was ideologically eclectic, with conservative and nationalist activists dominating the local branches in Krakow and Gorzów (see Szulecki, Borewicz, and Waluszko 2015: 32). The local grassroots mobilization was much more developed, which defined some of the patterns explored in this thesis. After a similar process of rollback and professionalization in the early post-socialist era, the environmental organizations in Poland have actively sought transboundary cooperation as a part of technocratic environmental governance (Hallstrom 2007). Another feature of the Polish

environmental movement particularly notable in light of its contemporary intersection with the far right was the prominence of youth groups (Gliński 1994), which spurred most of the grassroots activism. However, unlike the Hungarian green parties throughout history, Polish greens have hardly ever crossed paths with nationalist or even conservative politics. This points to a noteworthy gap, querying not only the “sincerity of care” of far-right ecologists, a leitmotif of this thesis, but the complex and the unexplored relationship between the far right and the mainstream, or the populist right on one, and greens on the other hand.

Building on the existing contextual intersections between ethnonationalism and the environmental movement in the post-socialist realms of Hungary and Poland, this dissertation aims to address how the contemporary far right in the two countries articulates this link. At the same time, it aims to explore both the general and the more contextual patterns in carving out this ideological relationship between the nation and the environment. By engaging with the contextual in the most tangible of all ways – the ethnographic immersion, this dissertation offers an authentic experience of learning and generalizing from the Eastern European, post-socialist realms. Engaging with these questions will point to the very mundane practices of the far right in the two countries: including, but not limited to, the production and dissemination of hate. In doing so, one needs to be wary of the caveat of “romanticizing the social location” (Ravecca and Dauphinée 2018, 133) – the post-socialist experiences of stolen transitions should, under no circumstances, be employed as justification of the resentment that generates nativist violence.

Aims and Objectives

This dissertation aims to assess the ideological features of far-right environmental agenda and its proponents and their contribution to environmental politics in the particular, Eastern European and post-socialist context of Hungary and Poland. In order to realize this aim, the thesis has the following objectives. The first objective seeks to identify and classify the main far-right organizations, networks, and processes and examine their role in environmental politics in Hungary and Poland. This is important to map out the relevant actors, both among the political parties and movements (including the influential individuals) which will be “followed” in the data collection process. Second, to identify the ideological tenets that inform the particular practices of creating knowledge of this Far-Right Ecologism. This objective has the following research subquestions: Does the far right have a discernible ideological account on the environment. If so, what are its outstanding features? What is its relationship with the ideology of the far right and that of ecologism? The third objective examines how the actors identified in the first objective operationalize or depart from Far-Right Ecologism through their particular framing of policy problems and contributions. Thus, this last objective addresses how Far-Right Ecologism affects environmental politics through policy preferences and contributions, both in the two countries-cases. The theoretical framework for this thesis is that of Ideological Morphology (Freeden 1996) paired with Grounded Theory (GT) as a guiding methodological principle that tends to sufficiently loosen the exploration of political ideologies. To meet the objectives and the aim of this dissertation, document and web analysis, semi-structured, qualitative interviews, and ethnography will be the methods used in the data collection process. For data analysis, qualitative text analysis with elements of critical discourse analysis (namely, Discourse-Historical Approach) will be applied.

Overview of the chapters

This introduction served to pinpoint the main elements of the research problem to be examined and addressed in the thesis. For that purpose, the dissertation will consist of 7 chapters. Chapter 1 will present a literature review of the notion of “far right”, pointing to how the fine-grained lines of distinction become ever-more troubling when one engages in comparison with similar ideologies or notions used about its features. Instead of providing an ideological morphology of the far right, a task which has been performed well by some of the most notable scholars in the field (Mudde 1995, 2000; Carter 2018, to name only a few), this chapter provided a comparison of ideologies as they are understood in the literature. From some of the already sufficiently completed tasks, such as distinguishing far right from “radical” or “extreme”, to the more nuanced or conceptually murky differences from fascism, New Right, ethnopluralism, alt-right, accelerationism, and neo-nationalism, the chapter offered a survey of the relevant ideological terminology.

Chapter 2 will also present a literature review, but this time of the intersection between the far right and environment. By first introducing the theoretical framework of “ideological morphology,” and then the concept of Far-Right Ecologism, this chapter will point to the necessity to move beyond the limiting notion of eco-fascism when exploring the contextual and ideological breadth of the link between the contemporary far right and environment. To set the stage for the exploration of ideologies as conceptual clusters, Chapter 3 offers background into the far-right world in Hungary and Poland, placing an emphasis on the relevance of the context in distinguishing between the radical and the extreme right, and outlining the main actors examined in this thesis,

therefore addressing Objective 1. The list of organizations is not conclusive, and is susceptible to changes occurring in the 4-year-long span of a doctoral research – though the discursive frames remain intact. Chapter 4 introduced the research paradigm in the background of this thesis, setting out the criteria and the orientation for undertaking the research. By outlining the notion of ideological morphology, the chapter also indicates the theoretical contribution of the thesis. It also points to the methodological nuances underpinning this particular approach, including the reflections on failure and the “incomplete” nature of ethnographic encounters presented in this thesis.

The analytical part of the thesis starts with chapter 5, which explores the core concepts present in the ideological morphology of Far-Right Ecologism, building on the empirical findings from the field. Chapter 6 expands this inquiry by looking at the peripheral concepts. The predominantly semantic approach to ideologies taken in this research has been complemented by chapter 7, which examined the policy and practice of its proponents. The policy contribution remains valuable as an indicator of the potential for recognizing and integrating far-right actors in environmental politics.

Chapter 1 - Defining the Far Right

There is a huge cultural gap between Europeans and the people from “migration-countries”, such as Africa and certain parts of Asia. Obviously, this is also reflected in the environmental awareness of the people coming from these areas.

We [Europeans] are increasingly focusing on renewable energy for selective waste management, and so on...In contrast, there is no tradition of environment protection in Africa and Asia. Furthermore, immigrants do not really understand the importance of these processes. Identity is somewhere in our environment, rooted in our relationship with nature. Obviously, a different culture coming from a different environment has a different relationship with the environment. Jozsef, HVIM, 24/04/2019

In spite of focusing on far-right ecologism, this thesis rejects the apriori pejorative rendition of ideologies, these ubiquitous maps through which any of us gets by in the world around us. Ideologies help us interpret politics, allowing us to become full-fledged *zoon politikon* – members of the polity. Through frame alignment and frame bridging, ideologies connect seemingly distant albeit entirely artificial “policy domains,” allowing for an almost endless and not necessarily coherent conglomerate of arguments and appeals. In providing a connection between immigration and environment, two domains which are not usually brought together in policy discussions, Jozsef unveils his ideological mental map that serves to support or dismantle his claims. Following this logic, the analysis of ideology is nothing but an attempt to assess the structure of these maps, how they are organized and oriented and what gets prioritized as a political value. The morphological approach to ideologies (see Freeden 1996 and 2013), operationalized in this thesis, seeks to do exactly that, building on the “linguistic turn” in politics. Through its focus on political concepts, this approach will enable a generalized outlook on particular ideologies, namely the far right and

far-right ecologism. Notwithstanding the limitation of these generalizations, such an approach set out to examine something as contested and morally discredited as the heirs to historical fascism.

In spite of being generally sidelined by both fascism and a currently more overhanging phenomenon of (authoritarian, right-wing) populism, far right remains the ideology considered as one of the gravest threats to liberal democracy today (see Mudde 2019). The proliferation of scholarship on the far right in recent years may seem to ease the task of producing an intelligible review of what this ideology stands for. The unequivocal definition of the concept is no longer missing (Carter 2005: 14), and the “taxonomic chaos” (Olsen 2000: 198) seems to have been resolved. The ideological morphology of the far right is more or less clear, with ethnonationalism, nativism, and authoritarianism being the core, indispensable elements-concepts, whereas populism, ethnopluralism, violence, integralism, etc. remain adjacent or peripheral components to the ideological core (see Mudde 1995 for the overview of the central concepts).

As with other concepts, “Far Right” overlaps to a lesser or greater extent with a number of other terms, such as Radical Right, Extreme Right, Fascism and Nazism, New Right, Neo-Nationalism, Alt-right, Accelerationism, and Right-wing Populism. Ultimately, all these variations belong, to a lesser or greater extent, to the far-right side of the (linear) ideological spectrum. For this reason, the task of defining the far right has still been raising a considerable amount of controversy. To some authors (Dafnos 2019), the issue is not only about the horizontal interconnectedness of these concepts, but also about the possibility for their vertical reordering, through respective “ladders of abstraction” (Sartori 1970). As this chapter will show, much like the case with ideological morphology, such conceptual mappings allow for a cumulative

refinement and creation of the chains of interconnected terms. At the same time, the overreliance on these mind maps can often be detrimental, as the social is never sufficiently clean for preordained conceptual containers. Partly because of this (and in part also because of the fact that the ideological morphology of the far right has been sufficiently examined), this chapter will have somewhat different logic.

What this chapter aims to offer is a twofold task. First, to introduce the notion of ideology and outline the abovementioned morphological approach to its study. Second, and building on the existing literature, this chapter will instead contribute to the existing scholarship by offering a comparative assessment of the far right and its kindred terms, such as Radical Right, Extreme Right, Right-Wing Populism, Nazism, and Fascism. By committing to this approach on the basis of the existing literature, I intend to outline why Far Right as an overarching ideology remains the most suitable for operationalizing in light of the research problem.

Introducing and researching ideology

Notwithstanding the deficiencies of the abbreviated versions of conceptual history, it is worth accentuating that, much like the far right and far-right ecologism, the notion of ideology has come a long way. From being conceived as nomothetic categories conforming to universalist standards by the French Enlightenment thinkers (including de Tracy, who coined the term “ideology” in 1796 as “the science of ideas”), the notion has quickly come to bear a negative connotation. Due to Napoleon’s critique of ideology, which was framed more as a discursive tool wedded to notions of conflict and power rather than a philosophical-apolitical debate over the meaning of reality and normativity, ideology lost its emancipatory momentum - if it ever had one.

Accused of “ascribing power to evasive and illocutionary ideas” (Stråth 2013: 18), the term soon became a taunt aimed at those who were deemed naïve or even delusional, the “terrible simplifiers” (Bell 1960: 17). This has eventually led to ideologies being relegated as forms of “false consciousness” and a façade behind which the “real intentions” come into play, or at best, a form of compass that guides its tributaries through the mores of politics.

Despite some 19th century attempts to purify ideology from these negative, ill-intentioned renditions (see Heine 1876), the term remained tied to the “hypostatization of ideas” (Stråth 2013: 23), particularly amplified with the Marxist teachings, equating ideology with the ideas of the ruling class. Building on these pejorative assessments of ideology, Marxists have successfully advanced the notion through a distinction between progressive and regressive visions and ideologies.¹ The work of Karl Manheim (1936), subtly moving away from classical Marxism, envisages ideologies as a product of the social environment, though with distinguishable psychological manifestations. In his view, free-floating intellectuals, who piece together the fragmented parts into a solid, progress-making whole, constitute and advance a (progressive) ideology.

In parallel to the work of Manheim but remaining faithful to (neo)Marxist credentials, Gramsci develops his understanding of ideology beyond (or below) the state, emphasizing the importance of civil society in advancing and dispersing ideological hegemony (Gramsci 1971). To Althusser (1984) who argues that while ideology remained instrumental in safeguarding the

¹ The residues of such approaches remain visible in most of the scholarship on the far right, most often articulated through the emancipatory ideal pursued vis-à-vis far-right/populist influence (see Scoones et al. 2017).

interests of the ruling class, it represents a new reality rather than the obscured, concealed truth. Moreover, Althusser's greatest contribution is in asserting the multiplicity of ideological manifestations (instead of a single outlook asserted by Marx and Engels), and arguing for fundamental features irrespective of the historical forms specific ideologies adopt (Althusser 1984; Freeden 2003: 25-27).

However, the scholarship of ideology required a move beyond historical materialism and the outlook on progress rooted in the Marxist and the neo-Marxist approaches. Giovanni Sartori's (1969) attempts to articulate ideology as a "belief-system" opens up the space for pragmatist injunctions that indicated the never-ceasing world of ideas and actors that purport them. One of the scholars who did most to repack the existing presumptions about ideologies and their formative elements is Michael Freeden, whose work serves as a benchmark in the contemporary studies of ideology. Although Freeden himself criticized pragmatism and "judging things based on their merit", his insistence on the internal dynamics of ideology, which are never closed self-sufficient systems but dynamic structures of *l'imaginaire sociale* (Castoriadis 1997 [1987]), point to his attempt to envision ideologies as continuously (d)evolving forms of political thinking (Freeden 1996: 22-23). Distantly following the ontological explorations of Deleuze and Guattari, but also those of Bruno Latour, Freeden's (2003: 95) fundamental contention is not related to the modular structure of ideologies, but the rapid rate of their (re)assembling within the public perception. He sees ideologies as being fundamentally associated with power, performing a variety of services (he mentions legitimation, integration, socialization, ordering, simplification, and action-orientation), all essential to the functioning of societies (Freeden 1996: 23). This process can be

subsumed to “discursive competitions over the control of public political language” (Freedden 2013: 153).

This ubiquity of ideologies, paired with the fact that they are both produced and consumed by the groups, stands at odds with the previous understandings of ideologies as unidirectional (elites-society) or presenting an inadequate form of social reality which can be ideally criticized. Therefore, Freedden (2003: 11) opts for the act of “decoding”, rather than that of “unmasking” ideologies. To understand the logic and principles of the act of decoding, the following section will outline a (loose) methodological roadmap which ideally measures the interconnectedness of values asserted within a single ideology.

Introducing ideological morphology: the core, periphery, and adjacency

Appreciating the unintentional and unconscious in human thinking, Freedden asserts the importance of indeterminacy and contestability as fundamental features of ideologies and their internal structures-morphologies. This is complementary to Bauman’s (1989) recognition of the “liquid modernity”, in which we (as students of ideologies) have to now cope with the uncertainty (as in *anomie*) of the incessantly-moving social. The variety, waywardness, and idiosyncrasy become the standards to which any undertaking into what ideology presents has to account for. Therefore, ideologies and their inner, constitutive morphologies are, at best, pliant structures that allow us to apprehend the discursive shifts and occurrences around us. These structures consist of distinguishable concepts constituting the formative component of ideologies. Hence, the ideologies consist of conceptual clusters organized hierarchically in accordance with their relevance.

Freeden's work is heavily reliant on the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, who sees the use of language as a social enterprise, and historian Reinhart Koselleck's (2004) notion of “conceptual history”, focusing on the ways in which historical events are described. The fundamental characteristic of political concepts, as they show, is their inability to be fully unpacked, or at least, to reach an agreement on their content. These “essentially contestable” concepts (Gallie 1955-56) point to a value, but the exact content of that value is always disputed. The concepts are indeed polysemic (Collier et al. 2006) and changeable over time, and whatever comes out of the conceptual cluster should take into account the possibility for contestation. But this should not be seen as an impossibility to cast a distinctive ideology and its morphology – it simply denotes the pathway through which concepts are articulated, allegedly fixed yet always amendable, and the social actions that may emanate as a consequence of using such frameworks. This also explains the interpretative approach and the leverage political theorists and ideology scholars have when identifying a distinctive ideological architecture. Although many combinations of concepts in accordance with their meanings are possible, they are not indefinite and have to follow a logical sequence.

Ideological morphology aims for the universal level of generalizability amid its dependence on the contextual, “acceptable cultural combinations” (Freeden 2013: 152). Basically, liberalism should have the same core features in e.g., Hungary and Botswana, though some of the concepts lower in hierarchy may differ on the basis of the context. Not only that ideologies should not be perceived as doctrinaire and manipulative visions, but their structure is also susceptible to change. To use the same example of liberalism, this ideology does not share the same features as

its 19th-century variant. The limited coherence through which concepts construe a morphology of an ideology means that ideologies are nowhere near “natural”, but constantly shifting and moveable (Freeden 2013: 153), both in terms of their presence in the hierarchy and its position on the hierarchical ladder. Contrary to beliefs of Marxist scholars (Eagleton 1991), morphologies are not always consciously designed: the “hybridization” becomes a condition of modernity (Latour 1993 [1991]).

But how does this hierarchical ladder look, and what are its features? To Freedon (1996, 2003, 2006, 2013), whose approach on “ideological morphologies” will serve as an analytical framework for this thesis, the elaborate internal structure of ideologies rests on the three-tiered conceptual distinction. The first is a set of the “ineliminable”, core-type concepts, which are central to any given ideology (e.g., “liberty”, “human rights”, and “democracy” in liberalism). Their indispensable nature indicates the durability of an ideology, which rests on these concepts, regardless of their variation and interpretation. For ecologism, or “Green ideologies” in the words of Freedon and his followers, the core is “communality, holism², and resistance to progress,” (Freedon 1996: 528) or the fourfold structure: ecological reconstruction, radical democratization, ecological law, and non-violence (according to Humphrey 2013: 504). Here, it is worth noting that the ideological cores should always contain a number of key concepts (instead of one), although they might not imply equal relevance for a given ideology. This rules out the simplistic accounts of ideologies with a single concept being in the core (e.g., “tradition” for conservatism or

² Porritt (1984: 199) defines holism as “the most important feature of ecologism”, related to the development of “planetary consciousness” and “work in sympathy with rather than against the organic harmonies that make life possible.”

“equality” for socialism): while without these concepts, these ideologies could not be labeled as such, it is the interplay that allows for prospective mutations and variations which occur (Freeden 2013: 159).

The second (and third) component of Freedén’s ideological morphology consists of concepts that belong to the perimeter: adjacent and peripheral concepts. Adjacent concepts do not appear in all variations of a given ideology but are nonetheless vital in finessing the content of the core (Freedén 1996: 71). The adjacent concepts (e.g., democracy in liberalism) can be logical or contextual, but both steer the core in the direction of an ideological variety (e.g., libertarianism or liberal democracy). Peripheral concepts are ephemeral in nature, changing at a faster pace depending on the historical contingencies. However, peripheral concepts (Freedén uses “elitism” and “empire” as examples) remain important for the ideological morphology because they can move from the periphery towards the core in light of their relevance at a given time. However, this is the weakest point of Freedén’s theoretical contribution, as the line between adjacent and peripheral concepts becomes vague and too overly abstract to be accounted for with the respective empirical data. Much like the components of an ideological core differ in their presence (although all of them are indispensable), the perimeter is, following the same logic, of the most appropriate notion to designate concepts which are complementing the core.³

³ For ecologism, the role of the perimeter is even more amplified by the “thin” nature of this ideology, which often borrows some of its morphological content from “thicker” ideologies with a more solidified inner hierarchy (liberalism, socialism, conservatism). This is visible with the differences in programmatic statements of e.g., green parties across the world, which hinders efforts to outline a solid green position.

Of course, ideological morphology has several limitations that need to be taken into account. The first of them refers to the overreliance on concepts as informative, but vague building blocks of something equally fuzzy such as ideologies, which are hardly ever found in their crude form in practice. Just like Freeden acknowledges in his writings, his ideological morphology is essentialist. The question that logically emanates from this is – are all ideologies sufficiently complex to be explained through a set of concepts (Norval 2000: 327-328)? Resolving these issues is not always straightforward. Since ideologies are continuously changing, outlining their conceptual core is of fundamental importance, whereas the analysis of adjacent or peripheral concepts often ends up with a shopping list of topics that, at some point, may appear closer to the core and subsequently, more relevant for understanding an ideology.

Freedden's sometimes counterintuitive conceptualization rests on developing the safety valves to contain both structuralism and indeterminacy. For instance, while ideologies have their core, concepts are intentionally contingent, drawing on the contemporary linguistic theory which does not require the “signified” to have a fixed core of meaning (Norval 2000: 324). The range of conceptual clusters, hence ideologies, is seemingly indeterminate, but nonetheless conditioned by the attempt of those practicing the ideologies to have them appear as solidified and monolithic as possible. These issues present an obstacle in defining and discerning far-right ideology from some of the kindred terms and concepts, to which I now turn.

The intellectual tradition and the ideological morphology: what was so “far” about the right?

Providing an intelligible historical overview of the far right at this point through typologies is an obsolete and unnecessary task, well-performed by some of the most established scholars

dealing with this topic (see von Beyme 1988; Mudde 2019). These works have attempted to identify regularities in complex transformations of far-right organizations over time by pointing to (mutually overlapping) patterns of organization, behavior, discourse, and influence. Some of them (Mudde 2000, 2019) focused on the post-war far right, others (mostly historians) have included the interwar period to incorporate the monumental contribution of fascist ideology to the contemporary far right (Finchelstein 2017). This section provides a (very brief) overview of the far right over the last century, setting the basis for laying out the ideological morphology of the far-right.

The antecedents to what is now commonly understood as the far right can be probably found as early as the French Revolution, though, in this instance, the term alludes more to “radicalism” or “extremism” (see Backes 2013). While the conceptual history of extremism is not in the focus of this thesis, it remains important insofar as it defines the relative positioning of this ideology on the ideological spectrum. The “far” label stood for deviation from the established or “moderate” positions, first as the “middle grounds” of Aristotelian political philosophy, and only later as the post-Revolutionary (1789) “golden mean” navigating between the radicals and reactionaries (Backes 2013: 43-86). It is now well-known that this middle has notably shifted throughout over the almost two- and a half century of political ideologies, changing the very structure of the ideological spectrum. Though it can be used to challenge the rigidity of preordained frameworks, this fact is also used to trivialize both the far right and ideologies in general. With this startling possibility in mind, the “far right” serves as the final boundary of the ideological

world we all occupy. Even with its relative distance from the center(-right) being ever-more malleable and hazier, this ideology nonetheless remains at its very brink.

Unlike as is the case with the concomitant ideologies of right radicalism and populism, it was not until the end of the First World War when the distinct features of the far right could be outlined. The classic sociological account of the rise of the far right emphasizes the crisis of modernity (Norris 2005: 130), referring to Lipset's explanation that it was exactly this issue that introduced the threat of big businesses to the small individual entrepreneurs – petite bourgeoisie, prone to a range of risks to their modest reserves of capital in the late 19th century. Perhaps this sentiment can be best captured with the notion of *decadence*, inspired by the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Oswald Spengler, with the latter presenting the outlook on history as pre-determined by the organic structure of cultures (Spengler 1926 [1920]: 67). As we will see in Chapter 5, this organicism views, among others, nomadic lifestyles as decadent and ultimately harmful to the environment.⁴ Through an analysis of Spengler's works significant for the rise of the far right, Eatwell (1989: 68, 124) argues that its emergence and focus on activism was antithetical to previous right-wing tradition, and should be seen more as a response to the rise of socialism rather than liberalism, rejecting the “alien institutions of modernity and parliamentary democracy.”

The (most) infamous historical manifestation of the far right occurred in Germany, where such groups were associated with the “Conservative Revolutionaries”, responding to the tension that eventually abrogated the Weimar Republic and eventually contributed to the emergence of the

⁴ The pejorative construction of nomadism as opposed to some more positive articulations of ferality established in environmental theory (see Garside 2013) induced a sense of discomfort with the perceived collective degeneration.

Third Reich. The 1930s and the wartime period was when far right seemed to have reached its historical peak. While the anti-modern sentiment prompted by the pressure of big businesses on the “small man”/peasant/producer/entrepreneur might have been the case in the early 1920s, the rise of the post-Second World War radical right is attributed not so much to the threat of big business as to the nativist impetus - fear of the “other”, asylum seekers and guest workers bolstered by the process of globalization, or the still very present “old-fashioned” racism and anti-Semitism. As the remnants of the biggest fascist organizations continued to operate in exile (mostly Australia and the Americas), the far-right spectrum underwent a significant ideological and organizational transformation. Genetic racism gave way to a cagier “cultural” racism, such as that championed by the French *Nouvelle Droite*. The metaphor of nations as (separate) ethnic containers, as highlighted in Jozsef’s statement from the beginning of this chapter, has strongly influenced contemporary far-right politics, which have been significantly capitalizing on the immigration issue (Carvalho 2014, for an opposite argument, see Lonsky 2021). In addition to this, in the last couple of decades, it was the precariousness of post-industrial societies that benefited those social groups characterized by the educational and cognitive skills, geographic mobility, and professional career flexibility, at the expense of those unable to adapt to these “fluid” times (Bauman 1989). The pervasive sense of crisis in the “risk society” (Beck 1992), implying a systematic way of anticipating (or attempting to anticipate) future events and threats on a global scale. Such a condition of late-modernity, particularly visible through the current *COVID-19 zeitgeist*, contributed to an ever-increasing politics of fear (Wodak 2015), ultimately creating a fertile soil for far-right politics.

Departing from this very short account on the historical developments and motivations that inform the far right today, identifying the concepts underpinning far-right ideology rests on the scholarly consensus which seems to be reached. Unlike as is the case with e.g., populism or nationalism, which are at best considered “thin-centered” ideologies, there is little doubt that far right is an ideology. The central concept to this ideology is (ethno)nationalism (Halikiopoulou et al. 2012; Höglinger et. al 2012; Eger and Valdez 2015, 2018). The role of ethnonationalism is in providing an organic congruity between the state and the nation, assuming both holistic (Eatwell 2000: 412-413) and exclusive homogeneity (Minkenberg 2000: 151). This exclusionary nature of far right’s ethnonationalism underlines its anti-pluralist nature (see Lipset and Raab 1970; Castelli Gattinara 2020), asking for additional elaborations and decontestations. Examples include “ethnonationalist xenophobia,” as well as “anti-establishment populism” as concomitants of this nationalist conceptualization. This plenitude of meanings urged other scholars to seek for alternative concepts, such as “nativism,” accentuating the need for ethnic homogeneity within the national boundaries (see also Mudde 2000: 19, 2007; Wirchow 2016; Göppfarth 2021).⁵ From the perspective of a political or sociological theory, the complex decontestation of ethnonationalism in far-right places it considerably higher on the ladder of abstraction than the other concept – of authoritarianism.

Whereas authoritarianism, ethnonationalism and/or nativism figure as core, vital components of far-right ideology, present in all of its instances (Stoss 1992, Bonikowski 2017; Rydgren 2018; Mudde 2019), the shopping list of peripheral concepts is considerably long.

⁵ Nativism, however, is not necessarily nationalist or defined on ethnic grounds.

Mudde's (1995:207) inventory on the selected attributes consists of five elements (he then used the concept of right-wing extremism as the focus of his analysis): nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, and the strong state, which he later analyzed through 26 definitions. Likewise, Ramet (1999) adds potentially important peripheral concepts, such as antimaterialism, tribal nationalism, social Darwinism, and futurism. According to Kitschelt (2006, quoted in von Meering and McCarty 2013: 106), the theoretical framework developed by Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) offers a parsimonious framework with two key elements: radical nationalism and radical socio-cultural conservatism for classifying radical parties.

An equally important element of far-right appeal is its relationship with the continuously reinvented past (Minkenberg 2010: 16). Similarly, as Lipset and Raab (1970) argue, a distinguishing feature of right-wing [extremist] movements is their nostalgic outlook on the (sometimes imaginary) past. To some extent, this is true of all ideologies, though to an extent incomparable to that of the far right. Roger Griffin's (1991) analysis of fascism offers the concept of "palingenesis", a flamboyant way of articulating the ideal of "rebirth", as being central to the ideology together with revolutionary ethnonationalism. Therefore, the past always serves a particular purpose, that is, calling for national unity and order on the basis of ethnicity. For this to be discursively constructed, myths play an indispensable role (Rydgren 2018: 2).

The endeavor of identifying the ideological morphology of the far right through a(n incomplete) survey of the literature is also bound to entail a number of qualitative labels. For instance, far (radical/extreme) right was also defined as a system of "organized intolerance" or "hate" (Ramet 1999; Shoshan 2013; Miller-Idriss 2020). These distinct currents were also among

the essential components of fascism - of which a radical right is perceived to be an "incontrovertible incarnation" (Ramet 1999: 9). This is where the heuristic element of self-ascription complements the aims to define the phenomena. The most common terms the proponents of these ideologies use are "nationalist", "patriotic", or "radical right". Yet, the "right-wing" is seldom accepted, although most of the "extreme" right rather identifies with a third way, post-ideological politics. The "far right" and "populism" are more often than not perceived as unacceptable labels due to the derogatory connotations they bear (Mudde, 2004: 542, quoted in Pirro 2015:2; Kaltwasser, Taggart, Espejo, Ostiguy 2017: 17). Nonetheless, its analytical precision paired with its established position in the scholarship calls for undermining (albeit acknowledging) the logic of ethnographic fieldwork, which places a considerable value upon the agency of the "object of study". Finally, paying attention to self-ascription can also help level the contextual discrepancies, where the "far right" label is dependent on the relational aspect (von Meering and McCarty 2013: 119).

Inside the far-right spectrum: extreme vs. radical

Another scholarly-established way of dissecting the far right refers to distinguishing between the extreme and the radical right. Both terms are often used interchangeably among the scholarly works referring to the far-right side of the ideological spectrum (see Carter 2018). However, the distinction between these has been established over the years, on the basis of the level of hostility towards democratic procedures (Mudde 2000: 12). Unlike the radical right's implicit disavowal of liberal democracy, which does not prevent it from operating within the boundaries of a liberal democratic system, the extreme right (or "right-wing extremism") is

explicitly opposed to democracy and seeks to dissolve the existing constitutional order. In a similar vein, Backes and Jesse (1989: 33) define political extremism as an "umbrella term" for those political outlooks that reject a democratic constitutional state, negating the basic principle of equality of citizens. Likewise, Carter (2005) points to anti-constitutionalism and anti-democratic values as the two main criteria that discern right-wing extremism from other political ideations and movements. Examples of the extreme right include neo-Nazi organizations, racist skinheads, and the alt Right.

Much as it may seem counterintuitive within this dichotomy, the radical right's attitude to democracy and its procedures is far from clear. For instance, Minkenberg (2000) and Betz (2005) argue that, despite the radical right's acceptance of procedural democracy, the ideal form of society for the radical right is "ethnocracy". At the same time, it is also questionable whether it is only the extreme right that resorts to physical violence in pursuing its political agenda. It is also important to be aware of the exclusion criteria: those who are successfully labeled as extreme in an attempt to discredit can then hardly be considered legitimate political actors.

However, insisting on the dichotomy between the extreme and the radical right, particularly through the emphasis on the relationship with liberal democracy, overlooks the agenda behind such contentions. This dichotomy may easily be employed to legitimate the radical right, whereas the conflation of these terms under the far-right ideological umbrella seems to drive both outside of the boundaries of liberal democracy, resulting in the exclusion of such ideas and actors from the political arena. Indeed, many scholars would agree with the conclusion that "extreme right" is more useful than the "radical right" since the extremist political expression is central to both

phenomena (Rush 1963: 64). On a similar note, Rydgren (2018: 3) warns against making a watertight distinction between the two, as many of the radical right-wing social movements border with extremism; in fact, radical-right leaders often have contacts with the extreme right, as is the case in both Hungary and Poland. As we will see in the following chapter and throughout this thesis, drawing the line between the radical and extreme movements is not always an easy task. Since this is the case almost with any given movement or party considered to belong to the radical right in Central and Eastern Europe, adding the “extreme” elements to the picture thoroughly encapsulates such strands of thought and activism in the environmental (or any given) domain. Because of this, the ideology of the far right, comprising of the radical and extreme right, is the most suitable and overarching ideological term.

Coping with the fascist minimum: Far right and fascism?

There is little debate as to whether the term “far right” is even necessary in the post-WW2 world of ideologies. Fleshing out the distinction between the radical and extreme strands of the far right disentangles the relationship of this ideology with fascism, as the extreme portion of the spectrum generally corresponds to neofascist actors. As with anything in the social sciences, this relationship is not always as straightforward. To Passmore (2002), fascism comprises both the radical and the extreme right, because of its opposition to socialism and feminism and the quest for a new populist elite. The contemporary use of “fascism” as an analytical term in describing contemporary organizations and politics serves to assert continuity between the interwar fascist organizations and the far right of today. Though it can be rightfully argued that some - or even most of today’s far right would have been fascists of the interwar era, the breadth and relevance of

the far-right spectrum caution against assuming such a logical conclusion. In the words of Michael Mann (2004: 365), the term “fascism” now stands for a protean label that is cantankerously thrown at those whose opinion we wish to delegitimize, “a term of imprecise abuse hurled at people we don’t like.” Perhaps Mann’s argument presents itself as an unfounded mockery of a well-established ideology, though the use of the notion of fascism today indeed serves a myriad of purposes, from being (often rightfully) alarmist to plain wrong.

The commonly articulated argument on the contemporary fascist “inappropriateness” pertains to its historicity. According to this logic, fascism was a moribund historical phenomenon that perished in the Wehrmacht bunkers and the Nuremberg trials. Within this logic, the contemporary far-right ideology was denoted as “neofascism” (Krejčí 1995; Castelli Gattinara et. al. 2013; Mammone 2015),⁶ which is criticized for being insufficient to flatten the vivid nuances between the context in which fascists and the contemporary radical/far right operate (Copsey 2017: 173). It is interesting that Kitschelt (1995) objected to the use of the fascist label by articulating two points that nonetheless still depart from the same premises. Firstly, most of the parties belonging to the far right deny any links with historic fascism. Secondly, and returning to the main argument, fascism should be seen as a historical phenomenon, “propelled by different social, economic, and political conditions than the contemporary extreme Right in Western Europe” (Kitschelt 1995: 42-43, see Copsey 2017: 169). For Prowe (1994), this ahistorical fallacy is epitomized in disregarding the notably different cultural fissures that fueled fascism (colonial,

⁶ The far right is also sometimes referred to as “neo-nationalism” (Eger and Valdez 2014), though this term is not examined in this thesis due to its ambiguity on the ideological spectrum, but also the fact that ethnonationalism is already one of the core concepts of far-right morphology.

class-conflict societies) and far right (which emerged in the period of decolonization in multicultural societies) respectively.

Opposite to these relegations of fascism as a historical and evanescent phenomenon (Bale 2006; Mammone 2015; Copsey 2017: 170-71), a significant portion of the scholarship portrays fascism as a ubiquitous and ever-present ideology (Eco 1996; Sparrow 2019; Mason 2021). Such arguments are broad in scope – from viewing fascism as a mostly amorphous doctrine behind mass-mobilization through abstractions of unity and power (Woodley 2010), to a syncretic ideology resting on patriarchy and mythopoesis (Reid Ross 2017) elevating the collective feeling of humiliation and victimhood (Paxton 2005). Much as these definitions point to the importance of historical embedding and contextualization, they ignore the existence of “notions in flux” – the ability to delineate far right and fascism even in the interwar period. For example, the radical right in interwar Germany emanated from the circle of conservative revolutionaries, and was elitist more than the fascist populism of Adolf Hitler.

Notwithstanding that fascism (though to a lesser extent than populism) has proved to be “elusive” (Eatwell 2017: 363), or “notoriously slippery and resistant to interpretation, and even to a basic definition,” (Payne 2000: 110) many authors (see Gentile, 1990; Griffin 1991; Payne, 1995; Eatwell 1996; Mosse 1999; Kallis 2002; Mann 2004; Iordachi 2009, 2010) point to a set of distinguishable, ideal-type features that constitute the inner core of an ideological morphology. This “fascist minimum” can be identified along with its mythical core, palingenetic nationalism and the myth of rebirth, the need for a charismatic, authoritarian figure and the Manichean

demonization of enemies differentiates fascism from the large family of authoritarians (Griffin 1991, Griffin and Iordachi 2018: 565).

Though some hold that far right and fascism remain synonymous (Fleischer 2014) with regard to these illustrative features, there are notable conceptual-morphological differences. The first one is related to the revolutionary nature and proclivity to violence as “self-defense” or with an aim of attaining and/or restoring purity, that is, rendering violence as legitimate means for achieving political goals, all of which are core to fascist ideology (Mann 2004). Fascism presupposes and glorifies crude and physical violence aiming to bolster a revolutionary change, usually presented as “counter-violence”, or the “national self-defense” (Petersen 1982: 282). In spite of the role attributed to the concept of violence in the ‘late’ (closer to the Second World War) fascism, the role of violence has hardly been central to fascism from its historical emergence (Freeden 1996: 78). The contemporary radical-right parties operating in parliamentary democracies are timid in expressing support for violence. Meanwhile, the extreme-right parties, such as Slovakian Kotlebists or Hungarian Mi Hazánk (and formerly Jobbik) have sponsored their own paramilitary formations which were loosely associated with the main party through a web of social networks (see Pirro et. al 2021 for the Hungarian case). The events in January 2021 at the Capitol Building have prompted serious discussions as to the link between the mainstreamed far right and violence, meaning that revolutionary violence may easily move from the periphery to the core of contemporary far-right ideology, thus nullifying this difference.

Another pronounced conceptual difference between far right and historical fascism is related to territorial expansionism. Yet, even this holds only to an extent, as the far right in the

countries whose appeal is heavily reliant on the national myths of a “greater” country (Serbia, Hungary, Poland), would not discount territorial expansion or, better put, a return to the natural borders. As we shall see in the following chapters (particularly chapters 2 and 6), space is central to the nationalist ideology, but not to the point where territorial expansionism is to be justified. The third concept of the ideological morphology that was not necessarily central to fascism, but appeared prominent in Nazism, is anti-Semitism.⁷ Even though anti-Semitic references are occasionally present in far-right activism, anti-Semitism has never been central to the post-war far right (Eatwell 2005), but rather “concrete, physical racism.” (Prowe 1994: 312, in Copsey 2017: 169) This is associated with the “purification” of far-right ideology in the 1960s, which led to an eradication of overt racism and anti-Semitism from the party stances. Nevertheless, anti-Semitic incidents are still common, particularly in Eastern Europe, putting in question the argument of anti-Semitism having evaporated from the ideological morphology of the far right.

There are also arguments debating the position of fascism on the ideological spectrum, signaling that fascism may not fit the predetermined far-right standpoint. For instance, Eatwell (1989) argues that, if communism posed problems for defining the left-right spectrum, fascism proved even more cumbersome. He justifies his argument with the case of fascist economic policies, which implied a general acceptance of private property, albeit subject to the needs of the nation when necessary, which are essentially interventionist and proto-Keynesian. Lipset (1960) argued that this positions fascism as a political doctrine of the “extremist center” or “revolutionary center” (Sternhell 1983) – standing for a rejection of parliamentary democracy, but centrist in its

⁷ For a detailed discussion on the difference between Fascism and Nazism, see Eatwell (1989) and Ravlić (2009)

attempt to find a middle way between capitalism and communism. This speaks to the already mentioned “third wayism” of both the fascists and the far right, but it hardly holds in a serious morphological analysis.

The picture becomes even more obscure once taken to the level of empirics, with an attempt to distinguish between the far right and fascist outlooks on development, progress, and technology, given the “future-driven” impetus of fascism which contrasts to a more typical nostalgia in other far-right conceptualizations (cf. Brose 1987). The assumption that the actors belonging to the same group in the far right share exactly the same values and beliefs is also problematic. For instance, The National Front in Britain put an emphasis on the immigration problems, and compulsory repatriation of nonwhites was its main plank, while the inner core of the party favored a National Socialist dictatorship like Hitler's Third Reich (Karapin 1998: 217). Hence, ideological layers are not always evident in the public rhetoric, and they may vary across different organizational levels of the party/movement. As we can see from this overview, fascism is perhaps the closest of the notions compared in this chapter with the far right. Amid numerous overlapping and problematic features, the far right nonetheless remains a broader and consequently more analytically-useful notion, suitable for contemporary ideological explorations.

Far vs. New Right and ethnopluralism

If fascism was seen as the most concrete embodiment of the far right in the first half of the twentieth century, the ethnopluralist nationalism, developed by the New Right (*Nouvelle Droite*)⁸ after 1968, presents the most prominent articulation of far-right thought nowadays.⁹ Here it is important to establish a terminological difference, as the New Right label can be indeed “misleading” (Marcus 1995: 25, quoted in Bar-On 2013: 2) or “inappropriate” (Norris 1999). Besides its far-right variant, “New Right” also refers to the individualist/*laissez-faire* thinking that some of the neo-conservatives have taken up. The (far) New Right to which this section refers is evidently hostile to neoliberal patterns and the idea of the free market, representing itself as going beyond right and left distinction within the ideological spectrum. This assertion of “Third-way” politics is presupposed in the “quest for body politic of an alternative modernity” (Bar-On 2013: 1).

In its attempt to articulate their third position, the New Right is admittedly striving to go both beyond the established ideologies of liberalism, conservatism, and socialism, but also the right-left demarcation which emanated from the French Revolution. This led to subsequent efforts to construct a counter-hegemony with an aim to “change hearts and minds” instead of direct activism, thus paradoxically following the footprints of Antonio Gramsci (Casadio 2014:52). The prioritization (and implicit separation) of the cultural over political realm allowed for both

⁸ While it can be argued that the New Right is a peculiarly French phenomenon, it also had its offsprings and intellectual concomitants in Italy (*Nuova Destra*), Germany (*Neue Rechte*), Australia, and many other countries (see also Minkenberg 1992; Archer 2009: 177-190).

⁹ The distinction offered here is not as absolute, as many (in fact, most) scholars argue that the New Right is only a more sophisticated incarnation of fascism, with a very similar ideological morphology (Spektorowski 2007; Sunshine 2008; Bar-On 2013). To some (Versluis 2009: 154), the New Right is closer to conservatism than fascism.

assuaging the overt racism and resuscitation of ideology as the acceptable notion. This “obsession” (Bar-On 2013: 3) with “metapolitics” (Badiou 2012) by the right was a product of the effort to counteract liberalism as the dominant ideology of the West (Teitelbaum 2017:47), motivated by the sense of an “organic crisis” pronounced in Gramscian thought. What is also worth examining in light of the metapolitics are existing takes at self-positioning: Alain de Benoist, the intellectual forerunner of the Nouvelle Droite, was a conspicuous endorser of illiberalism – not necessarily in a sense of authority as its perceived antipode, but rather the anti-bourgeois stimulus that caused an overlap between the two separate poles of the ideological spectrum. Interestingly enough, an appropriate example of “the right that resembles the left” is ecologism: “uniting the conservative impulse to “conserve ecosystems” with a revolutionary desire to “radically transform our relationship with the world and our ways of living” (de Benoist 2012: 250; quoted in Bar-On 2013: 37).

As argued previously, the increasing culturalization of politics (Rydgren 2005: 427) allowed the New Right to refurbish biological racism by framing immigration as a pathosis to culture. Instead of lamenting for lost empires and golden ages, New Right openly criticized colonial practices of the West, blaming them for the present cultural hodgepodge (Spektorowski 2013). This was an appealing move for many far-right organizations, which openly embraced the idea of ethnopluralism (e.g., Identitarian Movement), as this enabled advocating cultural separation without explicitly referring to any of the fascist leaders or thinkers. Through calls for restoring the “indigeneity” of European people by linking it to the intentionally ambiguous framing of cultural emancipation, common to some notably different political ideologies and schools of

thought (e.g., The Frankfurt School), the proponents of ethnopluralism have technically advocated for a country without immigrants. In the reading of this cultural fundamentalism, immigrants have gradually become “the other”, a threat to the imagined sanctity and wholeness – they bring to mind the incompleteness, the inability to enclose the imagined whole of the social (Laclau 2005: 85). Linguistically foreclosing this framing, such messages are often accompanied by tropes of invasion, usually pointing to the alleged historical nexus between some of the early conquests and the present patterns. From these representations, those on the far right who employ ethnopluralism often resort to calls for stronger controls and harsher measures, including expulsion, “repatriations and policies of national preference in employment and social benefits.” (Givens 2005: 20, 37; Carter 2018: 165) Therefore, ethnopluralist tendencies, much as they are occasionally repacked in more palatable forms, remain closely related to xenophobia.

As per the differences between the [French] New Right and most of the contemporary far-right ideology, one of the most visible ones is related to the spiritual profile of these organizations. Unlike the predominantly Christian far right, particularly those organizations operating in Hungary and Poland, New Right is rooted in the pagan political tradition. This is particularly important insofar as the Christian far right is a modality of (or a deviation from) traditional conservatism, or at least, national conservatism as an established ideology in East-Central Europe. Regardless of these variations, the ideological morphology of conservatism is compatible with the basic tenets of liberal democracy. In contrast, the neo-pagan tradition is essentially anti-liberal, aimed at delegitimizing the fundamental egalitarianist principles upon which the Judeo-Christian tradition is based. In spite of New Right’s endorsement of intellectualism and revolution (although not

through violence), it is difficult to imagine it calling for a monarchy developed upon conservative and traditionalist principles – all indispensable to Eastern European far-right’s imaginary.

Unlike New Right’s focus on culture, the far right is specifically concerned with national identity. Though the outcome of this logic leads to evident overlaps, such as advocating for the self-governing regions demarcated on the basis of ethnic background (ideation which has important consequences for articulating Far-Right Ecologism, see Chapter 5), New Right is not necessarily a nationalist movement. The fundamental difference here is that in regionalist ethnopluralist renderings, cultural boundaries are naturally equated with regions, not nations: “Europe of Fatherlands” (Mammone, Godin, and Jenkins 2012, 2013) is a case in point. Although this is one of the common arguments of the contemporary far right as well, it is not at the core of its public appeals. Just like the case with fascism, the far right is to be understood as a broader notion which may or may not comprise ethnopluralist paganism. Thus, the kind of romanticizing of pre-modern nations that is immanent to far-right thought is ephemeral, if not entirely absent from an ethnopluralist conceptualization of a future and prosperous society. In opposition to the far right, particularly that of Eastern Europe, the rural idyll is not a particularly valuable element of the New Right imaginary.

Alt Right and Accelerationism

In the quest for the most accurate substitute of fascism in contemporary politics, a number of other concepts heavily reliant on (albeit not necessarily derived from) the tenets of the ethnopluralist New Right have sprung up over the years. This section explores the alternative portion of the right (“alt right”), these fringe, albeit emerging, strands of the (mostly) extreme right

are simultaneously capitalizing on the ongoing crisis of neoliberal capitalism and exploiting its offsprings, such as the internet and social media. Most of these, such as “Accelerationism” or “New Age”, are actually borrowed from other domains and scholarships (science fiction, religion). In fact, both of these terms are used in describing different sides of the ideological spectrum. Even though it is eclectic and operates in various domains and circles, the alt-right community has originated and is mostly based in the United States, gaining prominence during the 2016 Presidential Elections. Therefore, its conceptual contribution to the ideology under scrutiny is limited insofar as this is predominantly a contextual phenomenon, whose outreach and influence merits examination in this chapter. Accelerationism and alt right are undeniably racist and identitarian, with its proponents often defining themselves as “white nationalists” (Hawley 2018: 10). Alt-right is a broad church, with ideologically broad origins and contemporary variations. Among others, alt-right is informed by strands of paleo-conservatism, conspiracy theories (such as QAnon), white nationalist, but also neo-Nazi, Incel misogynists (people living in an “involuntary celibate”, see Hoffman et. al 2020) and accelerationist organizations to neo-reactionary and New Age far-right organizations placing a considerable emphasis on the spiritual component of the far right and the “lifestyle extremism” through yoga, “holistic wellness” and alternative medicine (see Evans 2020).

Accelerationism has originally been envisaged as an idiosyncratic and “libidinal *Marxisant* [italics in original] tendency”, derived from the works of Deleuze, Guattari, Lyotard, and Baudrillard (Gardiner 2017: 25). As its name shows, accelerationism speeds up the state of chaos, the normalization of looming catastrophe in “Risk societies” to point to “latently emancipatory

potentialities” (Gardiner 2017: 30). In doing so it seeks to attain a fundamental and wide-reaching political, social, economic, and environmental transformation through the use of technology and innovations. The nature and direction of the transformation, while seeking a departure from the moribund neoliberal capitalism, is not necessarily anti-capitalist. Technologism is emboldening an accelerationist change, though it entails a resuscitation of materialism and rationalism while simultaneously abandoning nostalgic traditionalism and anti-modernism (see Williams and Srnicek 2010 and 2015).

The far-right version of accelerationism rests on the (blatant) clarification of the ambiguities arising from the ways in which this theory is conceptualized in the left academic circles. To far-right accelerationists, the cause of the demise of capitalism and liberal democracy is the corrupt governments of the West. The obvious crisis should be used and accelerated to form a "white ethnostate." This is not the only variation of a prosperous future polity, as the accelerationist imaginary spans from a centralized ethnic entity to a highly decentralized “authoritarian seasteads on the model of Singapore” (MacDougald 2015) or varieties of “Deleuzean Thatcherism” developed by Nick Land (Harrison and Burrows 2021: 6). Land is, together with Curtis Yarvin, also the author of the "Dark Enlightenment" (NRx) coinage, which advocates for reactionary principles of return to absolute monarchism and Prussian cameralism, in which the state is de facto a business running a country (Harrison and Burrows 2021: 8). Dark Enlightenment is particularly interesting as it intertwines with the “deep ecological fantasies” (Gilroy 2019:4) through purporting eugenics and distressingly similar variations of the ecological modernization discourse (see Hajer 1995).

What is common for these rather disparate interpretations of society and the solutions to its problems is a longing for a neo-reactionary hyper-efficient state. This dream of the dispersed alt-right network is significantly informing and contributing to the mainstreaming of the far right. This was particularly noticeable through the rise and fall of Donald Trump from the US political scene. The link is perhaps most evident through the political ontology of race, but also the new realm induced by the internet-mediated reality (Gilroy 2019: 5). Such conspiracy reality facilitated by the internet forums and online platforms are indeed reminiscent of Deleuzian rhizome, a series of (continuous) transformations of the far-right morphology in its core, which can no longer be recognized and assessed just by ticking its conceptual boxes. This is why alt right is an immense amplifier of the far-right appeal around the world, exactly because it exists on the fringe but tangentially informs and unsettles the imaginary clarity through which ideologies operate.

Amid some similarities with far-right ideology, mainly through commending the ethnonationalist and authoritarian principles, far right and the alt right are significantly different. As mentioned, most of the alt right belongs to the extreme right, although the eclectic nature of it prevents one from drawing fast conclusions. At the same time, the alt-right variety devoid of white nationalism (ironically termed “alt lite”), engaging in conspiracy theories and anti-Islam and misogyny, can hardly be situated on the extreme side of the far-right spectrum. Moreover, the actual role of violence in these ideological constellations is rather questionable. Some branches of the alt-right network have indubitably motivated terrorist attacks, like those committed in Christchurch and El Paso, although it is difficult to argue that even a majority of QAnon tributaries would endorse such acts. In spite of its appeal facilitated by the internet, alt right remains a

contextual phenomenon centered on the United States. Attempts to export some of its influence abroad, such as *The Movement* founded by Steve Bannon, have failed miserably. In spite of its geographically limited influence, alt right remains useful for understanding how far right operates in the broader context. The ideology which had considerably greater success in mainstreaming the far right was populism.

(Populist) radical right: how central is populism to the far-right?

To grasp the intersection between populism and the far right, it is perhaps useful to return to Gramscian political theory, though its left and notably more pessimistic strand. To such theorists, populism thrives in the conditions of a “postpolitical,” “peak” or “simulative democracy,” in which alleged contempt for democratic practices only reinforces the existing hegemonic structures (see more: Rancière 2004, 2016; Žizek, 2008; Swyngedouw, 2009; Blühdorn 2013). Following this logic, populism does nothing but strengthen the resilience of the established order by reasserting the desirability of liberal democracy, in which emancipatory progress becomes exhausted. Populist movements are not a deviance of democracy to which it ought to return, but a new form of democratic discourse, leading towards ever more social inequality and exclusion induced by both far-right nationalists and the liberal “defenders” of the established order (Blühdorn and Butzlaff 2018).

This is exactly why the current rise and mainstreaming of populism has to be linked with the rise of far right (see Mudde 2019). Recent years have witnessed the merging of the two, as the “populist radical right” is becoming increasingly prominent in the academic world (Pirro 2011; Mudde 2017a; Moffitt 2017; Roeth et. al. 2018). Given the developments in contemporary politics,

this does not come as a surprise: right-wing populist parties have not only been on the rise, but have also managed to seize power in many countries (see more Akkerman 2012; De Lange 2012; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015). Some of these parties (such as Fidesz in Hungary and PiS in Poland) did not have a pronounced radical-right background before their populist turn, though the far right nowadays is, in the main, a populist one (Betz 2018: 139).

A precondition for immersing into the morphological exploration and comparison of populism and the far right is conditioned by two main prerequisites. The first is in recognizing that populism is an ideology (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013; Mudde 2017a). This in itself can be rather challenging, mostly because populism in the scholarship also stands for a political strategy (Weyland 2001) and rhetoric-discourse (Kazin 1995; de la Torre 2000; Caiani and Della Porta 2011; Katsambekis forthcoming). The second is related to the ideological (left-right) variation of populism. Populism is often referred to as the “common currency,” (Westlind 1996: 31) which allows most ideologies to incorporate the populist logic into its ideological morphology. Being a thin-centered ideology, the incomplete structure of populism allows other, thick-centered ideologies (such as the far right) to supplant its ideological core (cf. De Cleen 2017). Therefore, morphological analysis of populism will focus on those commonalities that this ideology has with the far right.

Regardless of whether populism is left or right, its core component is a homogenous and monolithic concept of “the people”. The second core component of populism is Manicheanism, epitomized in the portrayal of an antagonistic and eschatological conflict between the people and the enemies – “others”. The panoply of perceived enemies presents a wide front of “elites” against

which the “people” should be mobilized: from politicians and bureaucrats, to corporations and finally media and academia (see Chapter 6 for the appropriation of this binary principle in far-right ecologism) (Rovira-Kaltwasser and Mudde 2017b). The far/radical- right conception of populism adds the abovementioned nativism (Mudde 2010) and the nostalgia for the “sacred heartland” (Taggart 2000: 3, 95) to the ideological core. Just like with ethnopluralism and fascism, nativism serves as the amplifier of the binary logic and the exclusionary principle, which also introduces the concept of ethnonationalism to the populist morphology. The two concepts (nationalism and populism) are kindred but separate: “nationalism is about identifying the sovereign people, while populism is about re-presenting the people in the place of power” (Heiskanen 2020: 2). Much like the far right, ethnonationalist variation of populism also borrows its slant towards the past, again being highly critical of both modernity and globalization, which uproot and alienate the deprived, the underdog, those tormented by the speculative forces of global capital. The idea of politics and democracies being usurped and hijacked by professional politicians who have become unresponsive to their constituencies lends itself to a radical change – something which both populists and those on the far right would endorse.

Even if populism is not perceived as an ideology, the practical overlaps between the far-right and populist strategies are vivid. An example is the tendency towards scandalous public appearances and promoting “bad manners” (Moffit and Tormey 2014: 16) as a part of their politics of spectacle. This serves the role of taking pride in the purported status of an outsider and, consequently, the “people” (Stauffer 2020: 9). The populist praise of the people and the popular will is likely to bring about swift and quick-fix policies, bringing about a “*fast and wide-reaching*

change” (Staufer 2020: 8, original italics). This is common in far-right electoral appeal, although it is questionable whether this feature is specific to far-right parties. The far right often employs populism as a discursive style, yet this does not have to be a rule. This is particularly the case with some of the far-right fringe movements (see Chapter 3), whose members are not professional politicians and have no ambitions to run for office or obtain the support of the electorate. Therefore, using the term “populist radical right” implies focusing only on those far-right organizations that have become mainstream, that is, use populist rhetoric and strategy in their attempt to enter government.

From this, it becomes clear that conflating populists and far right can also be problematic and ultimately superficial, as a consequence of the inescapable reductions in an attempt to conjoin the two. Rydgren (2018) is skeptical of calling radical-right parties populist because it was not populism that is a central, pertinent feature of radical-right parties, but ethnonationalism. While both far right and populism are against cosmopolitan liberalism, unlike populism, the far right is not necessarily anti-elitist (Rydgren 2018: 490). The anti-establishment rhetoric of populists is commonly voiced by the radical-right counterparts, but both radical and extreme right desire a meritocratic elite of able men who are to make decisions on behalf of the collective, without respecting the democratic principle of checks and balances which populists implicitly want. In other words, the idea of a “popular sovereignty”, which belongs to the morphological core of populism (Stanley 2008: 102) is not necessarily pronounced in far-right ideology.

While being exclusionary and antipluralist (Müller 2015), the populist radical right is still interested in restoring the imagined ideal of a “true” (direct) democracy, though exploiting its

contradictions (Passmore 2002: 107) and resting on the perception of the homogenous will of the people. In contrast, far right's conception of democracy most often (e.g., with its more extreme strands) stands at odds with liberal, procedural democracy (Mény and Surel 2002: 4; Carter 2018: 173). These differences point to not necessarily a broader, but more focused ideological morphology of the far right, which utilizes parts of the populist morphology but also places a greater emphasis on the ethnonationalist and authoritarian principle.

Summary

This chapter outlined the basic theoretical convictions and approaches for studying ideologies. One of these, ideological morphology, examines ideologies as loose clusters of decontested political concepts. Building on the fundamental tenets of ideological morphology and the existing far-right scholarship, the chapter examined the intellectual tradition of this ideology, laying out its concepts, namely: ethnonationalism, authoritarianism, organic view of the community, and a clear-cut, Manichean dichotomy of friends and foes. The second part of the chapter engaged with the kindred notions that are commonly used in reference to the far right, including “radical” and “extreme” right, those that lost its historical legitimacy (fascism), those that seem to be out-of-steam (New Right and ethnopluralism), those still operating on the fringe (alt right and accelerationism) or those that are pervasive across the ideological spectrum (nationalism, populism).

Through an analysis of similarities and differences, it is possible to identify the intersections of the far-right intellectual patterns with those of other ideologies. This does not mean that the far right as a concept is devoid of problems, such as its qualificative nature with respect to

the position on the ideological spectrum – far to what and far to whom is this “right”? Nevertheless, its established position in contemporary scholarship deems it the most appropriate term for prospective ideological explorations. The survey of the relevant literature presented in this chapter intended not only to strengthen the position of the "far right" as the most suitable notion, but to also stress the continuity and the breadth of ideas from which the contemporary far right derives its appeal. This “breadth of ideas” explored through ideological morphology also informs the intersection of the far right and ecological thought, to be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 2 - Far-Right Ecology: introducing the spectrum

We are definitely intending to engage with propaganda - there are several goals that we set for ourselves for the next year. Among other things, the "anti-circus campaign" (circus without animals), which will end with collecting signatures in Polish cities to ban renting space to those circuses having animals in their repertoire...In addition, we also intend to organize conferences for nationalists, talk, and show the importance of the topic to those interested. As I said at the beginning, we want to introduce the theme of ecology "to the salons of nationalism"...Rex, Ecolektyw (Greenline Front Poland), interview with Autonom.pl, posted in 2018

*I am very young, and I already see a f****g huge change. It is true that climate has always changed, but not at that pace. The Baltic Sea used to be frozen, people used to live on it. The people who negate climate change are people who are not very smart. Rex, Ecolektyw, 06/15/2019*

A representative of the “new wave” of Polish nationalism, Rex is a friendly and straightforward young man. His rebellious spirit has led Rex to experience the awakenings by Polish S.W.A.T. – SPAP (*Samodzielny Pododdział Antyterrorystyczny Policji*) teams, who stormed his house for breaching the article 256 of the National Criminal Code, which outlaws the promotion of fascism or other totalitarian regimes. Unlike many encounters with my respondents, mostly occurring at local pubs, I spent hours talking to Rex in the forest close to a town in Northern Poland. This was in line with his genuine beliefs: he detested the urban “concrete monsters” sucking lives and creativity out of the people. Perhaps the most telling moment of that encounter was when I realized that what I thought was his white Northface™ t-shirt actually had something else written on it: White Race. This telling moment signaled a wake-up call of failure in the field, when one realizes that, in spite of all the structural circumstances, a true reconciliation with extremism has to entail coming to terms with its unsettling history and occasional mainstreaming of right radicalism and extremism in Poland and Hungary. Such moments reinstate the burden of the research undertaking

and a feeling of solitude enhanced with each new interaction with what comes under “the object of study”: the far-right actors.

In spite of this, Rex should be given credit, not only for his unmatched frankness and an exceptionally friendly attitude towards a total and possibly suspicious stranger like myself, but also his determination to envisage an alternative sustainable polity. In so many ways, Rex represented everything one would not expect to find in a member of a nationalist organization denoted by the scholarship as the “extreme right”. At the moment of our encounter, Rex seemed to be in flux, regretful of his violent past and aggression towards those he deemed incompatible with his vision of a good society, yet holding on to his somewhat diluted nationalist and racist convictions. In his affection towards the local environment and climate change acceptance, Rex articulated an odd mix of *Völkisch* and traditional progressivism, enabling him to work with, as he once said, “all the spectrums out there”. Whereas this was more difficult to accomplish in practice, he signaled the blurry lines of impermeable conceptual markers and the caveats of rendering ideology as a static configuration. It is exactly these “odd mixes,” the leitmotif for this thesis, forms the conceptual cluster of far-right ecologism.

This far-right ecologism re-emerged as a consequence of the increasing popularity of the far right, paired with the ever-increasing salience of environmental issues and climate change. Nevertheless, environment is still most often on the margins of both far-right and right-wing political agendas. Actually, the contemporary right-wing (and not only right-wing) obsession with economic growth is considered to be in stark opposition with the environmental agenda (see McCright and Dunlap 2000; Ivarsflaten 2008; Krange, Kaltenborn, and Hultman 2018), implying

that the right-wing, and consequently far-right thought, has not much to offer to the contemporary environmental concerns. In times of world leaders such as Jair Bolsonaro or now formerly, Donald Trump, who openly dispute the scientific findings connected to climate change, or the more moderate (albeit no less staunch) conservative politicians closer to the Eastern European context, such as Jarosław Kaczyński or Viktor Orbán, “right-wing ecology” (Olsen 1999) or “far-right ecologism” (Lubarda 2020) may both sound like oxymorons.

Yet, most of the varieties of right-wing ideologies (namely conservatism, fascism, nationalism, and populism) refer to certain aspects of care for the environment. In fact, the very beginnings of the concern for the natural environment point to conservative and even nationalist roots (Ditt 1996; Dobson 2016). The left came relatively late to ecological issues, only after post-war nationalist parties established their own environmental programs (Olsen 1999: 88). Just like some sections of the “extreme right” (New Right or Identitarians, see Willinger 2013), green parties often resort to the problematic “third way” self-identification allegedly going beyond the “bogus left-right division” (Cochrane 2015; Lukacs 2005). As shown in the previous chapter and throughout this thesis, the left-right distinction matters in politics, and this chapter points to the necessity of “zooming out,” ergo understanding the ideational embedding from which a given ideology is derived.

Much like ecofascism, but also eco-socialism, eco-feminism, or green conservatism, the far right adapts its constitutive concepts to the environmental domain, enhancing the morphology of thin-centered ecologism. As will be argued in this chapter, this ideological intersection cannot be simply reduced to the notion of “ecofascism.” To understand how far right values on the natural

environment go beyond ecofascism, this chapter will broaden the scope by exploring the varieties of right-wing ideologies engaging with the environment, namely: conservatism, nationalism, and populism.

Far right and the natural environment: the existing analytical frameworks

So far, numerous efforts have been made to conceptualize the relationship between the various aspects of the far right and environmental thought. Apart from the most established “ecofascism” (see Biehl and Staudenmaier 1995; Zimmerman 1995, 2004; Dyett and Thomas 2019), notions of “Right-wing Ecology” (Olsen 1999, 2000a, b), “Far-Right Ecologism” (Lubarda 2019, 2020) figure together with other, broader terms, such as “Green Nationalism” (Lubarda 2017; Malm and The Zetkin Collective 2021), “eco-nationalism” (Dawson 1996) or “Environmental Populism” (Szasz 1994; Beeson 2019).

Irrespective of the terminology used, the geographical overview of the cases shows that studies of far-right engagement with different aspects of environmental politics are mostly confined to Germany (Jahn and Vehling 1980; Wölk 1992; Ulbricht 1995; Geden 1996; Olsen 1999; Radkau and Uekötter 2003; Bruggemeier et al., 2005; Blackbourn 2006; Uekötter 2006; Linse 2009; Heinrich Boll Stiftung 2012; Forchtner 2019b). However, research touching upon the convergence of the historical far-right and right-wing thinking with the environment has focused on other European countries as well: France (Flipo 2018; François 2021), Latvia and Baltic countries in general (Schwartz 2005; Galbreath 2010; Galbreath and Auers 2010; Lubarda 2017; Timofejevs 2020), Italy (Armiero 2014, Dogliani 2014, van Hardenberg 2014), Russia (Davidov 2015), Spain (Del Arco Blanco and Gorostiza 2021), Sweden (Löow 2002; Szenes 2021), the

United Kingdom (Williams 1999; Reed 2001; More-Collyer 2004; Stone 2004; Conford 2005; Fowler and Jones 2006, 2007), but also in other continents: Australia (Ray and Hall 1995), and the United States (Berlet and Lyons 2000; Rich 2016). The scholarship with regard to disciplines is equally broad: from political science approaches (Olsen 1999; Conversi 2020), sociological analyses (Dawson 1996; Bhatia 2004; Forchtner et al. 2018, Forchtner 2019a,b; Malm and the Zetkin Collective 2021), and environmental histories (Dominick, 1992; Confino 1997; Ditt 2000; Lekan 2004), to biographies of relevant actors (Bramwell 1985; Coupland 2017), and anthropological or ethnographic accounts (Cederlof and Sivaramarkishnan 2005; Snajdr 2008; Teitelbaum 2017).

From this brief overview, it becomes clear that a few dozen works have directly or tangentially addressed different aspects of the far-right ecologist intersection. However, four works are particularly important because of their aim, scope, and findings, conducive to offering an analytical framework for studying prospective empirical cases. One of these works was Jonathan Olsen's (1999) monograph on "right-wing ecology" in Germany. He suggests that the far-right's environmental ideology utilizes the basic tenets of ecology to justify a particular (far right) political vision – defense of small-scale communities and localism against the ravaging forces of global capitalism (Olsen 1999: 4). The right-wing ecology as an ideology and an analytical framework consists of three basic concepts. The first is eco-naturalism, pitted against the Enlightenment ideal of universal humanity, indicating that nature should be a blueprint for the social order. In a similar vein, the second building block of eco-organicism not only treats the "Volk as an eco-system" (Olsen 1999: 60), but envisages human beings as rooted creatures, indissoluble from the

environment in which they dwell. Finally, eco-authoritarianism represents the third, final concept in his framework, calling for a strong central authority as the most suitable for responding to environmental crises.

In spite of its immense contribution to identifying the ideological morphology of the intersection between the far right and environment, Olsen's study also has limitations. Examples include the focus on "right-wing ecology," which obfuscates the predominant focus on the far right, or the year of publishing which could not take into account the very dynamic developments that emerged under the *Populist Zeitgeist* (Mudde 2004) and the mainstreaming of the far right. Finally, another limiting factor is its almost-exclusive focus on Germany and the heritage of the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP), making some reference to other parties in Western Europe (e.g., *Vlaams Belang*) but not to any Eastern European or non-European cases.

The second scholarly work which attempted to conceptualize the relationship between the far right and the environment was Christian Voss's doctoral thesis (2014). Voss's fundamental assertion was that predominantly organic nationalism and romanticism inform its content (or morphology if taken to the level of ideology). This means that far-right thought is fundamentally juxtaposed to the anthropocentric Judeo-Christian worldview (Voss 2014: 22). By expanding Olsen's threefold framework by focusing on concepts such as Mutuality, Holism, and Manicheanism, Voss presents a robust literature review on the history of far-right environmentalism in both party politics and the early Völkisch thought. These strengths of Voss's approach become limitations if looked at from the spectrum of the far right in its entirety. Even though most of that spectrum is heavily informed by the organic, ethnonationalist underpinnings,

excluding the Judeo-Christian tradition means ignoring the vast majority of the Christian far right responsible for mainstreaming this ideology through national conservative and populist credentials. Moreover, Voss's focus on far-right parties instead of other relevant organizations is also characteristic of other analyses – with the exception of the volume edited by Forchtner (2019).

Forchtner's volume presents the most up-to-date analysis of a wide array of empirical cases of this ideological intersection. The focus on 10 European countries and the United States provides an overview of contemporary (and historical) implications of far-right interactions with topics concerning the natural environment. The value of Forchtner's volume is also in pointing to a myriad of topical surrogacies arising as a consequence of far right–environment intersection, such as immigration and reproductive policies, public health, sports, trade, etc. In addition to this, the volume offers a range of disciplinary and methodological approaches: from environmental communication to political science, sociology, and even history. Much as Forchtner attempted to conceptually bring closer these various outlooks, due to the nature of this work, it does not seek to exercise a form of conceptual control by offering a heuristic framework for studying these intersections on its own.

The limitations of these three commendable overviews point to a research gap which this thesis intends to fill. The gap is partly constituted by the onto-epistemological nature, nonetheless acknowledging the “closeness” of the object to the epistemic source – a form of “decolonizing” the knowledge production in Eastern Europe (see Fowkes and Hailbronner 2019).¹⁰ What also

¹⁰ Even though Forchtner's volume had a section on Eastern Europe, none of these works have used the knowledge from Eastern European cases to provide a conceptual framework that seeks to be generalizable.

contributes to the epistemological issue of knowledge-production on this topic is that none of the three main works used ethnographic approaches aiming to resist the "external" nature of far-right studies (see Castelli Gattinara 2019) studying the phenomena from a safe distance. This amplifies the detachment of the analyst being "in the know," losing sight of the agency in developing the causal power of social structures (see Elder-Vass 2010). Another limitation of these studies (somewhat addressed by Forchtner's volume) is yet another flaw of far-right scholarship – the almost exclusive focus on political parties (see Castelli Gattinara 2019). Notwithstanding the relevance and importance of far-right organizations and movements that are not competing for votes on mainstreaming this ideology, their influence needs to be considered. In addition to this, none of these works placed a considerable (and deserving) weight on the role of ideology, often viewing far-right environmentalism as a "pragmatic" indication. Yet, ideology is the most suitable term behind any assessment of how we come about the world of ideas in and with which we operate. Against the backdrop of these limitations in the scholarship, but also in an aim to complement its extraordinary achievements and explorations, the conceptual framework of "Far Right Ecologism" (Lubarda 2020), upon which the content of this chapter is based, seeks to formulate a basis for prospective examinations of the far right and environment.

An unwanted consequence of ignoring the existing literature and analytical frameworks is the popular resort to "ecofascism" as an overarching term, denoting all the cases of far right dealing with the natural environment. This term is undoubtedly important for the most extreme strand of the ideological morphology of FRE. Still, it is not enough to be a stand-alone version of ecologism that accounts for all the far-right engagements with the environment. As the following sections

will show, the far right does not necessarily contain the misanthropic ecofascist vision of the world, nor does the conservative anthropocentrism evident in established far-right parties, correspond to the eco-fascist vision of a man embedded in nature. Acknowledging that "Right-wing ecology" is not the most adequate term in describing the far right because of its obvious differences with the center-right, it is nevertheless important to go beyond ecofascism by looking at the broader right-wing ideological pool. This can be done by looking at how distant forms of ecological conservatism, as well as the "green elements" of ideological frameworks that could potentially operate on both sides of the political spectrum: populism and nationalism, contribute to FRE. But first, this chapter turns to the role of ecofascism in the far-right environmental imaginary and its paramount contribution to the FRE's ideological core.

Ecofascism: the Nazi environmentalists or more?

Probably the first association that comes to mind with the term "ecofascism" is *Blood and soil* (Blut und Boden), a notion that emanated in the 19th-century Völkisch movement in Germany, where it was gradually elevated to the level of the official creed of the NSDAP, as visible in the writings of Walther Darré (Bramwell 1985).¹¹ "Blood and Soil" refer to a complex spiritual, moral, and material interplay of human beings, nature, and the nation – an imaginary of the body-blood, both of an individual and the nation, united with the land in which this national body dwells, and which resonates with Olsen's *eco-naturalism* and *eco-organicism*. The applications of ecofascism appear most lucid with the endorsement of organic farming, one of the most "contentious themes in the existing scholarship on 'green' facets of Nazism" (Staudenmeier 2015: 108-110). Nurturing

¹¹ The Reich Minister of Food and Agriculture from 1933 to 1942

the (home) land organically, allowing Darré and Heinrich Himmler to purport a vitalist view of “agriculture in accordance with the laws of life” (*lebensgesetzlich Landbau*) (Vogt 2007: 22).

These ontological explorations point to mysticism as another feature of ecofascism derived from an attempt to deal with space conceptually. Ecofascist rendition of space seems to move away from the Cartesian equation of space with matter, thus implicitly “occupying the low land of space” (Casey 1996: 20). Of course, it would be far-fetched to claim that ecofascist ontology presupposes the body as the locus of personal experience and the field of localization, as present in the works on feral ecology and feral democracy (see Garside 2013). Unpacking the “Blood and Soil” metaphysics emphasizes mysticism as an important spiritual component of fascist ideology. For Janet Biehl (1995:134), eco-fascist mysticism is an irreconcilable difference between ecofascism and contemporary forms of ecologism – mystical ecology may easily relate to primordial varieties of ethnic nationalism, and the far right does not waste its opportunity to capitalize on such a nexus.

In other words, reviving the conjunction of mysticism, nationalism, and nature will allow for a range of interpretations that make previously discarded ideations more intelligible and appealing. Similarly, the spiritual component is a feature of ecologism more broadly, e.g., the roles of Buddhism and Taoism in shaping the contemporary environmental thought (Capra 1983; Goodman 1980: 73-80; Cheng 1986: 351-70; Spretnak 1991: 33–78; Marshall 1992: 41–53; Nash 1992: 113–16; Palmer 1998: 15-29; Hay 2001: 94-120; Nelson 2009). Hay (2001: 96) argues that the fundamental ecocentric impulses of deep ecology¹² are greatly influenced by Taoism,

¹² Deep ecology is a radical, holistic, and ecocentric environmental philosophy which asserts the inherent value of the natural environment, including all living and non-living beings, calling for a fundamental restructuring of human societies in accordance with this basic principle.

particularly through the conception of the “(larger) self-love” (see Chapter 6). In spite of not living up to its tenets in the practice of the Nazi Behemoth, Völkisch ecofascists were principally ecocentric.

But even though aesthetic, spiritual, and overall cultural motives played a strong role in the German conservation movement from the outset, it would be wrong to equate this early environmentalism with Nazism, let alone to see the roots of environmentalism in the ideology of national-socialism (Uekötter 2006: 8). The complexity of party politics and power relations within a structure as big as the Nazi party in the 1930s may have added interpretations of the term “ecofascism,” but it also contributed to skewing its meaning. This opportunism and tendency to look for alliances based on pragmatism as yet another (and not entirely separate) aspect of ideology (e.g., animal rights rhetoric paired with anti-Semitism) (Uekötter 2006: 55) highlight inconsistency as an essential feature of ecofascism, but also of ideologies in general: its pragmatic, fluid, but also visceral nature, dependent on the contingencies.

Irrespective of these historical debates, the notion of “Blood and Soil,” is not the only addendum of ecofascism to the ecologism of the far right. Much as this coinage captures the essence of ecofascist ideology as it was known in the NSDAP era and embodied in the mixture of utopianism, mysticism, especially the folk-myth and scientific insight, set in place in Nazi Germany (Hay 2001: 184), the term “ecofascism” also came to bear different notable features. One of them is associated with neo-Malthusianism and the fundamentally misanthropic calls to curb the population in order to meet the standards of an ecological polity. These ideas are far from being new, as they evoke Malthusian (1798) principles of population planning in accordance with the

projected future resources. The basic contention of Malthus was that the recipe for catastrophe was the fact that subsistence production's growth was arithmetical, whereas the population growth has been exponential. Although neo-Malthusianism seems to point to a historical trajectory separate of Darwinism, both stem from the very same logic which has been dominant in the early (environmental) sociology, with concepts of "evolution," "natural selection," and "survival" leading the scholarly debate towards biological and geographic determinism (Hannigan 2006: 18).

It is important to note that this logic did not cease with the end of the Second World War. The overpopulation concern was particularly thriving in the 1960s when environmentalism became recognized as a global issue. Many of these doomsayers contested liberal democracy due to its brokerage between competing interests, incapable of addressing the ecologically wrought disaster (Hay 2001: 173). These pessimistic outlooks (e.g., Hardin 1968; Goldsmith 1972; Heilbroner 1974) pointed to the need for urgency and factually exposed a fundamental lack of trust in human beings. To them, the only possible way to prevent environmentally-induced calamities was to establish a central authority with unlimited powers in order to speed up the decision-making process. Certainly, not all of the eco-authoritarians were fascists, but it is impossible to overlook the apparent lack of trust in the capabilities of humans to sufficiently address the environmental crisis. Much as this discourse may now seem to be on the margins of the ecological movement, it is still alive and well in the very logic of policymaking. Chinese "One child policy" or even the problematic framing of the subtly anti-immigrant and neo-colonial "Family Planning Program" by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Dyett and Thomas 2019) are examples of how population planning can be used to evoke neo-Malthusian and ecofascist principles.

Neo-Malthusianism was not the only meeting point of ecofascism and contemporary ecologism. The ecocentrism and spirituality of Deep Ecology served the case of critics, mostly those coming from the followers of Murray Bookchin's Social Ecology (see Biehl 1995), that Deep Ecology and Fascism share common ontological grounds. One of the Social Ecology scholars, Peter Zeegers (2002), suggests that the works of Arne Naess, the intellectual forerunner of deep ecology, can be interlinked with the ethnopluralist teachings elaborated on in the previous chapter. The argument follows that the lack of an explicit stance on the social causes of environmental crisis allows fascism, whose proponents are often willing to change ideological clothes to gain support, to mesh with vaporous slogans about "community" and "humanity's oneness with nature" (see Wall 2000; Zeegers 2002). The main defensive argument of the proponents of deep ecology, most of which locate themselves on the left side of the ideological spectrum, is that such an accusation by social ecologists is not supposed to illuminate the existence of connections between ecofascism and deep ecology, but to smear (Orton 2000). Regardless of one's take on these accusations, deep ecology remains a heavily contested strand of environmental thought.

Another form of contemporary ecologism which came to share certain grounds with ecofascism was bioregionalism, particularly that of the French school of geography and geopolitics in the early 20th century (e.g., Vidal de la Blanche and Jean Brunhes). The essence of bioregionalism appropriated by ecofascists is in treating regions as living organisms (see Gasman 1971). Indeed, ecology can easily be adjusted to the xenophobic agenda of ethnopluralism – self-sufficient and autarkic regions. Conceptions of a region as one's homeland can be perverted into a nationalist regionalism when a region's traditions and language are mystically tied to an "ancestral"

landscape (Biehl 1995: 34). To Olsen (2000), this symbolic interplay generates a weighty relationship between bioregionalism and right-wing ecology (he does not use the term "ecofascism"). The core difference found between the two is the devotion of bioregionalists to democratic principles and not identifying bioregional communities with nation-state or national borders (Olsen 2000: 75). The synthesis of naturalism and nationalism also coming from Blood and Soil (though not only) was forged under the influence of the anti-enlightenment traditionalism, disparaging Christianity, capitalism, economic utilitarianism, hyper-consumption, and progress (Staudenmeier 1995: 5-6). These ecofascist tendencies were, albeit in a subtler manner, gradually linked with people's dissatisfaction with the degradation of the environment and existing livelihoods, obviously lacking reference to fascist ideological credentials.

The startling intersections between fascist ideology and ecologism, most notably through the cases of neo-Malthusianism, Deep Ecology and Bioregionalism, point to how such seemingly outdated ideological amalgamations may influence contemporary ecologism. Although they differ from a heavily scientific discourse of contemporary environmentalism, which emerged in the 1960s (Hay 2001: 173), the authoritarian tendencies continuously shadowed the ecological impetus, thinly veiled under the purported need to protect the environment from harmful human influence. At the same time, the ecofascist Naturalist-Organicist nexus paired with distinctive spiritualism, epitomized in the notion of the "Blood and Soil," does not sufficiently encapsulate the conceptual pool from which far-right ecologism derives its morphology. Its ecocentric reading visible in contemporary ecofascist movements (most of which are situated on the alt-Right or the extreme right) does not correspond to some of the anthropocentric tenets of Christian ecology. By

looking at the intersection of conservative political thought and ecological concern, it is possible to identify these anthropocentric strands of these ideo-political assemblages.

Conservatism and ecology: local identities as historical loyalties?

While ecofascism is, without doubt, contributing to much of the far-right ideological positioning on the environment, it is considerably limited in explaining the anthropocentric portion of ecologism on the far right. This is why an analysis of far-right ecologism's morphology needs to move from the spectrum of the far right towards the center, hence examine the conservative contribution. Much like the far right, conservatism is a broad church, comprising both contextual specificities (e.g., free-market neo-cons in the United States or national conservatives in Hungary and Poland) and ideological variations (paternalistic conservatism, neoliberal conservatism, Christian democracy). Although ecofascism has its roots in the Völkisch tradition, the pioneer eco-philosophy was deeply entrenched in the conservative political tradition, oriented around the value of personal responsibility and stewardship of nature. Eckersley (1992: 21) argued that "leftists failed to observe that certain political tributaries in the contemporary eco-political thought had irrefutably conservative sources." Indeed, many conservative intellectuals since the 18th century idealized the rural world as untouched and pristine, juxtaposed to the moral decay inflicted by the process of modernization. Such nostalgic ideas were rooted in natural beauty aesthetics, resembling the "national cultural heritage" (Ditt 1996: 23-24).

The idea of environment/nature as heritage indeed resonates with conservative political thought. Heritage entails three important presumptions which are indispensable to both ecologism and conservatism. The first is that of continuity: valuing environment or political order both require

recognizing its presence over a prolonged historical period. Unlike liberal and socialist understandings of identity as socially defined, conservatives emphasize the temporal dimension – the generations that were here and that are yet to come (Pillbeam 2003: 500). The second is the imaginary balance or equilibrium existing in such a solidified understanding of the heritage. These understandings of equilibrium are usually devoid of Darwinian zero-sum-game interpretations, instead of placing an emphasis on communal wisdom and responsibility (Burke 1968: 119). The third is the foreseeable sense of nostalgia arising as a consequence of the imperfect upholding of the political values of this heritage. Nostalgia taps into traditionalism, which feeds into the organicist principle of nature and the nation being a part of the indivisible whole instead of looking at "mechanical aggregates" (Quinton 1978: 16). The naturalist sentiment: looking up to the natural world to address the issues in the social is also pronounced in conservatism, which is why societal change should mirror the speed of changes in the natural world (see Scruton 2001).

A practical way in which the conservative concept of heritage and community is brought into green theory is through the notion of environmental stewardship, implicit also in the works of the most famous historical conservative thinkers, Edmund Burke and Michael Oakshott (Ujj 2013), but also some more recent conservative philosophers, such as Roger Scruton. Scruton is particularly known for developing the concept of *oikophilia* - the love of the Oikos, "not only the home but the people contained in it, the surrounding settlements that endow that home" (Scruton 2012: 25, 227). Loving "home" and having deep feelings towards it represents a custodian blueprint for a conservative society, predominantly through small, autarkic communities organized by the principles of the free market. Scruton's extensive discussion of, e.g., permaculture or low-

carbon communities, links the abstract value of protecting heritage with specific proposals of how a conservative (Scr)utopia (the title of Scruton's summer school) can be envisaged. What also makes this and other forms of conservative environmentalism appealing to a wider electorate is the anthropocentric nature of oikophilia.¹³ When conservatives pay tribute to tradition and the idyllic landscapes, they principally bemoan the cultural, hence human practices and the visions of community that no longer exist (Dobson 2000: 175-176). This is why conservatism falls neatly with the Judeo-Christian perspective which mostly perceives human beings as stewards of nature. As seen in the case of ecofascism, another important and common feature of conservatism and the (non-populist) far right is the pessimism of human capability, at odds with the Enlightenment belief in incessant human progress.

Despite the extensive criticism of his work (though not oikophilia), mostly due to his scandalous public appearances bearing racist connotations (Guardian, 04/26/2019), Scruton could hardly be labeled a "far-right thinker". His criticism of ecofascism, based on the "collectivist turn" and the "nationalist frenzy" (Scruton 2013: 25), leaves scarce space for the argument of Scruton endorsing FRE. Certainly, "the love of home" can be turned into an exclusionary principle: using established criticisms towards commercializing heritage to have a go at those who do not have ownership over that heritage, to discontent with the outsiders tarnishing the idyllic image of the home. While it relies on some form of authority and order, proponents of ecological conservatism are not yearning for a green dictator or an ethnonationalist utopia.

¹³ For forms of biocentric/ecocentric conservative environmentalism, see Porritt (1984).

Closely related to order, another concept particularly useful for understanding the intersection of conservatism with ecologism is that of limits. The decontestation of this concept points not necessarily to the need to "conserve," ingrained in the very name of this ideology, but to "preserve" through defining the boundaries of a possible and desirable change (see O'Sullivan 1976). Here, another notion is particularly helpful in the process of decontestation: that of prudence, which implies tempering of the imperfect and adamant human desires to dominate nature (Bliese 1996; Pilbeam 2003: 493). Prudence and limits in conservatism also espouse a strong anti-capitalist sentiment (albeit not visible in the works of e.g., Scruton) which is constitutive of most ecologisms, given the causal relationship between capitalism and environmental degradation. Prudence can also take an authoritarian strand, particularly noticeable in the early phase of the contemporary environmental movement. At that time, nature conservationists prominent in the green thought of the 20th century were operating on the fringe of that broader movement in the 1960s, which did not prevent them from becoming proponents of eco-authoritarian, neo-Malthusian ideations.

The neo-con offshoot from the late 1970s also brought on board conservative environmentalists advocating for the marketization of the environmental crisis, e.g., through internalizing pollution costs or giving prevalence to entrepreneurial solutions (Bennet and Block 1991; Anderson and Leal 2001; Austin and Phoenix 2005; Jacques et al., 2008; Tranter 2017). The fundamental idea behind free-market conservatism is the belief in the culture of entrepreneurship as being the "natural" (hence, invoking a decontestation of "naturalism") condition of humankind. Consequently, these natural conditions are epitomized in the idea of property rights and the

common law, which would ideally reduce the externalities of environmental degradation. These strands of conservatism are particularly prominent in the United States – still, it is worth noting that many American conservative politicians and thinkers were among the most vocal environmentalists (Farber 2017).

Although some far-right parties (among other things, Polish Ruch Narodowy, see Ch. 3) cooperate with libertarian parties purporting free-market environmentalism (KORWiN), such stances are fundamentally at odds with far-right values. However, a closer look at the strengths and weaknesses of this form of environmentalism, both derived from the instrumental outlook on nature, point to how the far right may profit from pursuing a neo-con environmentalist agenda. Obviously, neo-con environmentalism is also at odds with the basic tenets of far-right ideology, given the distance of the former from the concept of (ethno)state. Conservatives (especially the American neo-cons) have generally preferred the label "environmentalism" over "ecologism" in self-ascriptions, although this does not tell much about the content of their claims, which spanned from both "shallow" and "deep" ecologism (Pilbeam 2003: 491). At the same time, it is exactly the "shallow" approach of free-market conservatives that brings people on board. It potentiates a form of ecological thinking that is not articulated as a zero-sum game that would require recasting economic relations.

Overall, conservatism can hardly be compatible with the core values of the ecologist agenda and, as a consequence of this, conservative ecologism is relatively insignificant even today (Flipo 2018: 210). The egalitarian ethos of ecologism is at odds with conservatism's inclination towards order and authority or "natural aristocracy" which seems irreconcilable in advancing

towards a radical form of politics generally assumed by ecologism (Eckersley 1992: 22). Moreover, the vast majority of conservatives are still more interested in the “productivist status quo” rather than the disruptions that may arise from advancing an ecologist agenda (Dobson 2000: 178). However, the conservative contribution to environmental thought through the concepts of authority as tradition, autarky as the “love of home,” the “spirit of restraint and sobriety” towards nature (Flipo 2018: 2021) and the respect and responsibility for the environmental (as cultural) heritage of the previous and future generations, defines conservative morphology as potentially useful for any form of ecologism. Conservatism and fascism are “thick-centered” ideologies with a distinguishable ideological core, and thus it is not surprising that they have the power of influencing or even swaying both the core and the periphery of far-right ecologism. Ideologies with a thinner substance and a narrow core, such as nationalism and populism, cannot supersede the ecologist core. What they can, however, is buttress the (far-right) ecologist periphery.

Nationalism and populism: enhancing the perimeter

Nationalism and populism are certainly not at the top of the list of ideologies associated with a desire to advance “the environmental agenda”. Yet, the profound conceptual relationship between these ideologies and the environment is continuously overlooked. Again, this link is either reduced to ecofascism (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Bhatia 2004), ignoring not only the contextual history (such as that of the post-socialist realms, see Hamilton 2002) but also the lengthy tendency of both social and natural sciences to think of nature through metaphors of “national containers” (see Trigger et al., 2008).

Nevertheless, nationalism and environment have a long historical record, as the impact of the historical, eco-nationalist convergence on environmental politics has been noted by several authors (Marshall 1996; Dawson 2000; Hamilton 2002; Fowler et al. 2005; Carter 2013). The term ecological (eco) nationalism was coined by Jane Dawson (1996) in her illustrious study of anti-nuclear movements in the Soviet Union, when the reforms of *glasnost* and *perestroika* were utilized to conceal the claims for national independence behind environmental protests. Even though ecological issues were high on the political agenda due to increasing pollution and nuclear incidents (Chernobyl) at the time, Dawson contends that they had little relevance in people's everyday life. In fact, the movement surrogacy enabled nationalists to embrace “green slogans” (Galbreath 2010: 9). By understanding the nature-nation nexus as purely instrumental in the political strategy of these movements, Dawson’s monograph failed to encapsulate the depth of the historical relationship between people and landscapes.

From this perspective, eco-nationalism denotes a wider environmental justice movement with emancipatory potential. Hence, such movements are hardly associated with the exclusionary politics of far-right ethnonationalism. In this vein, an environmentalist form of nationalism was thought to “harness the legitimate dissatisfaction to carry the massive transition towards environmentally sustainable civilization” (Garre 1995: 144). As the case of bioregionalism has shown, “national sustainability” can also refer to regional nationhood (Jones and Ross 2016), where environmentalism presents a useful political opportunity for liberal nationalist movements, such as those in Scotland or the Basque Country (Conversi and Hau forthcoming). What becomes problematic though is the ethos of the group; while it can be inferred that eco-nationalist

movements claim to represent the rights of the underprivileged, the political nature of eco-nationalism asserts the importance of political community embodied in the national struggle for a safe environment.

Relating a "national" political community to particular subjectivities affected by an oppressive system (neoliberalism or communism) allows the far right to assert a Manichean battle against the encroachments of the outsiders. Nationalism relies on territory (Fatherland, Home Country, or Native Soil), through connecting distinct peoples in distinct spaces (Smith 1991). Cederlof and Sivaramakrishnan (2005:8) argue that ecological nationalism is mostly, though not always, a reaction to the predatory state or to "global encroachments on the life and livelihoods of communities being marginalized by such an expansion". For them, the landscape is a place for contested identities, and its degradation adds a considerable value to the object of appreciation (Cederlof and Sivaramakrishnan 2005: 9). This did not prevent some from criticizing the extension of this logic to the environmental sphere – Galbreath (2010) notes that environmentalism and nationalism constitute a tenuous relationship, while de-Shalit (2006: 82) provides a critique of eco-nationalism on the basis of the problematic argumentation. For instance, nationalists' historical endorsement of ruralism can be problematic for current endeavors to "mainstream" environmentalism which has a strong footing in urban areas.¹⁴ In addition, the concept of sovereignty juxtaposes the political and ecological conception of borders: still, this can be overcome by different forms of bioregionalism (de-Shalit 2006: 83).

¹⁴ However, this is a questionable point, given the constant popularity of "back to the land," neo-ruralist economies and movements.

One of the most elaborated analytical frameworks for studying eco-nationalism as a discourse was made by Forchtner and Kølvråa (2015), consisting of an aesthetic, symbolic, and material dimension of nature in nationalistic discourses. The aesthetic dimension of nature in nationalism regards the former in a manner similar to Scruton and green conservatives: pristine and unspoiled nature, which should be reserved only for the local/national residents to enjoy and nurture (Forchtner and Kølvråa 2015: 204). The symbolic aspect relates to modernity's constitutive division between the universal and particular, but more specifically (and poignantly), the blurred borderline between nature and culture: what distinguishes “our” nature from that of others (Forchtner and Kølvråa 2015: 204-5). The material element of this threefold distinction focuses on the domain of “rational”: monuments, ruins, and historical sites not only connote a historical link between the nation and the land (Forchtner and Kølvråa 2015: 207) but are often used as an opportunity for various forms of tourism (Schwartz 2005), hence a resource. Consequently, such understandings resonate well with more tangible and less abstract goals.

The key idea of eco-nationalism, be it expressed through symbolic, material, or aesthetic form, is the idea of “state sustainability,” a society harmonious with nature achieved within the borders of a nation-state. As such, it has been particularly popular among ethnic nationalists today, including the former president of the far-right British National Party, Nick Griffin (Griffin 2008: 5). What this “national thinking” and “state sustainability,” contribute to, is the framing of the “native” and “alien” species, essential to ecosystem management (Antonisch 2021: 1-2, see also Chapter 5). Far-right nationalism relies on a naturalistic vision of ethno-pluralism (Willinger 2013), a firm belief that human cultures are unique and distinctive and that such a difference should

be expressed politically. The nativism in the environmental sphere is most visible in relating immigration with environmental degradation (Neumayer 2006: 204-7; Faris 2009; Turner and Bailey forthcoming): seeing nature as an eco-system and a self-sufficient container.

Thus, the fundamental addition of eco-nationalism to the ideological morphology of FRE is operationalizing the division between the nature that is in and out. As such, eco-nationalism can be utilized to augment the Manichean sentiments against the “polluting outsiders” (Lubarda 2017), but also to imply the organicist and naturalist wholeness of the nation and its nature. Similarly, the appreciation of pristine landscapes and “oikophilic” sentiments can be a call for increasing both personal and collective responsibility towards the land, which may also lead to harnessing a strong spiritual sentiment. In spite of its numerous perils, such a logic implicitly underpins the framework of international negotiations and environmental politics – the fact that it is not regional bodies that commit to climate change agreements or protection of the rivers, but nation-states.

The populist contribution to FRE rests on the definitional ambiguities of the former (Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Canovan 1981; Taggart 2000; Laclau 2005; Mudde 2007; Stanley 2008; Freeden 2017; Muller 2017; Elmgren 2018). As shown in the previous chapter, the common core of right-wing populism, be it an ideology, a strategy, or a style of political communication, is the monistic outlook on the “people,” paired with the tendency to monopolize national memory for the sake of developing “conservative anxiety” towards the possibility of change. Regardless of the specific elements that can be attributed to populism, its conceptual incongruities have mirrored the analyses of populist infringement in environmental politics. Lockwood (2018) argues that right-wing populism is generally compatible with climate skepticism on two following

dimensions: structural (the “little man” being overwhelmed by regulations imposed due to combating climate change, see “Reclaiming space” code in Appendix 4), and ideological (the cosmopolitan nature of environmental thought, also Forchtner et al. 2018: 592). Right-wing populist hostility to environmentalism and ecologism as an ideological framework has been observed by other authors as well (Carvalho 2007; Capstick and Pidgeon 2014; Painter and Gavin 2016; Freeden 2017: 3; Forchtner et al. 2018). The justifications for such stance are numerous, spanning from framing environmentalism as an obstacle to economic growth and the livelihoods of the ordinary people to a more fine-grained ideological disdain for global-oriented environmentalism, mostly aimed at mitigating climate change (see Gemenis et al. 2012).

Nonetheless, there is also another side of the populist-ecologist intersection. Much like Dawson’s use of the term eco-nationalism, the terms “eco-populism” (Szasz 1994) and “environmental populism” (Beeson 2019) refer to an environmental justice movement that is standing up for the underprivileged. Such movements entail a broad front of response to either a particular set of ecological issues (in Szasz’s case) or the global ecological crisis (in Beeson’s). This populism is articulated as a bottom-up “movement of dissent, by ordinary people working at the local level, from the dominant ideologies of modernization, development, and growth.” (Garavan 2007; Buzogány and Mohamad-Klotzbach forthcoming). The grassroots nature of such movements and the involvement of marginalized groups (or groups that self-register as “marginalized” or “endangered”) points to the potential for radical change, going beyond NIMBY (not-in-my-back-yard) initiatives. The spontaneous nature of these movements, often focusing on a single issue, is characterized by an untroubled eclecticism, “coexistence of multiple symbols

[which] have little in common except that they can be mobilized to legitimate a position of radical critique and activism" (Szasz 1994: 81).

The meeting point of ecologism and populism can be made potentially applicable to FRE morphology through Manicheanism: opposition to “environmental elites” and neoliberal privatization schemes that challenge or alter people’s livelihoods, traditions, and nature (see Bosworth 2020). In this sense, eco-populism refers to the ideology of those who "know nature through hunting, fishing, and trapping and who strongly oppose the neoliberal patterns, and who constitute a powerful force in environmental politics in many parts of the world." (Haggerty 2007: 235). This binary vision articulated through hostility to neoliberalism is shared not only by both left and right-wing populisms but also other ideologies (eco-socialism, etc.), although proposals for solutions are noticeably different.¹⁵

Both ecological nationalism and green populism can be concomitants of far-right, authoritarian environmentalism. Yet, the existence of a left variant of populism also invokes the distinction between liberal and ethnic nationalisms. What these debates ultimately boil down to, are the normative questions of a potentially acceptable form of nationalism/populism. The autarkic

¹⁵ This heterogeneity led some of the ecological thinkers to promote populism as a desirable ideological framework for expressing concerns related to the environment. Van Jones (2008:98) juxtaposes eco-populism to “eco-elitism,” claiming that the former would always foreground those green solutions that can improve ordinary people's standard of living, simultaneously decreasing the cost of living. This is in line with Mouffe’s (2018) vision of progressive populism against multinational corporations or elites/oligarchs (see also Bosworth 2020). From a normative perspective, there is also a sharp opposition to this trend. Likewise, Jones (2020) presupposes "green populism" as a positive, participatory manifestation of environmental care. To Antal (2017), while populism can enhance the efforts to reach environmental justice, it is important to discern tendencies within such a process that may lead to "elitist populism,” detrimental to the issues of social justice (e.g., Roma communities). The paradoxical convergence of populism and elitism, particularly in the upsurge of right-wing populism in the post-socialist world, has also been noted by other authors (Enyedi 2016).

element of both populism and nationalism is also visible in the contemporary (both left and right) variety of this ideology, as visible in the calls for self-sustainability and independence in resource management. Unlike eco-nationalism, which may contain both human-centered and "eco-centric" ontologies, green populism is exclusively anthropocentric: the "people" are the ones in danger, the ones that need to be protected. This tension traverses through the morphology of FRE but nonetheless points to the fundamental concepts shared by these different ideologies and ideological varieties.

Summary

This chapter served to tap into the lengthy ideological relationship between the far right and environment, a relationship that is, paradoxically, older than the far right itself. Rooted in "green romanticism" (Dryzek 1997) but developing with increasing complexity, FRE derives its ideological morphology from the broader strands of right-wing thought, including fascism, conservatism, nationalism, and populism. From the eco-fascist synthesis of naturalism, organicism, and mysticism to populist Manicheanism and the nationalist autarky, a conservative penchant for order and authority or spiritual sentiments towards the environment, the ideological morphology of FRE is a much broader church than it may initially seem. It also cautions against simplistic equations of FRE only with ecofascism, characteristic of a much broader alarmist tendency to resort to fascism whenever referring to the entire populist or ethnonationalist spectrum. From what could be seen in this chapter, ecofascism does inform the ideological core of FRE, particularly through the emphasis on "Blood and Soil," but it is important to also take into account the values appropriated from other right-wing ideologies. Although these values form an

ideological cluster, they are not devoid of internal tensions and idiosyncrasies. Thus, the concepts of "responsibility" and "the love of home" could be taken to refer to social ecology, eco-socialism, or even other, non-ecologist ideological variants. This is important, all the more so because it allows the proponents of far-right ecologism to linger in the arena of environmental politics without disclosing their dominant ideological attachment.

Chapter 3 – The Far Right in Hungary and Poland

Introduction: a “pathological normalcy” or...?

In Eastern Bloc democracy just doesn't work. Because of their historical background, people are easy to be manipulated, and it's very hard to make democracy work. So in this case, democracy would be good in a society which is 100% interested and engaged with topics. But just watching TV or voting once a year is not enough to grant the right to vote to stupid people. In terms of nature, it's not very good. I would like the idea of a strong central authority, not 100% authoritarian, but more central authority – yes. Maciej, MW, 07/06/2019

The act of “naturalizing” authoritarianism in Eastern Europe (EE) on the grounds of the political culture, livelihoods or some biologist features of the people is undoubtedly simplistic and fatalistic. Yet, it also speaks volumes not only to the far-right ideologues who eagerly embrace it, but the decaying faith in liberal-democratic procedures. For this reason, Maciej, a worker in the retail sector and a member of the Warsaw branch of MW, should not be blamed for not buying into the liberal democracy that has let him down way too many times in his own country. Having the experience of working in logistics, he has already experienced the blissful irritation of working with people, but even more importantly, the perks of the free trade that he also wishes to dismantle through the political movement he is a part of. These gaps in logic were not only characteristic of Maciej, but of the pervasive historical and ontological experience of existing in the semi-periphery, as a rule replete with contradictions and idiosyncrasies.

This all is not to argue that it is impossible to draw generalizations on the far right in Europe or the far right overall, for that matter. What the study of EE far right (ecologism) necessitates, as will be argued in this chapter, is a slight re-centering of the established findings in the scholarship, through “alternative [European] modernities” (Cooper 2005). One of these established, albeit generally contextualized accounts on the far right in Hungary and Poland commences with the post-socialist era. The uneasy history of the Second World War collaborationist movements in the EE was not only a consequence of sheer pragmatism in siding with the then-stronger force of the Axis powers. Instead, the war provided a playing field for a myriad of prewar, often fringe far-right actors to realize their political fantasies. In an ideology that places considerable value upon concepts such as “history” and “tradition,” understanding the contributions of and deviations from the prewar tradition to contemporary far-right stances prevents mystifying or simplifying this ideology, such as viewing it as yet another aberration from liberal democracy.

An unwanted consequence of examining the far right vis-à-vis these established and venerated norms of not only liberal democracy but also political liberalism is the portrayal of the “normal pathology” (Scheuch and Klingemann 1967: 18) of democratic systems (Mudde 2019: 102). In opposition to such accounts, Mudde (2010, 2019: 102) and others rightfully recognize that the far right has become a “pathological normalcy,” being mainstreamed and causing an overall radicalization of the political spectrum. What this means is that the line between the far right and the “mainstream,” conservative, liberal, social-democrats, and now greens has become ever murkier, meaning that distinguishing between the “far right” and other actors (e.g., conservative) is difficult. Nowhere has this ambivalence been more clearly established than in Hungary and

Poland, the two countries that have been among the pioneers of an illiberal, populist form of democracy. The ruling Fidesz in Hungary or The Law and Justice Party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) often use the far right in opposition to assert the "moderate" nature of their ideology. These often banal and ultimately combative endeavors of ruling populists overshadow their institutional encroachments, simultaneously revealing a striking ideological shallowness in a departure from historical "national conservatism".

With this subtle yet pervasive tension in Hungarian and Polish politics, this chapter intends to map out the far-right spectrum and its flagbearers in the two countries. In doing so, the chapter will first identify the "points of departure" or contextual ideological adjacencies – cleavages that assist in mapping the main actors, but also the broader, postsocialist and Eastern European settings in which these organizations operate. For the sake of easier identification of a plethora of organizations appearing in this thesis, the chapter will then follow a modular approach. First, examining the historical context and contemporary organizations in Hungary and Poland, followed by an overview of the historical developments and current map of the far-right actors in each country.

Commonalities as points of departure

Most of the analyses of the far right commence with an overview of fascist and populist movements founded after the First World War (see Camous and Lebourg 2017; Mudde 2018). Traces of far-right ideology and activism can be identified even before the interwar period, through the complex development of ethnonationalist exclusion impossible to sufficiently review in this chapter. What is possible to achieve, though, is isolating a few interrelated elements from the

exhaustive list of factors that contributed to the rise of the far right. As shown in Chapter 1, the far right and fascism both originated amid a crisis that beset liberalism in Europe, effectually acquiring significance only after The First World War (Lacko 1996: 111). Blinkhorn (2000:43) identifies three main factors contributing to the emergence of fascist and far right movements in interwar Central and Eastern Europe: the redrawing of the international map that spurred a wave of irredentism, the widespread left-wing revolution in the countries close to the Soviet Union, as well as the hardships associated with the then-emerging liberal democratic political order, especially after the crisis of 1929, which signaled the inner tensions within the system.

An important socio-cultural cleavage in EE that was paramount to the rise of the far right was the one commonly articulated in a rift between “urbanists” and “populists” (Esbenschade 2014: 177-180; Toomey 2018: 95-96;), or “traditionalists” and “modernizers” (Agh 2001: 41). In spite of their simplicity, these distinctions allow for grasping how the far-right capitalized on the ideologically-eclectic history of rural populism. In both Hungary and Poland, populist movements became prominent even by the end of the 19th century, conditioned by the issues of land scarcity, but also notably different political circumstances. The common thread was the emancipatory impetus of liberal nationalism, which, according to the established historical account, transmuted into a mass, ethnic enmity towards outsiders. Just like the populist element, the emergence of socialism uprooted Christian and predominantly middle-class nationalism (Borbándi 1983), the latter often turning out to be the dominant regime ideology in both Hungary and Poland. This casts light not only on the role of religion but also on the often-ambivalent position of the state towards the far right (Mareš and Stojár 2012: 160).

The role of Christianity in framing the struggle for independence and devising the “regime” ideology can hardly be overstated. Unlike virtually monolithic allegiance to Roman Catholicism by Polish nationalists (with an insignificant neo-pagan minority), the Hungarian far right is torn between a Roman Catholic majority and a protestant, mostly Calvinist minority. The concern of the late 19th century Catholic Church with a moral vacuum of a secular state has been a pertinent concern of the far right ever since its inception. The far right in Hungary and Poland was also heavily informed by the "Cultural war" or "The imminent civil war of belief" (Heinebrink 2006: 77) taking place in the late 19th century between liberals and the emerging radical-right offspring of the conservatives. Christianity was used as a backdrop against which the other, secular state was conceived, unambiguously pointing to yet another offspring of the ethnic nationalism in EE – antisemitism.

The attempts to enforce a cultural cohesion pitted the "Christian-national" middle class to the "Jewish" counterpart (for Poland, see Porter 2000). As a rule, the former signified a "pure-blooded" nature or, as Ferenc Szálasi, the leader of the Hungarian fascist Arrow-Cross Party, said – *talajgyőkeres* ("has its roots in the soil") (Karsai 1999: 134). Obviously, the historical developments and key events of antisemitism in Hungary and Poland vary, though they were commonly framed under an emancipatory guise. This is hardly a deviation of the liberal nationalist trajectory, but a consequence of the changing political circumstances. In Hungary, the debates on the Christian profile of the nation after 1919 came to bear conspicuously vitriolic features, integrating even the established notions of race and organicism to the mishmash of Hungarian exceptionalism (Hanebrink 2006: 8). In Poland, antisemitism was carried by the lower ranks of the

Catholic clergy and aimed at German Jews who represented the threat of cultural hegemony (Neumann 1966: 122). While it is impossible to examine this in greater detail in this chapter or the thesis, assuming the responsibility of Christianity as a religion for antisemitism or, even worse, the Holocaust, is doomed to produce meager interpretations.¹⁶ Be that as it may, these often unordered elements heavily influenced the advent of far-right organizations in the aftermath of the Great War.

Before delving into the historical themes that inform the Hungarian far right, it is important to outline a few contextual and language-related disclaimers. The term "far right" is not commonly used in the Hungarian (or Polish) language. Instead, the notions commonly found in the literature denoting the far right rather accentuate its "radical" or simply "right" nature. Thus, the name "right radicals" in Hungary was used to denote those elements which contributed to the emergence of a total of 101 semi-secret nationalist societies by 1920 (Macartney 1957: 1-30). In accordance with their scope and ideological positions, these societies can be divided into two main clusters: the conservatives and revolutionaries (Payne 1995: 132), analogous to the radical vs. extreme right demarcation nowadays explained in Chapter 1.

Far right in Hungary: living with Trianon

¹⁶ Firstly, this is due to the palpable contextual differences, such as the notably different ways in which particular denominations (e.g., Catholics, Calvinists, and Lutherans in Hungary) articulated nationalism (see Hanebrink 2006). Secondly, religion (and its misuse) was only one of the factors that contributed to the rise of antisemitism, together with the dominant and deeply embedded conjugation of organicism and social Darwinism and the perception of the "civilizing process" as a justification for, among other things, conjoining violence and ethics and administering cruelty (see the work of Norbert Elias).

Parsing out the distinctive epochs of the Hungarian, or any other Eastern European far right will usually end in devising the standard trichotomy of interwar, (the virtually non-existent) socialist, and the post-socialist era. The interwar period was marked by the emerging and pervasive sentiment of a "rebirth," following the establishment of independent states and Hungary and Poland after the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian, German, and (de facto) Russian monarchies after the First World War. This was paired with the unfettered belief in the cosmic loneliness (particularly in the Hungarian case) and the uniqueness of the national struggle. The first proto-fascist interwar organization in Hungary, founded in 1919, was called "The Szeged Idea" (*A szegedi gondola*). The Szegedists were formed in opposition to the communists led by Béla Kun (Mann 2004: 240), defending the calling for retrieval of lost lands after the defeat in the First World War, officially sealed with the Treaty of Trianon of 1920. The counterrevolutionaries pledged to reestablish the authentic, Christian Hungary as opposed to the Budapest-populated Jewry believed to have caused the Trianon injustice committed to the Hungarians. The Szeged far right was not a single organization, let alone a mass movement, but a network of individuals and groups admiring, among others, the Italian fascist regime, with the chief aim to nudge the system to a more extreme direction (Blinkhorn 2000: 46).

The party that emerged as the successor of the Szeged Idea in 1923 was the Party of National Independence (*Magyar Nemzeti Függetlenségi Párt*), a racist political party led by Gyula Gömbös (who was later to become Prime Minister under Miklós Horthy). Horthy's semi-authoritarian regime and the conservative counterrevolution after the failure of Kun's rebellion (which briefly established "The Hungarian Soviet Republic" in 1919) is of extraordinary

importance for understanding the extent to which the left was marginalized. The fact that Gömbös was appointed by Horthy in 1932, hence during the economic crisis as a response to the increasing pressure by the far-right electorate, encapsulates the tenuous relationship between the dominant conservatives and the radical right.

It was the crisis that allowed the crescendo of right radicalism and its eventual transformation into a consolidated fascist party. The main interwar fascist organization in Hungary was The Arrow Cross Party (*Nyilaskeresztes Párt*), initially a coalition of far-right groups, founded in 1939 by Ferenc Szálasi. A former officer in the Hungarian army, Szálasi's influence on the Hungarian far right can hardly be overstated. It was his idea of "Hungarism," the dream of "uniting the peoples of the "Great Carpathian-Danubian Fatherland" with the peoples from Ruthenia to the Adriatic, that constructed a still vivid imaginary of a kingdom where the Magyars would be dominant (as the chosen people), but not exclusive" (Weber 1964: 92). The pathway to the realization of such a revisionist plan entailed gaining power through constitutional means, though "against the parliamentary parties which did not derive their power from the will of people through the elections" (Weber 1964: 62).

Szálasi's revolutionary program brought wariness from the conservatives and the regent Horthy, which meant that Szálasi was largely confined to a modest, indirect form of influence: something the Hungarian radical right is well-known for even as of 2021. His dream of Hungarism seemed to be coming true in 1944 when the Nazis overthrew Horthy and installed a puppet government led by Szálasi, which organized systematic pogroms of Hungarian Jews. Szálasi's rule and the dream of a great Hungarian state did not last for too long though – he was ousted by the

communists and executed in 1946 for high treason. The Communist era silenced the far right in Hungary, though it later became clear that its elements had an important influence in the uprising of 1956.¹⁷ Only with the alleviation of the political pressure under János Kádár's "goulash communism" in the 1980s did the space for reviving the far right open.

The framing of the “far-right revival” in the 1990s was incredibly potent, even if not unprecedented following different epochs of Hungarian history which were similarly termed. This “revival” was not only associated with the alleviation of the political pressure following the transition, but also with the impression that the transition itself was not as cathartic as in some of the other countries of the Eastern bloc (e.g., Czechoslovakia). The perspective of a “stolen transition” was commonly voiced in both Hungary (Krekó and Mayer 2016: 182-186) and Poland (Lipiński 2012), where this process has been viewed as being carried out “from within – the chameleonic socialist elite” and not “the people” (Schmidt-Schweizer 2007: 422). It is not surprising that such framings only amplified the existing populist sentiments, nurtured by the decades of both the socialist and the Horthy regimes. The well-established antisemitic interpretations of the transition serving the interests of foreign capital (Jews) swiftly became popular. The current forms of the Hungarian far right, even with the inclusion of the right-populist Fidesz, can be connected to the popular-national (*népi-nemzeti*) opposition within or on the fringes of the Communist Party, advocating for the values of “people and the nation” (Murer 2015: 81).

¹⁷ One of the icons of the uprising known for fierce clashes with Soviet troops at the Corvin Square in Budapest, Gergely Pongráz, returned to Hungary after the fall of communism, and was among the founders of Jobbik in 2003, two years before his death.

The most prominent leader of the late communist and early transition period from the radical right was undoubtedly István Csurka, Hungarian novelist, playwright, and then a member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF). In 1993, Csurka was expelled from MDF for his overtly radical views and antisemitic scandals, eventually founding a new party, called Hungarian Justice and Life Party (*Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja*; henceforth MIÉP). The core of MIÉP's political program was based on "folkish radicalism" (Barany 1994), invoking some of the (very disturbing) interwar frames of the "Hungary for Hungarians". A number of short-lived organizations founded in parallel with MIÉP in the 1990s were the Hungarian National Front Line, Jozsef Torgyan's Independent Smallholders' and Civic Party (Braun 1997: 202) or the Hungarian Welfare Alliance (MNSZ). As compared to contemporary standards set up by Jobbik and especially Fidesz, MIÉP's electoral results were considerably less successful, peaking with 5.5% of votes and winning 14 seats in the 1998 National elections. At the turn of the century, the popularity of both MIÉP and Csurka began to fade, which paired with the electoral loss of Fidesz as the conservative party called for a need for the readjustment of the right. That readjustment came in 2003 when Jobbik – The Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom) was founded.

With all this in mind, tracing the developments of the post-socialist far right entails generating different typologies. Some of them range from established and universal distinctions (radical-extreme, violent, non-violent, see Lubarda 2021) while others, including the one used here, follow contextually-adjusted principles. For instance, Mikecz (2015: 105) identifies three major "types" of postsocialist far-right activism: skinhead groups, the folkish radicalism, and the

new radicalism. While the folkish radicalism mostly belongs to the interwar populist traditions and some revolutionary elements, the Hungarian skinheads gained prominence in the 1980s, having several thousand members by the end of the 1990s (Karsai 1999). The "new" radicalism refers to the 21st-century era, fueled by the "postmodern riot" (Szabó, 2007: 186-187) of 2006, is well-adjusted to the new trends in political communication, dominated by the younger and educated representatives. Notwithstanding the dangers of insisting on a rigid typology, this review will be situated around the main, even if loose, far-right network that has been spearheaded by a single, main far-right party.

There are also important milestones that need to be taken into account. An example is the year 2006 as the (re)birth of the contemporary far right, indicating the beginning of nation-wide protests against the socialist Prime Minister, Ferenc Gyurcsány, paired with clashes with the Roma population (Krekó and Juhász 2018). However, the beginning of the 21st century was a watershed which marks the latest epoch in understanding the Hungarian far right for at least three interrelated reasons. First, this entails the self-ascribed “non-ideological” nature of the “new” far right, echoing the global developments outlined in chapter 1. The distinction between “20th and 21st-century parties” was created by the (former) leader of Jobbik, Gábor Vona. Within this coinage, the former, 20th-century parties (Fidesz and MSZP – socialists) operated on seemingly anachronistic ideological dichotomies (nationalist-socialist, liberal-conservative), and the latter (Jobbik, LMP, Momentum) allegedly moved beyond the “ideological debates”. Second, the loss of Fidesz in 2002 instigated a recomposition of the entire right. Third, it places an emphasis on the new patterns of grassroots organizing established by Jobbik.

While undeniably being a far-right party, MIÉP's organizational structure and overall influence can hardly be considered a representative of the "modern," 21st century far right in Hungary. Its running out of steam in the early 2000s was a consequence of many factors, from the contextual perturbations on the Hungarian political scene, particularly the Hungarian right, and the strategies that focused primarily on the older electorate. As the party membership gradually turned toward the new, then-increasing Jobbik, the aging Csurka was left with not much space for political maneuvering. The alliance with Jobbik was formalized in 2005, under the name „MIÉP–Jobbik Third Way Alliance of Parties (MIÉP–Jobbik a Harmadik Út pártszövetség)”, jointly led by Csurka and Dávid Kovács, the first leader of Jobbik. The electoral program of the coalition echoed textbook examples of populist Manicheanism, such as the trope of “Hungary being a colony” under the EU, as well as numerous calls for restoration of the death penalty, the introduction of protectionist measures, strengthening of the army, as well as "bringing the school and family together" by eradicating "neoliberal garbage from culture, education, and the media" (Gondola.hu, 01/26/2006). The alliance itself was a fiasco, as the coalition won only 2.2% of the votes in the 2006 elections and no seats, ultimately leading to its demise. The freefall of MIÉP was completed with the death of Istvan Csurka in early 2012, as subsequent leaders of the party, Zoltán Fenyvessy and Tibor Nagy (leader since 2017), virtually confined the party to several press releases a year. In the 2018 national elections, MIÉP won a modest 8,712 of the votes or 0.15%.

The 21st Century Hungarian Radical Right

Table 3.1. – An overview of main Hungarian far-right organizations (parties and movements)
in 2021. Source: author

An overview of Hungarian far-right organizations in 2021				
Name	Hungarian Name	Abbreviation	Type	Ideology (radical/extreme)
The Movement for a Better Hungary	Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom	Jobbik	Party	Radical (formerly extreme)
Our Homeland	Mi Hazánk Mozgalom	-	Party	Radical/Extreme
Hungarian Justice and Life Party	Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja	MIÉP	Party	Radical
The 64-counties-movement	Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom	HVIM	Movement	Extreme
The Hungarian Defence Movement	Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom	MÖM	Movement	Extreme
The New Hungarian Guard Movement	Új Magyar Gárda Mozgalom	-	Movement	Extreme
National Legion	Nemzeti Légio	-	Movement	Extreme
Hungarian Legion	Légio Hungária	-	Movement	Extreme
The Outlaw Army	Betyársereg	-	Movement	Extreme
Generation Identity	Identitás Generáció Magyarország	-	Movement	Extreme

Jobbik – A wolf in sheep's clothing?

What distinguishes “The 21st century” far right in Hungary from MIÉP and its predecessors is a number of centripetal groupuscules levitating towards a single, dominant party. In the period from the early 2000s until approximately 2017-18, that single party was Jobbik. By the beginning of 2021, Jobbik’s transition into a national conservative party was completed. The party’s leader since 2020, Péter Jakab, discussed his Jewish origins since the Jobbik turn, and the party has become a member of the united opposition (together with the social-democrats, left-leaning Democratic Coalition, liberal Momentum, green LMP and Dialogue), set up to challenge the majority of Fidesz in the 2022 elections. However, the data collected up to early 2018 with some of the party representatives still qualifies for an analysis of Far-Right Ecologism because of both the themes outlined in the data and the policy positions (e.g., agriculture, see Lubarda 2020b) that very much resonate with the commitment to ethnonationalist, Manichean authoritarianism.

Although it cannot be considered a far-right party in 2021, Jobbik’s influence on the contemporary far right in Hungary and its far-right status at the very beginning of this research (in 2017) deserves further exploration. Jobbik’s unparalleled success in mainstreaming the far right has elevated the party to a role model for the far right in Eastern Europe and beyond (Nagy et al. 2012: 1). The reasons for such a success are invariably related to the immense electoral success in the first elections in which it competed independently (almost 15% in 2010). This success was bolstered by the increasing economic uncertainties brought by the economic crisis, allowing Jobbik to capitalize on the overall shift of the electorate to the right and eventually become the leading party of the Hungarian opposition.

The story of Jobbik from its start is replete with controversies. Even the name of the party is an interesting play of words: Jobbik in Hungarian means both "better" and "to the right". Emerged from an association founded by university students (*Jobboldali Ifjúsági Közösség*), the predecessor of Jobbik was founded in 1999 to prevent the Socialists from returning to power by backing the Fidesz government (Pirro 2015: 67). Indeed, Jobbik's beginnings cannot be differentiated from the then (and now) ruling party of Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán. In July 2002, Fidesz promoted a network of "civic circles" (*polgári körök*), alluding to the coinage of one of the most renowned Hungarian political thinkers, István Bibó (Bibó 1985, see Greskovits 2020). The civic circles were initially envisaged as the base of future right opposition to the socialist government that just regained power, but to many, also served to instill populist nationalism in the Hungarian electorate (Halmai 2011: 113-141). One of the members of these civic circles was Jobbik's future and one of the party's most influential leaders, Gábor Vona (Rona and Bíró, 2013). At its beginnings, Jobbik was indeed a party that intended to cooperate with Fidesz in overturning the socialist government. As mentioned, the party contested its first parliamentary elections in April 2006, in alliance with the MIÉP, gradually succeeding in overtaking its agenda.

However, the tides changed in 2006 with the protests against the Gyurcsány government, particularly in 2008, when Jobbik members started openly attacking Fidesz leaders while developing an elaborate radical nationalistic political program. The program's core elements coalesced with some of the major features of Hungarian post-communist radical right: antisemitism and palingenetic nationalism. The party was also known for its elaborate positions

against the Roma community in Hungary, establishing the "notorious frame of 'Gypsy crime' (*cigánzbűnözés*) in the public and political discourse" (Pytlas 2016: 190). This frame refers to the biological predisposition of the Roma towards criminality, being an outsider to the idealized Hungarian nation (Kondor and Littler 2020: 124). The idea of dealing with this issue emerged as one of the top three priorities for the party in 2007 and has eventually become a trademark phrase, often used on various occasions by a number of party representatives (Pytlas 2016: 190-194). Of course, the issue was not presented as isolated, but as intertwined with a number of other salient topics affecting contemporary Hungarian society, such as crime and social welfare (Halász, 2009: 492).

Antisemitic scandals of Jobbik politicians were less frequent, albeit observable as a part of growing extremist tendencies that fueled the pervasive antisemitic sentiments in Hungarian society (see Kovács 2011). Márton Gyöngyösi, a Member of the European Parliament and the vice-president of Jobbik, once urged the (Fidesz) government to draw up lists of Jews who pose "National security risks" after the outbreak of the conflict in the Gaza strip (Reuters 2012). Still, the broader political claims in which these xenophobic and antisemitic remarks were situated were in the more general theme of a decay induced by continuity in harmful political practices of detached elites. In fact, the electoral manifestos and political programs of Jobbik assert continuity with the communist regime, disparaging the tropes of material prosperity and economic competitiveness as yet another incarnation of previous political networks and elites. Such framing consequently requires cutting all ties with the communist era, becoming a compulsive leitmotif that binds the post-1989 far right in Eastern Europe.

This is exactly from where the idea of Jobbik as a “21st-century party” was derived, as a constitutive kernel and the bearer of a new political force, capable of coalescing enduring radical nationalist inclinations in a coherent framework. Though the “losers of the transition” thesis is often misleading (see Miller-Idriss 2019), both in explaining the electoral base of Jobbik (Krekó and Mayer 2016:192) and the rise of populist and far-right tendencies (Muller 2017: 14), those who failed to maintain basic economic security amid transition were generally more susceptible to the anti-liberal framing of the cultural and, consequently, the alleged economic war waged against Christian Hungary. An additional source of discontent was the process of oligarchization followed by extensive corruption in the post-transitional era, also facilitated by the Orbán regime since 2010 (see Rogers 2020).

The main contribution of Jobbik to both the contemporary far right in Hungary and EE is not only in moving the ideology from the fringes to the national parliament but also in offering an organizational blueprint that is still in use. The network Jobbik established rested on a number of relatively independent organizations which nevertheless coalesce around the dominant party. While it is difficult to argue that Jobbik invented this grassroots-based system, its success depended on having a central party strong enough to develop a strong network of alliances on regional and local levels. Yet, Jobbik's network was not the first attempt at constructing such an organizational pattern, mimicking Fidesz's Civic Circles that influenced the middle-class voters on the grassroots principle. The base for such a network was the movement's spearheading the street protests in 2006 (Pirro and Rona 2018: 2). In fact, those who took part in these protests eventually became Jobbik's leading politicians (Mikecz 2015).

In addition, Jobbik's effective use of social networks (particularly Facebook) signaled the ability of the 21st century Hungarian far right to employ new strategies and outlets in order to augment visibility, but also appeal to the younger portion of the electorate (Karl 2016; Szabó et al. 2015). Indeed, Jobbik's mobilization strategy proved immensely efficient in satiating the demands of the youth, thus moving collective action beyond the electoral arena: a move that perhaps had a major contribution to the party's constant rise that peaked in 2018 (Pirro and Rona 2018: 8). Although Jobbik was initially underrepresented in mainstream media, its own media platforms, *Alfahir* and *Kuruc* provided ample space for crafting an alternative, far-right outlook on Hungarian society and politics. Moreover, Jobbik's engagement with a vast array of topics, including environment and agriculture, signal the ability to become competitive actors in the political mainstream. Jobbik's environmental section, *Jobbik Környezetvédelem*, has an active Facebook profile with more than 2,000 followers.

Attributing the "mainstreaming" of the far right exclusively to Jobbik and its network, later to be picked up by Mi Hazánk, would be unjust, as the much greater responsibility for this process lies in the political mainstream of the time. Both the political actors belonging to the socialist-liberal left (led by MSZP) and especially the national-conservative, eventually becoming the populist right (led by Fidesz), tried to exploit Jobbik's appearance for their own political purposes, a strategy that turned evidently counterproductive (Kovacs, 2015: 225). Even though Jobbik's popularity was steadily growing among the polls in the early 2010s, it quickly became evident that Fidesz was unbeatable in the elections, thanks to the gradual monopolization of certain far-right themes during the refugee crisis. After the electoral success of Fidesz in 2014 elections (the two-

thirds majority in the Parliament), Vona announced a moderation of Jobbik's party positions – the turn to *néppártosodás* (People's Party), a move which would determine the party's ideological turn towards the center. This allowed Jobbik to appeal to the younger electorate as the "underdog" party, but also to further radicalize its views ultimately shifting the margins of acceptability in the discourse.

The rebranding of Jobbik as a national-conservative party position took over six years and was followed by an increasing dissatisfaction in the far-right electorate (Bíró-Nagy and Boros 2016). Even though the party emerged as the leading force of the Hungarian opposition to Fidesz, the results of 2018 were perceived as a loss, which resulted in Vona's decision to step down as the party leader after 12 years. His successor and a former skinhead, Tamás Sneider (Krekó and Juhász 2018: 86) failed to convince the far-right membership to stay in the party. The following split resulted in setting up a new political party by the former far-right membership of Jobbik. This new party, Our Homeland (*Mi Hazánk*) also took over the extensive far-right network which Jobbik coordinated, forming informal partnerships with groups that formed the core of its grassroots dimension. These groups, such as The Outlaw Army (*Betyársereg*) and *HVIM*, (together with *Magyar Gárda*) signed an official cooperation agreement with Jobbik in 2009, providing the necessary clamor needed to uproot the party and transform it into a potent electoral force (Karácsony and Róna 2011).

Mi Hazánk – The “real” radicals

Mi Hazánk is not the only party founded after Jobbik's internal split. The first one to form a faction was Attila Pintér, Jobbik's representative in the Budapest municipality of Józsefváros,

who launched a new movement under the name of “Radical Right-wing Society” (Radikális Jobboldaliak Társasága – RAJT). However, Pintér’s initiative was short-lived, as László Toroczkai¹⁸, mayor of Ásotthalom, and Dóra Dúró, member of Parliament, relatively quickly succeeded in forming Mi Hazánk's party base. After an unsuccessful attempt to launch a new platform within Jobbik, called "Mi magunk," (We Ourselves) which aimed to "return the party to the ideology laid out in its founding deed" (Hungary Today 2018), the two established *Mi Hazánk* in June of 2018.

The party profile has been made invariably clear from the outset, although it is less clear whether the party should be labeled as "extreme" or "radical right". Even though the latter is used in self-ascriptions among the party members, there are many reasons for situating the party on the extreme end of the far-right spectrum. Examples include hard euroskepticism (Vasilopolou 2018: 54-55) viewing the EU as an external organization effectively imposed on the nation, as well as collaboration with violent far-right organizations, and strong xenophobic and anti-Roma stances. Simultaneously, the populist dimension of the party ideology is unambiguous, fortifying the logic of a “small man” under the influence of the Brussels, an alienated and detached elite of bureaucrats and politicians without understanding or respect for one’s national identity and cultural values.

A strong ethnopluralist platform, paying tribute to the coinage of the "Europe of Nations," is paired with a subtle authoritarian undertone, visible in both the foundational documents and

¹⁸ An experienced leader and an emblematic figure of the Hungarian nationalist scene, Toroczkai was one of the most influential figures in Jobbik. He became particularly infamous worldwide in 2015, when he recorded a video message threatening the migrants crossing the Hungarian border, introduced his task force which aims to combat illegal border crossings, subsequently also banning the public practice of Islam (Washington Post, 09/27/2015).

party discourse. An adequate example of the former is the speech of Toroczkai from January 2019, who indicated that the goal of the party remains "Hungary to the Hungarian people, and Europe to Europeans," stressing the importance of "building a wall in physical, spiritual, and cultural terms to protect Hungary and Northern Civilization from Kamchatka to Iceland." (Pestisracok, 01/26/2019) "Northern Civilization" is a concept also articulated in the party's election program for the 2019 European Parliament elections, referring to the "Christian foundation of European and Asian politics, culture, and linguistics." (Mi Hazánk 2019) Bringing about the potent metaphor of crossroads, Toroczkai's "Northern Civilization" meets in the Carpathian Basin of the Trianon Hungary. Not only that this idea brings about Hungarian exceptionalism long-present in the national(ist) political thought, but serves as an explanation of the country's tempestuous history. The idea of a Hungary occupying the Carpathian Basin, the "natural" borders of Greater, pre-Trianon Hungary, is also a pretext to two important and interrelated concepts: historical revisionism and nativism (see also Chapter 5). The environmental section of the party, entitled *Zöld Hazánk* (Green Homeland), is also prominent, following Jobbik's example of having a specialized spokesperson, Krisztina Csereklye.

The Founding Declaration of the party is focused around the idea of a national "rebirth," and the party is even selling merchandise with a slogan "Make Hungary Great Again" and the boundaries of the pre-Trianon Hungary. Nativism is particularly evident in anti-Roma and anti-immigrant positions, openly advocating for segregation and abolishing "meaningless Roma programs" (Foundational Declaration 2018). The anti-Roma sentiment can be articulated through a longing for the social "order" (e.g., the protests in Miskolc, Dailynews Hungary 2020) and

authoritarian leadership The ethnically-marked alterity, be it of Roma or "immigrant" descent, presents a source of discomfort and anxiety, caused by the "second other": domestic and foreign elites and oligarchs. Unlike sporadically implied in Jobbik's primetime, extreme-right (2006-2014) rhetoric, the "other" is not construed through antisemitic references.

The absence of antisemitism in Mi Hazánk program does not point to an entirely separate nativist trajectory, given the personal appointments to high-ranking positions in the party. For instance, the leadership of the youth section was given to János Lantos, former co-leader of Pax Hungarica and Erő és Elszántság, known for his outspoken Hungarist and neo-Nazi activism. After the media disclosed an image of Lantos in Arrow Cross uniform performing a Nazi salute, Toroczkai claimed he "was not aware of his views" and promised an internal investigation (Pestisracok, 01/07/2019). However, Lantos remained affiliated with the party, being not the only individual who openly promoted Hungarism in the past. Examples include László Balázs,¹⁹ a former student leader of Identitesz²⁰ (Betyársereg.hu, 01/09/2018), but also a number of other extreme-right leaders and sympathizers, such as Zsolt Tyirityán, the leader of Betyársereg. Overall, Jobbik's shift to center also entailed Mi Hazánk overtaking and inheriting its network of extreme-right organizations. Through the informal alliance with Betyársereg, HVIM, and tangentially with Légió Hungária, Mi Hazánk seeks to increment the support of the far-right electorate.

¹⁹ In an announcement made on his personal blog from 16 January 2019, Balázs announced his resignation from Mi Hazánk, after "the exclusion of the far right/radical right-wing individuals from the party and/or youth section" implying he can no longer identify with the party's political strategy.

²⁰ Identitesz was an extreme-right student movement founded by László Balázs in 2015, envisaged as a counterweight to the "liberal intellectuals of CEU" (betyarsereg.hu). The movement ceased to exist in the spring of 2017 with the intention to become a political party. Most of its members later joined Erő és Elszántság (now defunct) or Mi Hazánk.

The core of the far-right network in Hungary consists of extreme-right movements that have well-developed connections on both the leadership and the local level. What is also characteristic is that these movements also never shy away from appearing at protests or engaging in violence, thus acting as an intimidating group of coercion. While Betyársereg, HVIM, and Farkasok, (some of) the groups were in a close relationship with Jobbik and now (2021) with Mi Hazánk, it is important to avoid essentializing this rather loose and informal network of personal contacts between the leadership.

The motto of Betyársereg, an extreme-right movement founded in 2008 is *Ne bánstsd a magyart, mert pórul jársz* (Do not touch Hungarians, or else!) (Holdsworth and Kondor 2017: 185). By its very name, the movement pays tribute to the 19th-century group of Hungarian highwaymen and social outcasts. Organizationally, the movement consists of clans separated on municipal basis, and its leader, Zsolt Tyirityán, is one of the most renowned figures on the Hungarian nationalist scene. The role of Betyársereg in the far-right network led first by Jobbik, and subsequently Mi Hazánk is in establishing a physical presence by providing informal security at public events and meetings (Interview, 11/26/2018).

The group derives its membership mostly from personal contacts among the Hungarian martial artists and powerlifters. On the ideological terrain, Betyársereg engages in a variety of far-right initiatives that implicitly or explicitly endorse violence and racism, such as: "combatting Gypsy crime," "protecting normalcy" – distributing anti-LGBT propaganda, "race-war," anti-migrant content and a vast array of conspiracy theories. Nonetheless, the movement also takes part

in organizing commemorative hikes and other events, such as children programs (Betyársereg, 2018). Their official webpage-blog, Betyársereg.hu, is a hub for the Hungarian extreme-right, providing information about the events and initiatives of other Hungarian groups (Mi Hazánk, HVIM, Légión Hungária, Erő és Elszántság, and Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom). The blog also has a section on motor clans and "The Fight Club" (*Harcosock Klubja*), dedicated to professional sportsmen affiliated with the organization.

Just like Betyársereg, The Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement (henceforth HVIM) is an unambiguously extreme-right political movement, with outstanding longevity in comparison with similar organizations. Founded in 2001 by László Toroczkai, HVIM's principal aim is the unification of all ethnic Hungarians under one state, as well as the revision of the Trianon Treaty of 1920. The name of the movement stands for the sixty-four counties (excluding one in today's Croatia) of the Hungarian state before the end of the First World War. Toroczkai's figure also points to how the movement's early activism can hardly be diverged from that of Jobbik. Adrián Magvasi, the chief editor of *Alfahír* and the leader of one of Jobbik's electoral districts in Budapest, joined HVIM at the age of fifteen (Pirro and Roná, 2018: 12).

The current leader of HVIM is Gábor Barcsa-Turner, who is also one of the founders of the Holy Crown (Szent Korona) radio station, and the acting "commander" of *Wolves* (*Farkasok*), a quasi-paramilitary extreme-right organization that conducts regular combat trainings with airsoft weapons. The group conducts trainings usually during the weekends, claiming to congregate with those "of a warrior blood, who have left behind the spirit of the pre-1945 builders of the Kingdom of Hungary" (Patriota, 2018). The Wolves' website asserts the continuity between the traditions

of Turanian, Viking, and North-American tribes, amplifying the role of Scythian warriors for Hungarian warlike tradition (Farkasfalka, 2018). (Neo-)Turanism, a belief in a unified, Uralo-Altaic race, comprising Turks, Tatars, Hungarians, is particularly important in understanding the "Eastern turn" of the far (especially extreme) right in Hungary (see Akçalı and Korkut 2012). The myth of rebirth is also present, as Barcsa-Turner highlights how the point of such gatherings is "physical and spiritual renewal of the civilians" and that the Government "need not fear airsoft guns" (Szent Korona Radio, 2017/07/03). In a similar vein, Dániel Zsiga-Kárpát, a former vice-president of Jobbik, noted how the Wolves are "only a group of friends who conduct leisure activities, arguing that "it should be more positive to see young people committed to the defense of their homeland" (Pestisracok.hu, 03/13/2016).

With these profound personal connections and kin organizations, HVIM members specialized in those activities that garnered support for Jobbik on the grassroots level. Ever since, the movement has been active in protests against the Budapest Pride and have actively engaged in activities and protests during the immigration crisis (Holdsworth and Kondor 2017: 185). Hence, the movement usually focuses on more minor activities, such as protests in front of embassies of countries with a significant Hungarian minority, which used to be a part of the Greater Hungary such as Slovakia and Romania (Bernath, Miklosi and Mudde 2005: 86). In fact, the movement has its branches in these countries, which have occasionally participated in demonstrations, but also attacks on non-Hungarians and even for plotting terrorist attacks (Mareš 2018: 126; Radio Televizija Vojvodine 2013).

Since HVIM, social media accounts are often banned from the networks, and their key outlets remain their website and the Holy Crown radio station. The Wolves formation remains active to this day, organizing hiking tours and conducting basic military training, placing an emphasis on "survival skills". The similar motivation is behind HVIM's "Youth Camp" (*Gyerek és Ifjúsági Tábor*), which conducts basic archery and self-defense training, paired with camping and handcrafts, all with the alleged purpose to “make young people move and experience the value of community” (Alfahir 2016). Similarly, albeit focusing on the slightly older age group, The Hungarian Island Rock Festival (*Magyar Sziget*) is envisaged as an alternative to the “consumerist and neoliberal Sziget festival” (Kürti, 2012: 97), gathering national rock and folk authors. The frames of irredentism and the restoration of national glory (pre-Trianon Hungary), simultaneously reviving the old topos of the nation threatened by various conspirative elements (foreign powers, the Roma, and the Jews), are common in these music styles and thus reinforce the political messages from these public gatherings. As such, some of these bands (*Kárpátia, Ismerős Arcok, Hunnia, Romantikus Erőszak, Oi-kor, Egészséges Fejbőr, and Magozott Cseresznye*) frequently performed at Jobbik rallies as well (Pirro and Roná, 2018: 10).

Since 2018 was a year of major changes in the Hungarian far-right landscape, HVIM also suffered an internal split, followed by the formation of *Hungarian Legion (Légió Hungária)*, in the summer of that year. Amid some informal attempts to establish contacts with Mi Hazánk, Légió Hungária remained on the fringe of the far-right spectrum as the most extreme of all organizations. Aside from extremism, the movement often ideologically subscribes to "third way politics". The leader of the movement, Béla Incze, who formed Légió Hungária after an internal split in HVIM,

indicated the importance of leaving out the notions of "national radicalism" or "nationalism," as such distinctions "point to a period that is closed" (Betyársereg 2019). The three main pillars of the organization outlined on its website are tradition, consciousness, and community in order to "protect the Carpathian Basin" (Légió Hungária Website 2019). While the memory of Trianon and the idea of national rebirth are conspicuously visible also in the activities of Légió Hungária, its membership differs from that of HVIM in belonging to non-pagan spiritual cults, such as Odinism and Wotanism.

The organization became notorious after setting on fire a Jewish community center in Budapest (Wójcik 2018). This was not the only occasion on which the movement engaged in physical violence, as the organization clashed with Antifa during the commemoration of the Siege of Budapest in 2019. Légió Hungária also launched a campaign for changing the street names of former socialist politicians and artists, as well as expressed support for István Beke and Zoltán Szőcs of HVIM branch in Romania, who were accused of preparing a terrorist attack in that country. In addition to this, like most of the other movements, Légió Hungária organizes memorial hiking tours to the monuments erected in memory of the Trianon Peace Treaty, or war operations in pre-Trianon Hungary (Légió Hungária 2019). Even though it is a relatively new movement, Légió Hungária cooperates not only with Eastern European extreme-right organizations, such as *Karpatska Sich* in Ukraine but also in other parts of Europe (*Lotta Studentesca* in Italy).

It is, however, important to note that the list of far-right organizations operating in Hungary is not exhaustive. Notable organizations which have not been included in this analysis for the simple reason that they either did not post any of the relevant content on their official outlets

(webpages, social media, interviews) or it was impossible to schedule an interview with them. These organizations include the vigilante/paramilitary Hungarian Defence Movement (*Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom - MÖM*), The New Hungarian Guard Movement (*Új Magyar Gárda Mozgalom*), The National Legion (*Nemzeti Légió*) and the identitarian, student-led Generation Identity Hungary (*Identitás Generáció Magyarország*). Two organizations that became defunct in the course of this research were the neo-Nazi Pax Hungarica (2007-2013) and Erő és Elszántság (2017-2019). Most of these can be classified as extreme-right given their ideology and alliances, as well as (with the exception of the Hungarian Chapter of Generation Identity), proclivity towards violence. There are also a number of skinhead groupuscules that are currently defunct or idle, such as Death Squad (*Halálbrigád*) and the Hungarian Arrows National Liberation Army (*Magyarok Nyilai Nemzeti Felszabadító Hadsereg*, see Table 3.1).

Fidesz as a far-right party: shallow grounds of ideological opportunism

To many "in policy and media communities" (Kondor and Little 2020: 125), Fidesz is a far-right party in 2021. Indeed, the ruling party has successfully overtaken the part of Jobbik's far-right electorate (the other party being Fidesz) by adjusting its political strategy to make it more appealing for the far-right constituency (Holdsworth and Kondor 2017). Others were skeptical of this inversion, implying that Fidesz and Jobbik represent two sides of the same coin and belong to the same ideological "team" (Bayer, 08/14/2017). It is by now clear that the regime of Viktor Orbán is well known for its illiberal, authoritarian, nationalist, and nativist tendencies (Bozóki 2017), which may seem the pathway to a far-right transition has been successfully completed. Finally, considering the political trajectory of Fidesz, which moved from an initially (staunchly)

liberal party,²¹ which changed its position to a national-conservative only once it went back to the opposition (1998), to a populist party in the 2010s, seeing Fidesz change its ideological profile once again would not be a massive surprise.

In spite of its ardent populist rhetoric and the anti-Soros campaign, which resulted in serious breaches of academic freedom in the country, Fidesz can hardly be understood as a far-right party, for a number of reasons. Although the shift in discourse towards palingenetic nationalism is noticeable, Fidesz lacks common grounds with the far right in Hungary, such as (even if timid) endorsement of antisemitic attitudes,²² or glorification of the Hungarian far-right history in the interwar (or the Second World War) period. Instead, Fidesz clearly belongs to the Horthian tradition of conservative Hungary, whose national-conservatism can be discerned from its *Völkisch* and undeniably fascist interpretations of the Szálasi era. Moreover, the pragmatism of the ruling party resembled in its sharp ideological shifts since the breakdown of communism makes its political programs or positions virtually impossible for a rendition through any established conceptual lenses. The trite “conservative” self-appointed profile of Fidesz is slowly eroding in spite of its withdrawal from the European People’s Party and frequent scandals concerning the rule of law in Hungary, but this was not that clear in the early-to-late stages of this project. This is why Fidesz can rightfully be defined as a (right-wing) “populist” party without a consistent ideological core. Although the same could be potentially argued about Jobbik, its extreme-right and antisemitic history allow easier tracing of radical-right residues in the party's electoral program.

²¹ Fidesz is an acronym of *Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége*, which means Alliance of Young Democrats.

²² In fact, Fidesz has openly criticized Jobbik’s antisemitic scandals. Moreover, Hungary under Orbán has developed close connections with the Israeli government led by Netanyahu.

Far-right in Poland: parallel trajectories

The prolific history of Polish “nationalism without a state” was, like many countries in Eastern Europe, marked by a romanticized, post-revolutionary idea of self-determination and national sovereignty which originated in the 18th century. Hence, it can be rightfully argued that it is among the earliest manifestations of "Western-type" nationalisms (Walicki 1982: 69). The complex interplay of authority, modernity, and democracy, in all their splendor and ambiguity, provided the grounds for the birth of an ethnonationalist far right (Porter 2000: 13), which can be hardly deduced through a simplistic narrative of the main developments outlined here. Perhaps surprisingly, these grounds were not (mainly) derived from the romantic (idealist) outlook, with protagonists such as Mochnacki and Mickiewicz, but its counterparts, "the realists," who emerged after the defeat in the 1863 uprising. Unlike romantic nationalists, realists conceived exclusive ideation of ethnically and religiously "pure" Poland, constituting a narrative bundle that effectively traversed to the post-1918 era of Polish independence (Harper 2018: 3). The existence of such competing, rival traditions eventually molded Polish interwar (according to Harper, 2018, even post-socialist) politics. The two traditions were honored also by the word choice in Polish: *nacjonalizm* representing the more extreme and ethnonationalist conceptualization, whereas *narodowcy* stood for the patriotic, worst-case scenario, radical right (Porter 2000: 14). Two historical figures who were simultaneously intellectual leaders of these competing traditions were Józef Piłsudski, the first chief of state in independent Poland (1918-1920), and Roman Dmowski (1864-1939).

This is exactly where honoring the typologies leads to ever more confusion. While both Piłsudski and Dmowski were seen as an incarnation of 19th-century nationalism, only the latter is (rightfully) associated with the Polish far right. Dmowski, the leader of the opposition National Democrats (Endecja, Narodowcy) in the 1920s, rejected the multi-culturalism of Piłsudskite tradition as anachronistic and inappropriate, opting instead for the ethnic Polishness in opposition to Germany, Russia, but also the Jews (Pankowski, 2010: 21). Dmowski was also a patron of several nationalist organizations, most notably The All-Polish Youth (*Związek Akademicki Młodzież Wszechpolska*, MW), founded in 1922, and the Greater Poland Camp - *Obóz Wielkiej Polski* (OWP), a paramilitary, revolutionary organization founded in 1926 with the aim of toppling Piłsudski's government. National Democrats later changed their name into the National Party, which, despite its strong fascist leanings, declared war on Hitler as a part of a coalition government in 1939 (Ost, 1999: 86). In opposition to Piłsudski, Dmowski's vision of Poland emanates from the Völkisch tradition of German nationalism, in which the ethnically cohesive Poland reincarnates the idyll of traditional *Piast* Poland rooted in Roman Catholicism (Davies 1984: 142-43). To Endeks, a non-Catholic Pole is virtually a contradiction in terms: even the 19th and 20th-century hardships preceding independence in 1918 were depicted as "the time on the cross" (Davies, 1984: 157). Thus, it does not come as a surprise that if there was a single outstanding, predominant feature of the Polish far right, that would have to be Catholicism (Linz and Stephan, 1996).

The end of the Second World War saw Polish far-right organizations banned from the country, but the Endecja tradition never ceased to exist, partly due to pragmatic cooperation with the communist regime, but also heroic anti-communist sentiment expressed by the dissidents

(Pankowski 2010: 38). Much as in Hungary, the process of decommunization, signaled by The Round Table talks in 1989, enabled the political pluralization that allowed for a number of previously stitched voices to be heard. Still, this also foreshadowed the radicalization of the political space and the fora for expressing Völkisch and anti-Semitic sentiments. The first far-right movements (such as *Przełom Narodowy* and ONR) in the 1990s revived the Endek, "National Radical" tradition. Simultaneously, a number of skinheads and radical catholic and neo-pagan groups emerged, the latter including the neo-pagan Zadruga and eventually Niklot. These movements conducted a variety of activities but lacked clarity in envisioning a prosperous Polish society, apart from the standard tropes of Poland purged of Jewish, German, and Russian influence.

Unlike Hungary, where the far-right scene, albeit atomized, was dominated by a single party, the Polish case entailed a broader and decentralized far-right spectrum. Prior to 2001, when the far-right parties first entered Polish Parliament – Sejm, many parties-movements unsuccessfully attempted to garner political support. Most of the radical nationalist actors in the 1990s existed on the fringe of political life, mostly in the form of movement-parties (see Kitschelt 2006): The National Rebirth of Poland (*Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski*, NOP), (*Polski Front Narodowy*, PFN), and the Polish National Union - National Party (*Stronnictwo Narodowe*, PWN-PSN). The first, NOP, was officially formed as a party in 1992 but operated underground since 1981 (as a group formed in 1983), in the wake of the martial law imposed by Marshall Jaruzelski. In the very early days, NOP had even its magazine, the "Brzask" (The Dawn) and "Jestem Polakiem," which went out of print during the governmental crackdown. The youth leaders of the NOP had a strong connection with even some of the prewar Polish dissidents (Witkowski 2019),

which gave the strong anti-Semitic impetus to the newly formed organization. At the turn of the decade (1989-1990), the organization became a part of the newly formed Christian-National Union (ZChN), a party led by Wiesław Chrzanowski, a former Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*) soldier during the Second World War. However, this membership (and the ZChN itself) did not last for too long.

Just like the case with the similar Hungarian organizations of the early post-socialist phase, the early years of NOP were marked by an ideological eclecticism (or, at least, eclecticism across the far-right spectrum), incorporating radical-right (hence Christian) visions with national anarchism or even outright (neo)Nazism. However, the proper breakthrough for NOP in an ideological sense was its alliance with the International (initially just English) Third Position. Ever since, NOP has been championing "Third Way" politics, seeing itself as being in the middle of the ideological struggle of capitalism and socialism. Such stances were epitomized through an endorsement of corporatism, distributionism, Salazarism, and the Spanish Phalanx (Tomasiewicz 2010: 174). The organization also had its own magazine, *Szczerbiec*, which served as a locus for exploring the ideological varieties of the far right in Poland and around the world. Only recently, the intellectual monopoly of NOP has been challenged by breakaway organizations, such as *Trzecia Droga* (Third Way).

It is also interesting that the members of NOP were among the first nationalist ecologists in post-socialist Poland, articulating the first environmental program of the Polish far right. Following its "Third Way" credentials, NOP's environmental program was admittedly positioned in-between American neo-cons (e.g., Pat Buchanan) and "eco-radicals." Particularly influential

was the figure of Bogdan Koziel-Salski, an author of several texts on ecology and nationalism, whose contribution to Polish far-right ecologism will be explored in later chapters. Although NOP still exists in 2021, its lack of activity induced by interpersonal disputes and lack of cooperation and collaboration with other nationalist groups render it a rather historical than contemporary far-right actor.

The most influential leader within the early phase of Polish post-socialist right radicalism was undoubtedly Maciej Giertych, founder of the League of Polish Families (*Liga Polskich Rodzin*, LPR) in 2001. Maciej's father, Jędrzej, was an influential intellectual radical-right dissident during the communist era, who wrote extensively from his London exile about "Jewish conspiracies" into his "codified Endek creed" (Pankowski, 2010: 30). The ideology of LPR was, for many reasons, emblematic of the far-right parties in Poland: the centrality of ethnonationalism paired with a strong, though a secondary, emphasis on Roman Catholicism and conservative social values, all mirrored by subtle but at times very overt anti-Semitism. The electoral success of LPR was immediate and swift: after 38 seats (7.9% of the popular vote) won in the 2001 elections, the party won 34 (8%) in 2005. After 2005, the LPR became a part of the coalition government with the populist Self-Defense (*Samoobrona*) and the national-conservative Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc*, PiS). Much as in Hungary, during these times, the party had a well-developed network of youth organizations (predominately the MW) and influential media (Catholic *Radio Maryja*). However, the party was soon ravaged by an internal scandal, which allowed PiS to overtake its electorate by integrating the nationalist messianism of the LPR, leaving the latter out of Sejm by 2009 (Harper, 2018: 34). Similar to Jobbik, the party gradually shifted its ideological

position towards the conservative-right, losing the support of the MW. Amid these shifts induced by PiS's rightward turn, some of the Endek LPR electorate remained disillusioned with PiS's policies and the failed promise of the "Fourth Republic".²³

If this modular overview of the far-right was to be backed by a set of "tipping points" or important milestones for the development of far right, it could be argued that what 2002 or 2006 were for Hungary (see Krekó and Juhasz 2018) happened in Poland around 2010. This year marked a "new phase in the evolution of Polish contemporary nationalism" (see Jajecznik 2015: 43), following the tragic death of Polish Prime Minister, Lech Kaczyński, in a plane crash in Smolensk, Russia. Kaczyński's death prompted aggrieved nationalism through alleged conspiracies of Russia's involvement in his death. Also in 2010, the youth of the LPR (particularly those coalescing around the All-Polish Youth) took over the editorial board of *Polityka Narodowa*, the most important nationalist magazine in the post-socialist era, heralding a new generation of Polish right-radicalism.

Moreover, these newcomers managed to (re)establish the March of Nationalists (*Marsz Niepodległości*) in 2011, ever since held annually on 11th November to celebrate Polish Independence Day indicating a new, grassroots transition in the Polish far right. Following the Hungarian blueprint, this transition, carried by the young radicals, was primarily based on the informal network structures and grassroots organizing instead of uniform party structures (see Jajecznik 2015: 45). The immense success of March of Independence paired with the broad,

²³ Such a framing indicates discontinuity with the Third Republic – Constitutional name of Poland after the Roundtable Talks in 1989.

grassroots network (following the blueprint of Jobbik in Hungary), enabled the formation of a new socio-political movement with strong anti-establishment features. This political network set the basis for a new political party, formed in 2014 – The National Movement (*Ruch Narodowy*).

Table 3.2 – An overview of Polish far-right organizations in 2021. Source: Author

An overview of Polish far-right organizations in 2021				
Name	Polish Name	Abbreviation	Type	Ideology (radical/extreme)
National Movement	Ruch Narodowy	RN	Party	Radical
Confederation of The Polish Crown	Konfederacja Korony Polskiej	Crown	Party	Radical
All-Polish Youth	Młodzież Wszechpolska	MW	Movement	Radical
National Radical Camp - ABC	Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny	ONR-ABC	Movement	Radical/Extreme
National Radical Camp	Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny	ONR	Movement	Extreme
National Radical Camp - Podhale	Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny - Podhale	ONR	Movement	Extreme
The Patriots of Małopolska	Małopolscy Patrioci	-	Movement	Extreme
Third Way	Trzecia Droga	-	Movement	Extreme
The National rebirth of Poland	Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski	NOP	Movement	Extreme
Stormtroopers/Black Block	Szturmowcy/Czarny Blok	-	Movement	Extreme
Ecolektyw	Ecolektyw	-	Movement	Extreme
Zadruga	Zadruga	-	Movement	Extreme
Niklot	Niklot	-	Movement	Extreme

The National Movement and All-Polish Youth: The Narodowcy

Another parallel with the Hungarian case, although not as pronounced in Poland, was the formation of a loose network of the contemporary, 21-st century “Narodowcy” nationalists, concentrated around one main political party – Ruch Narodowy. Ruch Narodowy was initially founded as an alliance of several radical movements, including the reformed ONR, MW, and also the conservative-libertarian Real Politics Union (*Unia Polityki Realnej*—UPR) (Płatek and Płucienniczak 2016: 305). All three organizations represented incarnations of the previously existing movements with rich historical backgrounds and a reputation as hereditaries of Endecja in the Polish far right. After the 2014 elections for the European Parliament, the Movement turned into a political party, now being the only parliamentary far-right party in the country.

Besides being the only significant far-right party in Polish politics, Ruch Narodowy has had to enter alliances in order to maintain or improve its parliamentary status (Minkenberg 2017: 116). They first attempted to do so in 2015, when Ruch Narodowy entered Kukiz'15 coalition, led by Polish comedian, Paweł Kukiz. The "anti-establishment" coalition was relatively successful, with 42 seats obtained (out of which five went to Ruch Narodowy). However, shortly after the elections, Ruch Narodowy left the coalition, with only one member (Robert Winnicki) remaining in Sejm. The party was a part of another coalition and electoral list, this time in 2018. The coalition was called 'The Confederation' (*Konfederacja*) and comprised of KORWIN (formerly known as Liberty), Confederation of Polish Crown, Party of Drivers, Union of Christian Families, and Ruch Narodowy. Even though the coalition failed to enter the European Parliament in the 2019 elections, it won 11 seats in the 2019 national elections (out of which 5 went to Ruch Narodowy).

Ideologically, the party is a typical representative of radical-right politics, with its pillars being Identity, Sovereignty, and Freedom (RN Website, 2020). These elements shape the party's policy positions: from strict and socially conservative family policies to right-wing-oriented economic standpoints. The memory of a "Great(er) Poland" is still alive and well in the party imaginary, although not so much through the calls for expansionism or revisionism, but mostly through repatriation of ethnic Poles abroad through *Karta Polaka* (Pole's Card), also exerting pressure on the countries with significant Polish minorities such as Ukraine or Belarus (CEE Identity 2021). Unlike Mi Hazánk, Ruch Narodowy is openly euroskepticist, also with significantly more pronounced antisemitic undertones. Even though the majority of its members are male, Ruch Narodowy also has its female section, currently led by Anna Bryłka.

Ever since its foundation, the party established close contacts with far-right organizations across Europe. In fact, Ruch Narodowy is one of the co-organizers (together with MW) of an annual gathering of European nationalists, held on the eve of the Marsz Niepodległości. Together with the co-organizers of the March (MW, ONR), Ruch Narodowy organizes the "Patriotism of God" conference, an annual meeting of international far-right organizations, bringing together groups from Norway, Serbia, Croatia, Italy, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and even The United States. Notable allies among the political parties regularly attending the March include the Italian *Forza Nuova* and previously Jobbik, now Mi Hazánk, given the personal connections of Robert Winnicki, RN's leader, and László Toroczkai.

Much like the LPR, instead of having its youth section, Ruch Narodowy actively cooperates with Młodzież Wszechpolska (MW). Originally founded in 1922, with Roman

Dmowski as the honorary chair, MW was reestablished in 1989 by Roman Giertych's followers and has represented the youth section of LPR from its foundation (2001) until 2006. Ever since 2014, it has technically represented the youth wing of RN. The manifesto of the organization proclaims the revisionist ideal of "reclaiming Polish lands" (*MW, Deklaracja Idejowa*), which is associated with the early history of the organization, in which it demanded rapid assimilation of Slavic minorities and the loyalty of the ethnic Germans living within the boundaries of the newly-founded state. The ideological pillars of the organization are Catholicism, a palingenetic call for a "moral and national renewal of the young generation by declaring war on doctrines of self-will, liberalism, tolerance, and relativism", and the organic unity of the Church and the state, embroiled in the "European Latin Civilization" (*MW, Deklaracja Idejowa* 2018), notably distant from Toroczkai's "Northern" counterpart. The late-socialist Organization adopted these principles, adding the idea of economic protectionism to its ideological pillars.

The immense organizational potential of the MW in reviving contemporary Polish nationalism is based on several overlapping factors, such as its historical importance, the continuous support of the radical side of the Catholic clergy (see Tronina 2020), but also a wide network of contacts and cooperating sections. The organization has significantly grown under the auspices of LPR, simultaneously retaining its organizational autonomy. Whereas "Narodowcy" are perceived as the heirs of the intellectualist tradition of Polish nationalism, rooted in the religious (staunchly Catholic) national position of Roman Dmowski and his followers from the National Democracy, "The Nationalists" (*Nacjonalisci*) stand for the extreme-right fraction: Autonomous Nationalists, Stormtroopers – Szturmowci, Niklot, Trzecia Droga, Ecolektyw.

However, there is also one movement that can be situated in between these two seemingly different poles - Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny (National Radical Camp, ONR).

Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny: a long tradition of divisions

Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny (ONR)'s liminal position can be attributed both to its ideological ambiguity and the often-occurring personal feuds that have led to relatively frequent separations of factions from the main organization. Historically speaking, the radicalism of ONR has clearly resembled the nationalist tradition within the Polish far right, with its imagery closest to that of proto-fascist interwar movements. Founded in 1934 by a group of disillusioned National Democrats (more specifically those coming from the National Party), coalescing around the Camp of Great Poland (*Obóz Wielkiej Polski*), ONR is an adequate representative of an interwar fascist organization (Davies and Lynch 2002: 324). Its founders, Jan Mosdorf and Henryk Rossman are some of the icons of contemporary Polish far right.

As a result of internal splits, the very name of ONR brings about confusion, as it refers to (at least) three major groups using a similar iconography: ONR-Falanga (*Ruch Narodowo Radykalny-Falanga*, Phalanx), ONR-ABC (founded following a split within the original party founded in 1934), and “the original” ONR. The ONR-Falanga was led by a young law student Boleslaw Piasecki, a tributary of totalitarian and fascist cults (Pankowski 2010: 34), primarily of Spanish Falangism. Much like the All-Polish Youth, ONR was a militant organization, predominantly popular among the urban youth, critical of capitalism (instead opting for “cooperatism”) paired with a distinguishable anti-Semitic character. Unlike the predominantly youth-based membership of ONR-Falanga, ONR-ABC gathered older and more experienced

members. Both movements were involved in paramilitary activities, and officially ceased to exist with the German attack in 1939. Nevertheless, both movements had their underground resistance networks, and as such actively participated in the war efforts, eventually as a part of the Home Army.

The resurgence of ONR in the 1980s was followed by a unique mix of traditional values, such as national Catholicism, with the skinhead subculture (Witczak 2012). However, in the post-2010 circumstances described in this chapter, ONR strove to moderate its own image. This rebranding was partly conducted through a cooperation with the All-Polish Youth, although the anti-Semitic messages from the March of Independence hardly speak in favor of this goal. Due to a lack of followers outside of the right-radical subcultural milieu, the March of Nationalists was branded as a separate organization, independent of its foundational groupings (Jajecznik 2019: 42). The website of ONR indicates the central elements to their ideology: God, Honor, Homeland, Family, Tradition, and Friendship (ONR Website 2019). The right radicalism as an underlying moment of this movement is epitomized in its mixture of restorative nostalgia and fascist dynamism, most clearly articulated in the following quote from the party's website:

Our goal is not historicism or sentimentality, but continuous development and work on the revival of national and Catholic values. We don't want to stand aside and complain - we want to take matters into our own hands. (ONR Website 2019)

Much as ONR is strongly opposing fascism as a label (primarily due to its association with the German Nazis – wartime invaders), the idea of a revolutionary and violent national rebirth cuts across its historical development.

Echoing the historical trajectories, the name of ONR in 2021 is used by three far-right organizations: the first is the "original" group, comprising 16 regional (Voivodeship) brigades. There is also an autonomous ONR Podhale, initially a brigade within the ONR, representing the Southern Polish region near the Tatra mountains. The third and the newest faction that split from the central organization were the members of the Warsaw, Mazowieckie Voivodeship, who re-founded the ONR ABC in early 2019 (ONR Website, 04/07/2019). This organization is also affiliated with the March of Independence leadership and the *Media Narodowe*, well-known among Polish Narodowcy. Thus, it belongs more to the radical-right side of the spectrum, unlike the main organization or ONR Podhale, which openly disputes both conservatism and liberal democracy. Although ONR and ONR Podhale actively cooperate, ONR ABC has not had any official activities with other groups. All of the groups have their own (though mostly overlapping) network of international contacts, primarily with Hungarian nationalist groups (ONR and ONR Podhale with HVIM and even smaller or now inactive skinhead organizations), but also with Slovak nationalists (*Kotleba – L’udova Strana Naše Slovensko*), Italian *Casapound* and *Lotta Studentesca*, Germany (*Junge Nacionalisten*), United States (*Patriot Front*), Norway (*Nordisk Ungdom*), Bulgaria (*VMRO*), Serbia (*Naša Akcija*), Croatia, Latvia, Spain, and Russia (Interview with Pawel, ONR, 01/17/2019).

Autonomous Nationalists, Szturmowci, Niklot, Trzecia Droga: invariably extreme?

Just like the extreme right in Hungary, Poland's nationalist, extreme-right movements are constantly on the brink of extinction. Under such contingent circumstances, these movements rarely aspire to become established actors in the Polish political scene or serve as movement-

parties. Instead, they specialize in specific types of activism (street protests, publishing, grassroots engagement) and only occasionally cooperate with other organizations. As previously noted, Nacjonaści operate in opposition to the "mainstream" radical-right organizations (Ruch Narodowy, MW, ONR), although it would be incorrect to claim that their development was dependent on the Narodowcy organizations. Most of the early post-socialist nationalist organizations developed under the Martial Law of General Jaruzelski (1981-1983) or in the early 1990s. Some of them were even founded after internal splits in the existing parties (e.g., NOP). The anchors of the Polish extreme right section are two major groups: the Stormtroopers (*Szturmowcy*) and the Polish fraction of the Autonomous Nationalists, comprising a number of loosely connected factions and groupuscules (e.g., *Ecolektyw*). Since the scarcity of academic works on these groups (even in the Polish language) makes this review all the more onerous, this section relies mainly on the accounts of interviewees and the material posted on the groups' internet pages.

After continuous police crackdowns and arrests of their members culminating in 2019, *Szturmowcy* (Stormtroopers) have officially ceased to exist as a nationalist organization but have continued as an informal atomized community. According to their website, *Szturmowcy* constitute a 21st-century group, without the will to return to their interwar nationalist roots (*Szturmowcy* 2018). The organization bears elements of fascist dynamism, expressed in the idea of a "community of continuity" ("of those who were, those who are, and those who will be"). Going back to this symbolism, the official symbol of *Szturmowcy* is lightning, bringing together "ancient spiritual readiness to fight" with the authentically Polish underground organization, the "Gray

Ranks Assault Groups - an elite scout sabotage detachment," which conducted its activities during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. At the same time, the lightning as a symbol indicates Szturmowcy's ideological proximity with the extreme-right in Germany.

Today's Stormtroopers are an example of an extreme-right organization with clear neo-fascist elements. The canonical texts of Szturmowcy posted on their website point to the fundamental principles of the organization, such as: "Vitality, as the revival of the creative power," "Racial separatism and Positive racism," "Futuristic nationalism," and "Black nationalism" (not to be confused with race). These are written by their influential members, authors, and editors of the *Szturm* Magazine, Gregorz Ćwik (now a member of Niklot), but also members of *Ecolektyw*, an organization which will be mentioned in the subsequent chapters. Logically, Szturmowcy are (much like Ruch Narodowy, MW, and ONR) against NATO and the European Union, but also promoting ethnonationalist ideas vis-à-vis pan-Europeanism. As of 2019, the group exists only through the "Czarny blok" (Black block), an informal Facebook group.



Figure 1.1. – Which is the better symbol for the ‘Stormtroopers’?

Zadruga and Niklot are two of the most relevant neo-pagan, extreme-right organizations in Poland. Historically, both emanated from *Zadruga*, an anti-clerical movement founded by Jan Stanchiuk ("Stoigniew" being his Slavic, in-group name) in 1937 (see Grott 2002). The *Zadruga* of the (postsocialist) Third Republic was reset in 2006, referring to the "Slav family communities" existing in pre-Christian Poland (Zadruga Official Blog 2020). According to their legal status, the purpose of *Zadruga* is to create events commemorating the native traditions and cultures of Slavs and their presumed ideological nationalism. The official symbols of *Zadruga* are the *Bułwicka Swarga* and *Toporzeł* (axe). *Zadruga* explicitly refuses association with fascist and totalitarian regimes, noting the court cases won by the movement or its representatives. Spiritualism,

Naturalism, and Organicism are the fundamental principles of the movement established on the official webpage (Zadruga Official blog 2018). In their internal structure, Zadruga echoes the neo-pagan tradition of Slavic communities. Much like Niklot (and other Slavic neo-pagan organizations), members of Zadruga have their own Slavic names, which serve as an in-group identifier. In addition, the group members (similarly to Légió Hungária) have their own authentic forms of greeting and communication.

Similar to Zadruga, Niklot was also founded in the post-socialist era (1998), with a goal of "shaping a new model of Polish culture and national character and reaching for the Slavonic and Indo-European roots of culture" (Niklot Website 2019). The organization was named after a prince of Slavic Obotrites, and the founder of the House of Mecklenburg, who fought against compulsory Christianization. The official symbol of Niklot is the Axeagle, referring to the White Eagle, a heraldic symbol of Perun (the Slavic god). The three fundamental principles/verbs depicting Niklot's "leading ideology" according to their official website are: fight, work, and learn. The spiritual component of the organization is central, as it points to the organicist and naturalist postulates of Niklot's activism. In terms of "policy" proposals, Niklot endorses the public death penalty against the "invaders" since "revenge is a fundamental right of man" (Niklot website 2019). Again, ethnopluralism is at the core of Niklot's ethnically-guided vision of the world, explicitly against "multiculturalism, liberalism and the Americanization of the Old Continent". Although the organization is autonomous, some members of Niklot (including Grzegorz Ćwik, the Editor-in-chief of *Szturm*) are associated with other nationalist groups, such as Autonomous Nationalists and *Szturmowczy*.

Although the Third Way - Trzecia Droga is an autonomous organization, it resembles the Polish chapter of the French New-Right. Trzecia Droga was developed after an internal dispute in NOP, and its ideological declaration reflects similar concerns to that of its ideologically-close organization. The ideological declaration of the organization points to an alleged departure from the left-right axis but, nevertheless, ascribes to the proto-nationalist radicalism (quoting Jan Mosdorf, one of the founders of ONR). The Third Way represents itself as an “anti-systemic” force, arguing for a modern nationalism that ambiguously “draws on past lessons”. Alluding to the Third (post-socialist) Polish Republic, the current system in which modern Polish nationalism is, according to Third Way politics, envisaged as ruined and therefore requires a demolition. Unlike Autonomous Nationalists, Niklot, Zadruga, and sections within ONR, Trzecia Droga associates the idea of right radicalism in Poland with the Catholic Church, nevertheless pointing to the spiritual fall of the clergy, which led to the downfall and decay of the Polish nation. The preponderance towards grassroots organizing as the atom of a healthy national community is also visible in the activities organized by the organization. Besides promoting Polish national identity, Trzecia Droga organizes charity donations to Serb children in Kosovo, as well as local charity and blood donations with *Małopolscy Patrioci*, another regional far-right organization.

Overall, the organizations belonging to the “nationalist” component of Polish right radicalism (as opposed to Narodowcy) present the more extreme section of the contemporary Polish radical right (see Table 3.2). Although these organizations operate in heavily volatile circumstances, their overall impact, especially on increasingly radicalized and precarious youth, should not be underestimated (Waniek 2014: 95-97). In policy debates, nationalists are often

"allowed" to express their positions and radicalize the discourse, which then allows the more mainstream actors (in this case, Narodowcy) to shift the weight and articulate their views and legitimate and 'less radical' than that of the extreme. Within such circumstances, the atomized nature of the Polish radical right (paired with electoral and strategic maneuvering by PiS) prevents it from contending the key governmental positions. Nevertheless, the impact of the radical right on specific policy domains including the environment, particularly with regard to its discursive strategies, calls for a closer examination of its fundamental positions and relevance for contemporary debates about the natural environment, and the attempts to generate a distinctive environmental imaginary.

Summary

This chapter attempted to canvass the ever-changing far-right landscape in Hungary and Poland. Conditioned not only by the historical right radicalism and fascism derived from the distinctive trajectories of ethnonationalism articulated in the late 19th century, the contemporary far right in Hungary and Poland operates in democracies that have gradually become “illiberal” under the pressure of leading right-wing populist parties, Fidesz (Hungary) and PiS (Poland). Logically, the rationale for presenting the far-right organizations in the post-socialist era can be justified through contextual markers: the distinction between twenty- and twenty-first-century parties in Hungary, or the difference between Narodowcy and Nacjonaliści in Poland.

In an attempt to level these differences in the logic of presentation, the overview of Hungarian far-right organization presented, in chronological order, the development of the main far-right informal network of organizations, headed by the main party (first Jobbik and then Mi

Hazánk) and concomitant, extreme-right organizations. While the difference between the radical and extreme right is not always easy to establish in the Hungarian case, the Polish distinction between Narodowcy and Nacjonaliści mirrors this ideological demarcation, with the exception of ONR and its factions. Overall, these subtypes intend to serve only an orientational purpose, as the complexity of organizational and ideological dynamics of the far-right in Hungary and Poland is further exacerbated by the fact that they operate in highly contingent circumstances. Nonetheless, the consistency in ideological diversity of this landscape over the years, also significantly reflecting the diversity of the far-right worldwide, allows for an exploration of the ecological and ecologist tenets of their appeal. But, before such a task can be performed, it is necessary to first outline the methodological convictions and considerations that informed this thesis.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

Both the natural and societal approaches are complex and may have some similarities. Nature may reflect some of the relations observed in our society but, unlike some “progressive” intellectuals, I certainly do not support any -ism which compares people to weeds.

Generalization is inevitable, yet sometimes it makes my life only harder. There are as many nationalisms as there are nationalists...that’s the truth we, as nationalists, are not even willing to admit. As long as I don’t end up depicted as an archetypical white supremacist sniffing flowers in a wheat field, I am fine. Agata, Ecolektyw, 7th June, 2019

In so many ways, Agata foretold what this chapter and my entire research experience of attempting to capture the representative features of far right and ecologism will look like. A *sui generis*, unique individual, far from being a conformist activist susceptible to the uncritical appropriation of narratives, Agata has already changed a few nationalist organizations in her quest for a "right-right". Now a female co-leader of a radical ecologist group with nationalist credentials, she was far from a vociferous and intrusive influencer, which increased my responsibility to avoid eliding the nuances which constitute her complex political activism (Busher 2020: 272). Having extensive knowledge about environmental issues but also willing to collaborate with the entire ideological spectrum in achieving her goals, Agata did not fit the stereotypical presentations of a lone-wolf "folk-devil" (Cohen 1972). Though her ideological profile seems unambiguous, her extraordinarily careful and, at times, remorseful accounts did not coincide with the well-established creed of extremists or radicals who are replete with bluntness and clarity. This is exactly why embracing these moments of fracture, abruptness, and surprise, characteristic of any hermeneutic and

ethnographic research, is of utmost importance in designing a methodology in order to open the text to critique and contest.

Building on these perplexing accounts, and the theoretical convictions outlined in the framework of ideological morphology, outlined in Chapter 1, this chapter will delve into the methodology used in this thesis. After identifying the ontological and epistemological grounds for this research, the chapter moves on to identify the methodological principles, mostly building on Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) as a guiding principle. The building blocks of a research paradigm will set the stage for addressing the reliability, generalizability, and validity of this research and its results. The overview of methods used in this research is divided into two segments: data collection, and data analysis. For the former, I will introduce the web and document analysis, qualitative in-depth interviews, and the ethnography, simultaneously reflecting on the ethical issues and positionality. For the latter, data analysis section, this chapter will outline the principles of qualitative data analysis (Kuckartz 2013) building on Grounded Theory, as well as elements of Critical Discourse Analysis (namely the Discourse-Historical Approach, DHA, see Reisigl and Wodak 2017) that enhanced the coding process and the construction of categories.

Research Paradigm and Grounded Theory; validity and generalizability

The term "research paradigm" refers, relatively simply, to the "ways of viewing the world" and understanding human experience (Kuhn 1962). What Kuhn essentially argues in his seminal work was that science entails competing outlooks on how the world can be examined, each of which consists of distinctive ontological, epistemological, and methodological convictions. The research paradigm constitutes a "disciplinary matrix" (Bryant 1975: 354), safeguarding from

(un)warranted questions some of the fundamental assumptions. In environmental sociology, where this research is mostly situated, dominates the hermeneutical paradigm, which emphasizes the conjectural nature of knowledge, fundamentally inconclusive and dependent on human perception. Thus, the key to understanding the far right as an ideology is to interpret the articulations of its proponents, well-attuned to conversational interactions and conceptual decontestations (see Vessey and Blauwkamp 2006).

Conversation is the basic mode of understanding (see Gadamer 2008 [1976]), and all understanding requires some form of interpretation between the "familiar" and the "alien," thus giving primacy to language. Gadamer's fundamental contention is that interpretation of any text requires reflexivity with regard to its alterities, in association with the conditions of its production, dissemination, and consumption or interpretation. Against the background of the "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Ricoeur 1965), the focus on language is with the chief purpose of historicizing the context (as performed in Heidegger's work, but also Wittgenstein's focus on the nature of language as a "public" matter). The interpretational encounter, very much emanating from the German intellectual tradition (as opposed to French), points to the hermeneutic circle, referring to the logic of understanding developed in accordance with Hegelian philosophy: understanding entails going in circles (Bauman 1978: 17). It does not assume a line of progress, a reduction of the unknown, but continuous recapitulation and a reassessment of the "particular" and "the total." Thanks to Schleiermacher, the hermeneutical circle does not entail mere interpretation of the texts but constitutes a lived experience, *Erlebnis*, of the encounter with the other. The fundamental contribution of a hermeneutical circle is that it actually entails a spiral – when following conceptual decontestations, the "analyst" never goes back to the same starting point but instead spirals out,

associating ever-more meanings and context to the original attempt to decontest a concept. This is why the hermeneutic circle is particularly in concurrence with Grounded Theory (see Glaser and Strauss 1967) as a systematic approach and the method of qualitative data analysis.

However, Grounded Theory (GT) does not actually stand for a theoretical framework. It should be rather understood as a methodological outline which is most attuned to the pragmatic onto-epistemological paradigm of the research (see Strauss and Corbin 1990). Grounded Theory emanated from the Chicago School of sociology, closely interlinked with symbolic interactionism. Its main protagonists, Herbert Blumer, George Herbert Mead, and Edwin Sutherland, emphasized the relevance of interaction and interpretation for the ways in which human beings understand the world. The research process and the value of interaction becomes central to theory building. The revolutionary aspect of Glaser and Strauss was the fact that qualitative research could also generate theories, “grounded in data.”

Grounding theory in (qualitative) data is exactly why Grounded Theory was coupled with the "language-centered" morphological analysis rooted in hermeneutics and Gadamer's emphasis on the historical character of understanding. But unlike GT's focus on inductive reasoning, this research is following “abductive” reasoning (see Peirce [1903] 1931-1958), where hermeneutical induction characteristic for GT gives way to the deduction of the morphological approach to ideologies, the generalization appears as a levelling factor which intentionally ignores the numerous idiosyncrasies. The other reason is more pragmatic, given GT's trial-and-error orientation and methodological flexibility, it forestalls "the opportunistic use of theories that have dubious fit and working capacity" (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 5). This flexibility allows GT to be complementary to other research outlooks and methods, such as discourse analysis. With data

being at the center of analysis, the moment of its very production initiates its continuous revisiting. Through a continuous comparison of the data, the coding process and the creation of categories is dependent on the selection of cases, since this thesis is an example of a case study research.

Case study research entails “an intensive, in-depth view of a spatially delimited phenomenon, where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases.” (Gerring 2007:19-20) In this case, a country serves as a “case” (Hungary, Poland) to shed light on other countries – cases. This research is not a single, but a cross-case, comparative study, with its focus on the heuristic method of discovery, valuing comparing and contrasting as “essential analytical moves.” (Bartlett and Vavrus 2017: 7) For this study, cases are preselected on two major grounds: the relevance of cases for the far right in Eastern Europe and the world, and the relevance of cases for environmental politics in Eastern Europe. With right-wing populist parties in power and the far-right opposition, Hungary and Poland represent cases of competing nationalist traditions in domestic politics, which sufficiently broadens the ideational depth for prospective ideological explorations. Moreover, Hungary, and less so Poland, represent role-models for the far-right not only in Eastern Europe, but also in the West (and around the world), which is why researching the contribution to far-right ecologism is even more important.

The second reason why Hungary and Poland were selected is in these cases accentuating the Eastern-European, post-socialist experience of conflating ethnonationalism with environmental concerns, as well as using the Eastern European context as the (open-ended) repository of knowledge on ecologism and political activism.²⁴ This role of Eastern Europe as a

²⁴ In doing so, the concepts of "culture" and "context" become extraordinarily important for the analysis in this thesis. Providing a substantial or even a brief conceptual history of these terms is beyond the limits of this thesis. However,

contributor to knowledge production in the world of fast-moving frontiers stems from both the mounting inequalities induced by the “eco-colonialism” and environmental exploitation (Harper 2006). While there are vast differences between countries and contexts within Eastern Europe, say Montenegro and Estonia, the shared post-socialist political tradition paired with rampant environmental degradation calls for a closer examination of EE as a political context. Yet, the extent to which some of the concepts within FRE are specific or peculiar to Eastern Europe or broader geographic context is irrelevant to this research: what matters is using the original, and in many ways emblematic experience of the far right in Hungary and Poland to infer about FRE, but also the similarities and differences between the two cases. In this way, the decolonization of sociology, and social science in general, is a prerequisite for valuing generalization as imperfect and as incomplete as they are.

Yet, comparative case study research also brings numerous problems. Aside from the concerns about, e.g., lack of rigor (constructing equivalence between the two cases) or generalization (Hungary and Poland as representative of the EE realms), Flyvbjerg (2006) pointed to the five most common misunderstandings and criticisms concerning the case-study research. Most of these are associated with deductive reasoning (see Dogan and Pelassy 1990), including the already-discussed inability of generalization, prioritizing “theory” over “practice,” case study’s

both refer to continuously evolving notions, which are susceptible to change, nevertheless standing as an assemblage of values and practices. Culture is never uniform: it comprises “multiplex and dynamically changing” entities (Erickson 2011: 32). Thus, moving away from deterministic conceptualizations is a prerequisite to embracing the world that is continuously on the move. That context is never static is perhaps well shown through the notion of “Eastern Europe,” elaborated on in the introduction. The notion of “territoriality” (see Vaccaro and Beltran 2010) is becoming prominent in both political ecology and environmental sociology, and its relationship with the environment has been thoroughly explored in light of the Eastern European context (see Gille 2007; Snajdr 2014). The symbolic representations of territory, place and its ramifications on identity have been perpetually molding the activism of both far-right and environmental organizations in Eastern Europe.

usefulness for generating hypotheses, bias towards verification, and the difficulty of summarizing particular case studies (Flyvbjerg 2006). Therefore, case studies as such allow for a closer contextual reading, where the “unit of analysis” (Yin 2003[1984]:26) is “far right” in the two countries (Chapter 3).

The question of rigor also relates to this thesis’s response to the fundamental principles of science: validity, generalizability, and reliability of the research findings. By introducing the aforementioned notion of essentially contested concepts, the content validity (Bolden 1989: 135, in Drost 2011: 118) is assured. Reliability of the data – replication of the research findings is a standard viewed with suspicion among the qualitative researchers (Stenbacka 2001) instead of focusing on the validity of the findings through data analysis. But even then, replicability of qualitative analysis is, more often than not, dependent on a rather unique and individual experience of assessing and interpreting the data (Wertz et al. 2011). This will be reflected on in the section on ethnography (see below).

In spite of this, Far-Right Ecologism is a generalization which builds on cases (Hungary and Poland) to provide knowledge about an ideology by looking at principally far-right organizations that are not all necessarily (in fact, it is probably a minority that belongs to the) proponents of this ideological amalgam. In spite of criticisms of invoking a generalization through two case studies, case studies are “generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (Yin 2003[1984]: 10). Much as some features of far-right (ecologism) in Hungary and Poland are resonantly contextual, but their ideological core resembles the universal and contextually-adjustable principles. To attain such universality, it was necessary to rely on abduction – “surprising facts” and outliers which moderate the model of FRE.

Methods: data collection

Apart from the review of relevant literature and actors, the primary methods of data collection used in this research are documents from the relevant webpages (official websites, official blogs, social media pages, speeches), qualitative interviews, and ethnography.

The data collection process, entailing a total of 51 interviews (37 audio and 14 in written format), with an average length of 46 minutes 56 seconds (minimum recorded was 14 minutes 27 seconds, maximum recorded was 1 hour and 44 minutes), was carried out in three major phases between 1st November 2017 and 20th July 2020 (see Appendix 3). The first phase was conducted between November 2017 and October 2018 – the Prospectus Defense. In the first phase, apart from formulating the research problem and defining the aims and objectives defended in the Prospectus, an overview of organizations relevant for this research (and their webpages) was completed, as well as 16 qualitative interviews with respondents from Hungary and Slovakia.²⁵ The second phase lasted from October 2018 to October 2019, with two research stays in Poland and 37 more interviews completed in Hungary and Poland. The third phase of data collection focused almost entirely (apart from one written interview) on collecting data from the social media and incorporating the new party documents: electoral manifestos for European Parliament and the 2019 parliamentary elections in Poland. What is common for all three phases is that they comprised an iterative process explained above, also in accordance with the principles of Grounded Theory (see

²⁵ In the initial phase, I also conducted 3 interviews with respondents from far-right organizations in Slovakia, as a part of the plan to incorporate this case in the research. The Slovakian case was eventually dropped after the Prospectus defense, due to the insignificant number of active far-right organizations in the country other than Kotlebists – The People's Party (*Kotleba – Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko*), the relationship of the far right in Hungary and Poland, the advantages of a comparative case study, but also the feasibility of the research.

Strauss and Corbin 1990), in which the data collection, analysis, and writing were conducted interchangeably.

Document and internet analysis: Webpages, social media, blogs, speeches

The first step of the data collection process, conducted between 1st November 2017 and 20th July 2020, was identifying the relevant organizations and their official media outlets, thus partly addressing Objective#1 of the dissertation (together with Chapter 3). Since none of these organizations have their official newspapers, the focus was on the electronic sources: the organization's official webpage or blog (in the case of *Ecolektyw*), social media pages (I focused on three: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram),²⁶ personal webpages or blogs (as the case with Jobbik's Lajos Kepli), speeches, as well as relevant media articles about the organization or its representatives. The relevant texts and visuals were based on their reference to the environment, including biodiversity, wildlife, ecology, agriculture, climate change, energy, animal welfare, or similar topics (see Chapter 8). Instead of running search engines through keywords, I "manually" went through the history of news items/posts/tweets on these webpages, to avoid missing relevant items from the analysis. This process was facilitated by the number of relevant items, which is also the reason why running content analysis (with Yoshicoder or the like software) was unnecessary, given the number of appearances in relevant sources (with the exception of Jobbik, Mi Hazánk, and Ecolektyw). As per the media articles, the relevant articles were chosen on the basis of

²⁶ For the social media pages, the focus was on both the official page of the organization, but also the local branches or topical pages: such as *Jobbik Környezetvédelem* (Jobbik Environmental Protection) or the *Zöld Hazánk* (Green Homeland), "green" wing of Mi Hazánk. The only Instagram page taken into account for the data collection process was that of *Ecolektyw*. As per the other organizations, the content posted on Instagram was reposted on their Facebook pages.

triangulation: if the same news item (concerning environment) appeared in several news outlets, the one closest to the party was chosen (e.g., *Alfahir* for Jobbik, *Elemi.hu* for Mi Hazánk, Szent Korona Rádió for HVIM, *Media Narodowe* for Ruch Narodowy and MW). Since the focus was also on visual communication, the data collected also comprised three videos, though only those specifically related to one of the relevant topics. Overall, the data collected included 277 texts and 3 videos (see Appendix 6). All textual data was stored in a personal *Airtable/Excel* file and analyzed through rQDA software. The downloaded images were stored in a separate file on my personal computer.

Qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured Interviews

Qualitative, in-depth, and semi-structured interviews are the building block of this research, pinpointing 51 authentic accounts (24 from Hungary, 27 from Poland, see Appendix 3) on the research problem under scrutiny. Much like identities, the fluidity of ideological attitudes renders them susceptible to change and difficult to grasp even through the well-designed questionnaires. As Yamaguchi (2005: 242) argues, "face-to-face interaction is an important locus for (re)producing, perpetuating, transforming, or even destroying social reality." Therefore, conducting in-depth interviews presented an opportunity to tap into the underlying ideological assumptions associated with the environment but also open space for ethnographic ventures. In-depth interviewing also provides an opportunity to highlight the contextual element (see Hennink et al. 2011: 110), as such interactions inescapably lead to reflections on the conditions of their very production. The semi-structured interview allows for easier mapping of the general attitudes with

regard to specific topics, but also the “degree of freedom” to which a respondent can develop or articulate their narrative.

Due to the nature of the research, the sampling strategy for qualitative interviews had to be purposeful (see Emmel 2013) to accommodate various contingencies arising from the preparation for the field. Patton (2002) suggests that in sampling strategies, the researcher should always prioritize credibility over representativeness. The choices always end up being justified by pragmatism, and Grounded Theory's sampling strategy has been recognized as that of "convenience" (Morse 2007). Nevertheless, having a sampling strategy, as malleable as it may be, accounts for the fundamental research principles such as generalizability, reliability, and validity. The sampling rationale for selecting respondents, while conditioned by their availability, was principally based on their role in the organizations outlined in chapters 3 and 4. Yet, the difference in sampling strategy before and after the fieldwork indicates the hardships of sampling strategies in qualitative research. The original sampling rationale included both the vertical-hierarchical and the horizontal aspects. For the former, the focus was on obtaining an interview with individuals from different positions within an organization: at least one leader of the organization (the president or a member of the governing/executive board), the leader or activist of the environmental section (if applies), and the local activist(s). For the horizontal sampling, the aim was to account for the geographical area, as well as gender. The requirement for the "geography" aspect of sampling was to engage with far-right members from outside of Budapest and for Poland to obtain as many contacts from different Voivodships as possible.

However, the mode that proved to be the most effective in practice was the snowball (also known as “chain”) sampling (Coleman 1958), as the researcher of far-right organizations

inevitably has to rely on the networks with which one becomes acquainted during the research. This can pose several problems, such as overreliance on these referential chains as representative of the population (see Biernacki and Waldorf 1981, for a broader discussion). The role of "gatekeepers" – influential individuals who, due to their position in a community/organization, can assist with participant recruitment has also been influential in the field (Hennink et al. 2011: 93). The gatekeepers are not necessarily the leaders: quite often, those were "lay" members with acquaintances in several far-right organizations, allowing me to obtain more useful contacts. Of course, I used each interview as an opportunity to ask for more contacts, which significantly advanced my network of respondents and prevented me from experiencing serious obstacles (e.g., safety concerns) in the research process. As with the whole process of sampling, flexibility and versatility proved to be the most valued assets: making the most of public and private events I attended as a researcher also entailed some irregularities in the original sampling strategy. An example is a private event organized by *Stowarzyszenie Marsz Niepodległości*, an organization behind the Polish March of Independence, which I attended thanks to an acquaintance from ONR. The event, organized on the eve of the March (11th November 2018), enabled me to establish contact with 7 of my future respondents.

The same can be argued about the principle of "saturation" – sufficient number of repetitions leading to no "new" data being discovered in the analysis process (Faulkner and Trotter 2017). Doing qualitative interviews, it was often difficult to establish this line of demarcation. In qualitative research, saturation refers to qualitative rather than quantitative mapping, interested in the nuanced and rather unquantifiable extent to which the data describes the phenomenon under investigation (Fischer et al. 2020: 201). The decision to stop collecting data, at least through

interviews, was partly informed by saturation and recurrence of themes in the data, but also by the sheer fact of exhausting options for informants or the inability to spend more time in the field.

Establishing the initial contact with my interlocutors required a sufficiently flexible approach, as most of the organizations I was researching were notably skeptical towards outsiders, which is characteristic of similar research (Fangen 2020: 246; see also Simi and Futrell 2015). Sometimes, contacting the PR department of the political party presented on their website was sufficient for arranging an interview. Such settings usually mirrored the circumstances present in a typical "elite interview," which was not the most desired outcome due to the issue of reliability of data, and the tendency of "elite" interlocutors to avoid making potentially controversial statements (Morris 2009: 211, also Beamer 2002). Apart from contacting the representatives of organizations through their official email or contact forms displayed on the official websites, a tactic which more often than not proved to be ineffective, I often resorted to other means, such as contacting people via their official or private social media (Facebook) pages. In addition to this, I tried to get in touch with the leaders of their unofficial supporting pages on the social media. Finally, the last-resort tactic which turned out to be very successful (in spite of the immense risk and subsequent ethical and safety concerns), was to show up to the official events organized by these groups and establish a rapport through face-to-face interactions (see *Ethnography*).

The implications of such interactions are numerous. Having dishonest interlocutors is always an issue lurking in the back of a researcher's mind: unfortunately, the only way in which the researcher can reduce this possibility is through establishing a solid rapport, which again is not consequentially accurate. The leadership of political, and even more, of far-right organizations, is well attuned to challenging questions or hostile audiences. Given the widely recognized anti-

intellectual background of this ideology (particularly the case with the extreme right), their attitude towards academics was, in most cases, no different from that of journalists. On the one hand, in a world where academics are (perhaps rightly) perceived as the representatives of the ivory towers of the left, establishing rapport is an arduous task. On the other hand, there are also cases where academics are considered "benign" or where respondents did not show a particular interest in the political views of the researcher (Jansson 2010). Although the attitude depends on the respondent, it also had to do with the settings in which the encounter occurred: it was much easier to become embraced without interrogation in a pub over a few pints as opposed to arranging a meeting over email.

Each interview is a "window on the world" (Hyman et al. 1975), but windows can be tainted and they are always situated in a particular way and thus offering a single perspective. To ensure that the high-ranked representatives of parliamentary political parties (e.g., Mi Hazánk and Ruch Narodowy) are sufficiently engaged in the discussion and willing to move beyond the programmatic statements articulated on their official webpages or media outlets, I resorted to a range of strategies. Examples include deliberately changing the topic guide (e.g., by asking a set of questions unrelated to the research, such as "what motivated you to get into politics"), or asking for an opportunity to interview in less formal settings (e.g., in a café). Some of the interviews (12 in total) were attained in written format. In most of the cases, it was impossible to arrange a meeting due to several circumstances, including safety concerns (such as a trip to Székesfehérvár where I was supposed to meet with co-leaders of HVIM). Still, in three cases, I already had the chance to talk to my interlocutors, who nevertheless opted for "taking the time" and providing a written response to my questions. While reflecting on these in the analysis process and in soliciting quotes

for the subsequent chapters, I treated written responses the same way as those transcribed from the audio recording.

All these strategies account for the fact that, in qualitative interviews, respondents-interlocutors do not simply stand as repositories of knowledge to be excavated from the able interviewer, but a co-construction of meaning (see Holstein and Gubrium 2004: 114). This is why preparing a solid topic guide plays an essential role in the creation (and, if poorly designed, skewing) of the data. I learnt this the hard way in my first couple of interviews with respondents in the Hungarian Parliament, as odd moments of silence would appear after my cumbersome and largely unintelligible questions. Through the use of vignettes in interviews, I attempted to “relocate” the burden of addressing unpleasant questions to the hypothetical and mundane situations unrelated to the issue at stake. Vignettes enable an “insight into the social components of the participant’s interpretative framework and perceptual processes” (Jenkins et al. 2010: 178) rather than an accurate prediction of a respondent's behavior. An example of a question for which I sometimes resorted to vignettes was the one exploring stances on migration and sociobiology (see number 4 in Appendix 2) because of the delicate framing of the question. However, the key to understanding vignettes is their plausibility, as the lack of it renders data obtained through vignettes unreliable and may even provoke negative reactions from the participants (Hughes 1998). Therefore, when vignettes were used, I resorted to "snapshot" vignettes over the more popular, "developmental" vignettes, which entail a longitudinal aspect (see Jenkins et al. 2010: 193). The use of "snapshot" vignettes allowed a swift return to the topic of the conversation and served more as a probe to a question rather than a diverting point.

The semi-structured in-depth interviews with representatives of far-right organizations had a total of 17 questions separated into three main themes: nature/ideology, movement, and contacts (see Appendix 2). The first theme consists of 11 questions, aiming to outline the basic ideological and policy positions with regard to issues such as (anthropogenic) climate change, ecological polity, organic farming, environmental migration, and the overall relationship between nationalism and the environment. The second batch of questions (3 in total) is related to the activities conducted within the organization a respondent is a representative of. Finally, the last group of questions referred to the contacts of the organization in question, aiming to address whether there had been any attempts at establishing an "environmental network" of far-right organizations or whether there had been any interactions with environmental organizations from a different ideological background.

Ethnography

Ethnography entails "writing about people" or "writing an account of the way of life of a particular people." (see Hammersley 2017: 3) It is one of the main methods of sociological, and particularly anthropological research, focusing on "naturally occurring settings" of and in the field (Brewer 2003: 99). As such, it corresponds to the "thick description" of culture (Geertz 1973), requiring a prolonged data-collection process and embeddedness in the context through observation of "naturally occurring" settings and interpretations people provide to actors, objects, and phenomena (Hammersley 2017: 6). All this makes ethnography particularly suitable for a paradigm rooted in hermeneutics, yet its features are often lacking delineation or substantial justification for one's choice in the field. Therefore, ethnography remains a contested method, and

for quite some time, researchers have been struggling to identify what ethnography actually stands for (Hammersley 2017: 4). This led to watering down the method and its rigor, becoming a "catch-all term" for qualitative methods and triangulation, synonymous with "writing culture" (Mitchell 2007: 55).

The ethnography as a method of data collection used in this research was rather "incomplete," and has notably deviated from the ideal-type, textbook and anthropological application. The multi-sited nature of the ethnography I conducted, paired with the continuous hesitancy to become fully immersed in the context and livelihoods of my respondents, meant that I had to continuously revisit the fundamental principles of (and motivations for) conducting ethnography, such as keeping regular fieldnotes or staying situated long enough in a single location. Conducting qualitative research on the far right is reminiscent of risky undertakings of hiking over a ridge, where the researcher is continuously expected to keep in mind the "safe" side that does not actually exist. Unlike Hungary (Budapest), where I stayed for the majority of my doctoral research, I took three short trips to Poland (November 2018, June-July 2019, and September-October 2019) to conduct fieldwork. Each of these trips involved moving places frequently in my futile quest for the "perfect sample," but also meeting as many respondents and thus, naively, maximizing the fieldwork experience. My very first field day in Poland was the already-mentioned 11th November 2018, during the March of Independence in Warsaw, which marked the centenary since Poland regained its independence. Other than Warsaw, I conducted my research in the urban areas, such as Gdańsk, Krakow, Bielsko-Biała, Szczecin, Poznań, Łódź, Katowice, Zakopane, but also smaller places such as Kartuzy, Nowy Targ, Myślenice, and Terespol.

For this reason, the first principle of ethnography, even if it is a multi-sited one: immersing into the mundane aspects of the lives of my respondents and inscribing the social discourse of their realities (see Geertz 1973: 19; Goffman 1989), was virtually impossible. The in-depth participant observation or “ethnographic interviews” (Poets 2020: 106) are often conflated with doing ethnography. To frequently move places in Poland instead of situating myself in a single location (as I had done in Budapest, for the reasons of convenience)²⁷ was a conscious and well-planned decision made on two premises. First, such an approach was in line with my research aims and objectives and the intention to ensure (or maximize) the generalizing potential, reliability, and validity. That is, focusing on Hungarian and Polish far right required getting acquainted with as many members of these organizations as possible, rather than identifying a single organization/location as “the” source of meaning-making. Second, such an approach was probably beneficial in avoiding mental health hardships characteristic of the “embodied fieldwork” (Okely 2007).

The ethical dilemmas and implications of such a research are numerous and arise as a consequence of “getting close” to the object of the study (see Goffman 1989). Obviously, this immersion entailed a range of dubious encounters, for which none of the classes in this, or (I dare presume) any other universities, cannot fully prepare the researcher for. Physical presence in the field brings about consequences, from practical to emotional and intellectual. From being unable

²⁷ It is worth noting that not only my university, its libraries, and departments were based in Budapest, but I was, for the most part, living in an exceptionally welcoming student community at the CEU Residence Center. This added a much-needed balance to my life and wellbeing and allowed me to take rests in-between frequent field trips to Hungarian towns, where I interviewed my respondents. While this may have diminished the ethnographic experience of being immersed in the non-Budapest contexts in Hungary, it has not significantly reduced my ability to collect data: in fact, it allowed me to be physically and mentally “fresh” while interacting with my interlocutors and their lifestyles.

to meet the respondents because they were arrested for possessing anti-Semitic materials, to entering pubs in which the initiation process for new members was about to commence, required making swift decisions that were not always beneficial to the research or the researcher (for similar dilemmas, see Ramalingam 2020). Deciding whether to accept the invitation and to go to a private party for the "inner circles" means acknowledging the possibility of entering potentially volatile and belligerent situations. A separate set of issues entail both physical proximity and ideological distance from those I researched.

Another dichotomy that requires being established is that between "externalist" (Goodwin 2006) studies on the far right (e.g., economic and cultural environments creating conditions for far-right mainstreaming) and the "internalist" research, entailing direct contact with the "objects" of the study (see Klandermans and Maier 2006). The former types of studies have allowed for a greater understanding of the relational dimension, as well as provided evidence and explanations for far-right mainstreaming. Even though this thesis suggests that ideology is a cluster of concepts with some internal coherence, that does not mean it exists in a vacuum. Thus, studying even a single ideology requires a comparative assessment. Simultaneously, to understand an ideological morphology, one needs to focus on the building blocks as outlined in the accounts of its proponents. Of course, focusing on the direct accounts of the meaning-makers and those who appropriate those meanings entail a range of practical issues related to validity, generalizability, and research ethics.

The ethics in the field also come with a certain sense of revulsion, coming from both the scholarly community and the wider public, of getting acquainted with the far right that a researcher has to account for. Far too many times, I found myself addressing suspicions of not only fellow

researchers and other interested individuals, but even my family and close friends: have I crossed the line by becoming a part of the private lives of my respondents, congratulating on their first child, providing travel advice about my home country, etc.? At times, I was also engulfed by an unwarranted feeling of contempt towards fellow researchers who never dared to soil their "moral hygiene" (Gingrich and Banks 2006: 7).

As Kathleen Blee (2007: 125) has rightfully acknowledged in her work on far-right ethnography, the application of this method is fundamentally dependent on the ability to negotiate. Yet, the negotiation with subjects with whom one does not share a frame of reference (Whittier 2002; see also Blee 2007) requires navigating between the "ethics of fairness" towards the subjects and mitigating the consequences of these social movements (Blee 2007: 125). Appearing naïve in the eyes of your interlocutors raises questions about the reliability of data, but being openly mistrustful will lead to significant limitations. Field relationships affect theory-building: claiming that my impression of Agata or others have not influenced my decontestations of, e.g., Naturalism or Organicism would be wrong (see Blee 2019). The fraught nature of the relationship with my interlocutors at times affected pursuing new lines of inquiry (Blee 2019: 758), as the changing perceptions of the "ridge" and "the safe side" impeded my ability to push deeper into their understanding of, e.g., authority or violence.

While there is no unique strategy to achieving such challenging goals, being upfront about the research and its goals has proven to be of immense value in deepening the rapport. Of course, this was partly due to the "nature of the topic" – being portrayed as a harmless researcher interested in an un(der)explored dimension of far-right nationalism diminished the skepticism that usually comes as a consequence of such intrusions. As Benjamin Teitelbaum (2018: 12) has noted in his

ethnography on far-right music, this was not a consequence of "the silly fetish of an unattainable neutrality" or the lack of concern towards the radical nationalism of the far right. It is an attempt at producing an authentic commentary which, amid unescapable criticisms, brings about reflection in the readers, but also my respondents, without which such commentaries would not exist (on the range of issues arising from this proximity, see Tenold 2018). Some of my informants appreciated the "professional" approach, with a lengthy introduction on informed consent, ethics, and storing data; others instead looked for a more "relaxed" discussion, relieved of procedural Q&A patterns. Much as I insisted on integrating the former: telling my respondents about the purpose of the research, the rules for recording, and willingness to remain available and visible to them after our meeting, the richest ethnographic accounts proved to be with those respondents who preferred the informal nature of encounters.

Yet, the informality of ethnographic research (see Laurier et al. 2001) may easily become a double-edged sword. As a relatively young researcher in his mid-twenties, growing up in the settings somewhat similar to those of my respondents, I found it relatively easy to both understand where some of the ideas of my respondents come from, as well as to navigate through even some of the uncomfortable situations. One of the most frequent examples of these potentially dangerous situations was the "Soros-moment," or the instant in which my respondents learned about my institutional affiliation and its founder. Even though I ensured that my respondents are familiar with my institutional affiliation before I obtained informed consent, I deliberately chose to "postpone," revealing the fact that George Soros, the meta-enemy of the far right (particularly in Hungary), is the founder and honorable chairman of my university. The strategy behind such a decision was in establishing a rapport, which was, in all of the cases, unaffected by the "finding"

of my informants. Informality allowed me to establish contacts with my respondents, learn about their lives (but also share my own life stories), and continue my research journey without ever being physically endangered.²⁸ The threat of physical violence was significantly diminished by my positionality: a white, heterosexual sportsman, which mitigated the position of being a "foreigner" and the "outsider" to my respondents. Using deflective techniques in discussions in order to re-center the debate on their, and not my opinion proved to be another helpful practice in narrowing the immense ideological gap.

However, informality may also mean the inability to be detached, let alone disinterested from the informants (Teitelbaum 2017: 13). The caveats of coming to terms with this are manifold: an ethnography of the far right is incomplete as it cannot fully entail the "co-creation" and collaboration characteristic of most anthropological accounts (see Kemper and Royce 2002). While my background chapters were written with their words in mind, I have not yet shown a draft or a published work to my far-right respondents. Growing closer with some of them, I find it increasingly difficult to navigate between justified criticisms of journalistic (and unfortunately, often scholarly) commentaries of those authors who have never encountered an actual nationalist, and the often repulsive and blatant comments and acts of the people I spent my time with. This is clearly a consequence of the overcasting discourse of moralization evident in far-right research, which situates the researcher in an uneasy position of being associated with the worldviews of their respondents. Yet, it is also easy to fall into the trap of being overly sympathetic towards the

²⁸ The only situation in which I found myself expecting a violent confrontation was the moment in Poznań. As my two informants were showing me around this beautiful city, one of them silently pulled a pepper spray out of his pocket without saying a word. It was only a couple of (tense) seconds later that I learned that we just passed the local ANTIFA pub, where my informants had numerous altercations with the pub's guests.

proponents of, more often than not, straightforwardly loathful ideologies. Maintaining the fine and delicate line between an intention to comprehend the worldviews and being complicit in spreading them was all about being aware of one's own values and being fine with the self-established principles, the boundaries which are not to be crossed.

There were also multiple occasions in which my respondents endeavored to instill fear as a tool that could be used against me. This was usually performed under the guise of controlling the research output, hence even beyond assuring that their accounts were veraciously presented. Through threats packed as casual jokes, my respondents struggled to maintain control over the content produced in such interactions (for a similar experience of conducting research with the far right, see Blee 2017: 24). It would be untrue to claim that such remarks, even if veiled thinly in the vague humor, have not impacted the production of the thesis and its chapters. Constantly thinking about what the reaction of my respondents to my written outputs about our interactions resulted in the feeling of exhaustion. Though this emotional toll is often excluded from scholarly publications on the basis of its usually cumbersome and unpleasantly candid articulation, the personal stories embroiled with anger and resentment had to be incorporated even in something as generalizable as an ideological morphology.

Even though I entered the field with an ideal of leveling the playground by co-constructing an egalitarian research process (Stacey 1988), both imminent and immanent failure of such an undertaking provided me with a deadlock of hatred from which I was unable to escape. I have been conversant with far-right nationalists as a constitutive part of my childhood in post-socialist urban settings, yet amid the indispensable empathy I had for them as human beings, any attempt to

position myself as an acting unit (Blumer 1969) and to see the world through their eyes was simply impossible. However, that did not prevent me from granting access to my own world in the same vein as I was allowed access to theirs (Geer 1967; Kleinman and Copp 1993: 28). To make an attempt of doing justice to those who took their time to help the very production of this account, the presence, articulation and, most disturbingly, dissemination of hatred gradually became my own way of coping with day-to-day situations. The thin line between curiosity, surprise and loathing is bound to be crossed (see Blee 2017: 24) – what is comforting though, is that this crossing is not necessarily unidirectional. Cognizant of the dangers of ethnographic writing, sharing moments from this particular journey outweigh the ingrained risk of providing "narcissistic self-reflections" (Blee 2017: 19).

No research is free of values (Fraser 1999), and therefore reflectiveness constitutes an important part of the research process. While establishing boundaries, e.g., by not appearing in any photos that promote far-right slogans or merchandise, such an attitude towards the objects of the study accentuates the extractive nature of research, in which participants seem to maximize the research interaction for personal or group gain. Addressing these caveats is far from a straightforward and unidirectional process. Enlisting the possibility of an ecological disaster to the well-established fear of cultural decay entails a range of sentiments. For the researcher to sufficiently grasp this range, it was necessary to acquire a sort of “moral relativism” characteristic of ethnographic research (Montesinos Coleman 2015). It was very soon that I realized that this relativism will be unattainable, much like my intention to appear as impartial and as detached as one can be.

The majority of conducted interviews were in English due to my unwillingness to speak in languages (such as Polish or Hungarian) that I did not fully master. This is, of course, a limitation of the research, and yet, this limitation made me value the need to work closely with my informants, to the extent to which that was possible, in order to ensure the correct meaning. When my respondents insisted on using their mother tongue, I either ensured the services of a translator (if this was known in advance) or relied on the translated versions of my topic guides. The somewhat different and consequently more difficult approach to obtaining informed consent forms was a consequence of my outlook on transcription as a necessary interpretation. Instead of having my respondents sign the consent form during or immediately after the interview, I contacted them after the transcription was prepared: in some cases, this was even one or two years after our interview. This also entailed difficulties in obtaining consent forms, so I had to sometimes rely on the audio consent and respondent's recognition of participation in a scientific study.

The transcripts were stored in three separate locations: my personal phone (with lock key), PC-laptop, and the google drive attached to my non-university email. This ensured that I was the only person who had access to these recordings, and I informed by respondents of this before the interview (adding the ability to share the transcripts with my Doctoral Committee, if necessary). Apart from obtaining verbal or recorded consent after providing the basic information about my research and the ethics of storing the data acquired through the research process, I deliberately wanted to ensure that my respondents would have another opportunity to amend the transcripts of our conversation, although more often than not, I would not receive any feedback from them. Fulfilling this requirement entailed prolonged contact with my respondents (often via private cell phones or Facebook profile).

As was previously noted, the basic idea behind ethnography is to capture the mundane aspect of research objects. The “capturing” process, apart from the audio or video materials, is also based on fieldnotes. For this research, keeping a log of everything that happens in the field is a prerequisite to successful fieldwork (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995). In far-right research, keeping track of field notes can be a rather dangerous endeavor. Many times during my interviews, my respondents took the freedom to take my topic guide or fieldnotes and go through them. To some, this can be read as a violation of “private space”: though I did not appreciate it at first, it always proved to be a sign of amiability. Overall, the struggle to maintain a systematic log of events in the field was yet another failure in the field. Acknowledging failure and embracing failure is a product of reflexivity, “both on the subject written and the subject writing” (Minh-Ha 1989: 76).

Failure is not only associated with the field: it occurs on so many levels of the research. Fieldwork is often perceived as a “legitimizing experience,” distinguishing those members of the ivory tower who deliberately, even if for a brief period of time, left their privileged positions to engage with the objects in the world out there. I took pride in the encounters I had, often to the point where I would become less aware of my limited subjectivity. The failures appeared not only in the field. The language barrier, amid my continuous attempts to master the two languages in a relatively short period of time, defined my entire research experience. Moreover, attempting to “obscure ourselves in the method that is inevitably embodied” (De Guevara and Kurowska 2019: 163), and assuming equivalence between sometimes very different contexts in Hungary and Poland (or Montenegro, my home country), is always associated with the unique and inevitable experience of “knowing things from a particular location” (De Guevara and Kurowska 2019: 163). With all

this in mind, this research not only has its limitations but very concrete failures. Yet, it is thanks to such moments that this account on ideological morphology, constructed both from a theoretical inquiry but also from the very live accounts of the people I have encountered over the last 5 years, has been made possible.

Methods: data analysis

Qualitative Text Analysis

The analysis of data rests on the combination of approaches from two notably different theoretical positions. The central method is qualitative text analysis (see Kuckartz 2013), complemented with elements of DHA. Qualitative text analysis has its methodological foundations in Grounded Theory, and therefore focuses on the inductive process of developing the theory from the collected data. Qualitative text analysis relies on five major methodological assumptions derived from hermeneutics: reflecting on the researcher's own convictions and presumptions, working through the text as a whole, being aware of the hermeneutic differences, paying attention to the themes important for the research, and differentiating between the logic of discovery and the logic of coding (see Kuckartz 2013).

To understand the process of qualitative text analysis, it is important to identify the central terms applied in the analysis: codes, concepts, variables, and categories. Codes have several different meanings (see Bernard and Ryan 2010), classifying issues, topics, and ideas evident in the data (Hennik et al. 2011: 216). Concepts are "structuring terms" (Schnell et al. 2008), whereas variables are referred to as a synonym for a category, which stands for classified entities. There

are no formal rules on how to draw boundaries to codes, though I abided by the general guidelines outlined in Kuckartz's (2013) seminal work on qualitative text analysis.

After reading the text (interview, press release, essay) as a whole, writing memos, the analysis proceeded to identify major themes and topics. For defining topics, I partly relied on the abductive approach, using both the topic guide designed for the purpose as well as the emerging topics from the data. This is particularly the case with the questions on scientific findings and responses in relation to anthropogenic climate change and organic farming (for the topic guide, see Appendix 3; for the findings, see Chapter 7). The topics proved to be useful not only as a locus of specific debates and arguments in relation to policy proposals but were closely intertwined with the construction of ideological morphology. It is difficult to establish which process, the deductive process of relying on the topic guide, or the inductive based on the emerging topics was more crucial to the analysis. In line with the abductive approach, the two were used interchangeably.

The analysis process usually begins with "open coding" (see Kuckartz 2013), which aims to open up the data for future classification, "naming and categorizing the phenomena through the close examination of data" (Strauss and Corbin 2004: 303). Hennik et al. (2011:208) point to two types of codes: inductive – emerging from the data, and deductive – designed by the researcher. Inductive codes are the preferential choice within the Grounded Theory approach, but deductive codes, much like topics, can also be derived from the topic guide. Much as the open coding should be as "free" as possible in terms of conceptualizations, the idea is that the codes can be conferred to a precise phenomenon that can later be combined and amalgamated into categories. Therefore, coding entails an inescapable reduction (Hennik et al. 2011: 227) in order to allow for a recalibration of the categories in light of the suggested research questions.

In total, there were 137 codes and 39 topics, which led to the construction of 14 subcategories, eventually distilling into 7 categories-concepts, serving as the building blocks of ideological morphology of FRE (see Chapters 5 and 6). The most frequently used code in the analysis (Responsibility) was coded 41 times, whereas the most coded category (Manicheanism) had a total of 36 codes, coded 236 times (see Appendix 5). Since the outlook on ideological morphology operationalized in this thesis (see Chapter 1) consists of core and peripheral concepts, the logical question emanating from such an approach to coding is: how does one distinguish between the core and peripheral concepts-categories? Even though the categories were developed inductively, based on the open coding process, they were also constructed deductively, on the basis of an assessment of the political theory of ideologies (namely conservatism, fascism, populism, and nationalism, as seen in Chapter 1). Therefore, the distinction between core and peripheral concepts, although informed by the content of categories (number of codes and times coded), was based principally on the ideational, theoretical inquiry.²⁹ For instance, the top three coded categories in the analysis are Manicheanism (236 times coded), Anthropocentric Responsibility (115), and Nostalgia (74). However, the core elements of FRE (see the following chapter) are Manicheanism, Naturalism (63), and Organicism (57), building on the ideational linkage these concepts jointly provide. Another reason for not relying on the number of codes is that some parts

²⁹ It is also worth noting that there were possibly many ways to go about the construction of categories based on the existing codes. Some of the codes (e.g., "responsibility," the most often used code in the analysis) could have been assigned to more than a single category. Much as embracing the bias is the necessity for an analyst, I introduced the theoretical inquiry (and consequently, the comparison with other ideologies), based on the objective#1, ideally addressed through the literature review of FRE outlined in Chapter 2. An example of the category which was rendered peripheral, although it could have been incorporated in the core of FRE (given its presence in far-right ideology), was "authority," coded a total of 55 times across 11 codes.

of texts were assigned to different codes, and some codes belong to more than a single category (e.g., tradition/roots).

Discourse Analysis and the Discourse-Historical Approach

Throughout the coding process, particular attention needed to be paid to the use of language, especially the quintessential role of metaphors in conceptualizing the world.³⁰ Ever since Aristotle (and perhaps even Plato), metaphors have been dominating the language, hence being the main "weapon" in decontestation of concepts. Much like ideologies, metaphors are often envisaged as tools for distorting the imagined reality through deception (see Lule 2007). True, metaphors are an indispensable ingredient of essentializing and "derationalizing" the mind and the public sphere, but they also are much more than that. Metaphors have the basis in our cultural and very tangible, physical experience and therefore resemble the cogent structure of how we acquire knowledge about the arguments and, ultimately, reality. In this way, they are independent of language, in the sense that they are primarily associated with complex neural processes and brain regions (Lakoff 2014). One of the most important groups of metaphors is the "container" metaphor, such as land areas, rooms, and houses, providing physical features of three-dimensional objects: such as the "inside" or the "outside" (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 29). This is how boundaries to nations have emanated, and this is how, as the following chapters will show, the boundaries to nature can be drawn with equal precision in abstraction.

³⁰ For seminal work on the role of metaphors in framing and constructing our understanding of the world, see Lakoff and Johnson 1980.

The focus on metaphors is motivated by their ability to frame debates and construct narratives operationalizing specific frames, altogether contributing to a development of a particular discourse. Framing rests on ideas, and the ideas provide the “wording” – framing. Framing, in its broadest sense, entails contextually- and culturally-bound definitions of reality, allowing for an easier understanding of processes and events (Goffman 1986 [1974]).

People think in frames...Neuroscience tells us that each of the concepts we have—the long-term concepts that structure how we think—is instantiated in the synapses of our brains... Concepts are not things that can be changed just by someone telling us a fact. We may be presented with facts, but for us to make sense of them, they have to fit what is already in the synapses of the brain. (Lakoff 2014: 34).

Therefore, my inquiry of frames that inform FRE looked at the ways in which they serve as an interrelated cluster of concepts, ideas, and arguments which, albeit occasionally contradictory, create a seemingly “rational” justification for one’s values. Even though Far-Right Ecologism is not an entirely new ideology, in the sense that it departs from some of the previously developed ideations (see Chapter 1), it nonetheless requires a reconfiguration or “ideological rebranding” (Hansen 2018) to substantiate its generic claims.

However, the role of metaphors in framing the debate or constructing a story-narrative in this research was not only taken in its literary form. Thus, I also focused on the (rare) cases of visual communication, notwithstanding the ongoing developments and the role of visuals in communicating both ideologies (see Baldwin and Roberts 2006) and the environmental crisis (see Hansen 2017; Wessler et al. 2016). The power of visuals, in particular those visuals that depict people (as opposed to images or things) to capture the interest of the audience, can be a motivating factor of outstanding importance (see Coleman 2010). In line with Hansen's (2018)

recommendations, the overview of far-right environmental communication particularly accounted for the relationship between the text and the visual communication, but also for the narrative development in this domain.

What is common for the focus on metaphors, framing, and visual communication is that they resemble another term vital for the subsequent chapters of this dissertation – discourse. The definitions of discourse and approaches to analyzing it are diverse, and providing a comprehensive overview as well would most likely require a dissertation on its own. Discourse encompasses "structured forms of knowledge and memory of the social practice" (Van Dijk 1998) but also contested imaginations of social reality. Discourse is often perceived as a broader notion than "texts," comprising also talk, a speech, topic-related conversations, which can be presented in an audio or visual format (Wodak 2009: 2). Yet, Critical Discourse Analysis reveals the social phenomena that bring about the production of texts, also including its spoken and visual forms.³¹

In line with existing critiques of ideology as a manipulating device for the control of political language, discourse is interested in power in, of, but also from the language. Even by following Lukes' three-dimensional view of power, which offers a negative rendition of ideology and opting for "demystification," power in discourse, it is clear that both a negative (as domination) and positive (as knowledge) conceptions of power rest on the discursive scaffolding. Unless one is coming from an anarchist perspective, power and control are, to a certain extent, requirements

³¹ Critical Discourse Studies is a transdisciplinary approach that is not confined to a single methodology, derived from humanities, social and cognitive sciences (Hart and Cap 2014: 4). Even the central concepts within this school, such as "discourse" or "text" are fundamentally contested. Much as some of the tenets of critical theory, namely the aim to make transparent how subjects are brought into existence within and through the discourse, are shared among the proponents of CDA, this school remains considerably wide in terms of methodological approaches.

for a functioning society. This is exactly why the analysis of discourse, instead of focusing on "suspicion, attack and demystification" should work more towards "interpretation, mapping, and problematization" (O'Regan and MacDonald 2009: 5).

Due to its focus on the "persuasive or manipulative" (Wodak 2015) character of discourse, the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), belonging to Critical Discourse Analysis, has been one of the most popular methods in qualitative analysis of far-right and identity politics.³² Epistemologically, DHA is rooted in pragmatics, "weak" constructivism, or "critical realism" (Reisigl 2017: 48), rendering discourse a cluster of semiotic practices that are inevitably tied to a particular context, revolving around a macrotopic and multiple perspectives (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 89). Therefore, discourses (and arguments) are always historically situated, therefore transcending the linguistic reductionism by incorporating the contextual as political, psychological, and sociological to the textual constellation (see Reisigl and Wodak 2001). There are four major dimensions associated with context: "the immediate co-text for linguistic features and its relation to the text as a whole; the other texts and discourses that the text draws upon, the

³² Of course, DHA is not the only and perhaps not even the most popular approach to discourse employed by ideology scholars. The Essex school (also known as "Discourse Theory") departs from the psychoanalytical fourfold theorization of discourse as predominantly fantasmic-symbolic, championed by Jacques Lacan, in which the name serves as "the ground of the thing." Unlike the limited engagement with ideology in DHA (see Reisigl and Wodak 2014: 88), The Essex school theorists have provided a detailed account of how political ideologies function in and against society. Laclau and Mouffe, the most renowned proponents of Essex school, generally accept the ubiquity of ideology and the process of decontestation upon which it operates (Norvall 2000: 327). However, while Freeden focuses on political concepts, Laclau and Mouffe go much further, by contesting the very meaning of terms such as "society," "power," and "identity," principally focusing on the role of hegemony (see Laclau 1994). Be it in the role of legitimizing the established order or perhaps in uprooting the totality of language, discourse remains an indispensable part of ideology. The Essex School, built on post-Marxist intellectual credentials, is interested in the process through which ideology becomes established or "hegemonic." But, this is not to mean that several discourses are bluntly competing with one another, as that ideological realm can never be fully foreclosed – "the empty signifier" (Norval 2000: 333). The reason why Discourse Theory is not in the focus of this methodology is partly because of its underlying theoretical assumptions and tense relationship with hermeneutics, but also the elaborate structure of DHA and the focus on linguistic means.

conditions in which the text was produced, distributed, and received, and the wider socio-political context" (see Reisigl and Wodak 2001). These dimensions of context reveal the importance of intertextuality as another causal principle in DHA.

Yet, the historical-temporal trajectory of discourse is not necessarily pronounced in DHA (Reisigl 2017: 44). The "historical" in DHA refers to diachronic, meaning that DHA does not require looking at texts produced over a long period of time (e.g., centuries) but focuses on the connection to existing or previous discourses (Koller 2009). This allows for triangulation (in this case, of method), another building principle of DHA, standing for the "detailed evidence from social science and historical research on the socio-historical context" (Musolff 2014: 55). In this thesis, this detailed evidence is provided in chapters 3 and 4 (but also in the introduction), contextually embedding the subsequent analysis. With its emphasis on prospective, future-oriented critique, DHA is foreclosing the normative construction of what came to be known as "politically correct language," advocating for dismantling the "status quo" (Wodak et al. 1999: 8).

The application of DHA in a given text consists of three steps (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 93). First, identifying the specific topics present in a discourse; second, identifying the particular discursive strategies employed; third, identifying the particular linguistic means (e.g., metaphors) through which these strategies are operationalized. While the identification of topics (as discourse is usually "topical," e.g., the discourse on the environment) is somewhat similar to the procedure within qualitative text analysis, the five macro-discursive strategies: nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, mitigation, and intensification, allow for a closer examination of the particular linguistic features operationalized in the discourse. Each of these strategies offers a response to a heuristic question (see Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 95 for a detailed overview).

Nomination addresses how particular actors and processes are referred to as linguistically, focusing on deictics, anthroponyms, metonymies, and synecdoches. Predication deals with the discursive qualification of these actors, objects, and phenomena, through the use of qualifications and evaluative attributions (adjectives, appositions, prepositional phrases, relative and conjunctive clauses, etc.). An overview of nomination and predication denotes particular linguistic devices the far right is using in denoting the ideological “friends” and “foes” (see the following chapter). Moreover, it allowed for a closer examination of the conceptualizations such as nature, environment, and land.

Argumentation in DHA looks at the justification and questioning of claims of an established, normative rightness through *topoi* and fallacies. The central element of the argumentation strategy (and DHA in general) is *topos*, borrowed from Aristotelian rhetorics. *Topos* (plural *topoi*) refers to the rules of argumentation, the content-related “figure of thought” (Wengeler 2003: 67). *Topoi* are the “sites” (*loci*) of argumentation, the “content-related warrants,” which point to the conclusion on the basis of the argument (see Wodak 2006). In his seminal work on the essentially contested concepts, which present the foundation for an exploration of the building blocks of FRE and ideological morphology, Koselleck (2004) identified *topoi* as memories of the past that are logically associated with the present-day action (see Forchtner 2011: 25).

The structure of a *topos* builds on the previous works in argumentation analysis and is most simply explained through the “if X, then Y” logic (see Toulmin, 1958; Horsbøl 2020). Going back to Koselleck's argument and Forchtner's elaboration, the *Topos of History* as a teacher would be defined along the lines of “if history has specific actions and consequences, then one should

perform or omit certain actions based on the historical example referred to". Wodak, who also works on the far right (2006: 74) offered an "incomplete and not always disjunctive" list of 15 topoi – in an updated work specifically dealing with the far right, Wodak singled out 5 general and 10 topoi specific to the far right (Wodak 2016: 78). This exhaustive list has prompted questions on where the list ends and what is the hierarchical structure of topoi (in accordance with codes and categories in qualitative text analysis).³³

In the process of analyzing the data, identifying topoi was a helpful exercise in the development of codes during the first round of coding (particularly following the "if X, then Y" logic of argumentation). The list of topoi was developed in accordance with the existing lists mentioned earlier in this chapter but was also developed further based on the data and the principles of Grounded Theory. The rQDA (r-Qualitative Data Analysis) software enabled adding a memo to each code/topos, and each topos had its written explanation (e.g., if we do not learn from history, then we are doomed to "repeat" it), with possible exceptions and outliers for the analysis process. There were a total of 56 topoi identified, some of which were later merged with particular categories or topics. The second round of coding added the "non-topoi" codes: those which could not be straightforwardly reduced to the existing rules for developing a topos. In the process of

³³ These ambiguities in defining and applying topoi in DHA motivated several criticisms. Departing from the classical rhetorical analysis, Igor Žagar (2010) identified a range of deficiencies with the definition and application of topoi in DHA. One of his major criticisms is related to the lack of delineation, indicating that topoi are not as self-evident as proponents of DHA may argue. Consequently, the analyst lacks clear guidance on what constitutes a topos and what does not, obfuscating the criteria and confusing the reader on how one came about these conclusions. Žagar's criticisms are motivated by the presumed "skewing" of the Aristotelian original topoi, with an elaborate sense of clarity and self-righteousness of DHA proponents. In his response to this and other criticism, Reisigl (2014) acknowledged the need for clarification, although rebutting other criticisms. For instance, he claimed that Aristotelian topoi are not as authoritative, given the contemporary explorations that are not necessarily derived from such a tradition (Reisigl 2014: 86).

constructing categories, these codes were treated as topoi, which means they could be added to a particular category, and the number of times these were coded in the text was added to the total number of codes within the category (see Appendix 5).

However, the focus on fallacies is more problematic. Stemming from the pronounced critical approach of DHA, the identification of argumentative fallacies is inapplicable to this research paradigm. Another practical problem of identifying fallacies in the data is very much associated with topoi: the 'shopping list' of existing fallacies (see Reisigl and Wodak 2001, but also van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992, and Wodak 2009) is built on the normative presumption of a "good discussion." Here it is important to distinguish fallacies from presuppositions, which are another salient concept in (critical) discourse analysis. Unlike fallacies which serve to "unmask" poor argumentations, presuppositions derived from pragmatics point to ingrained "explicit the implicit assumptions and intertextual relations that underlie text production (Schiffrin 1994: 45-96)". Therefore, predispositions construct participants' takes on the context, and as such are vital for molding and grasping the ideological convictions (Sbisà 2002: 14). This can happen on a variety of linguistic levels, from the lexical level (presupposed frames) to a sentence-clause level and discourse level (see Polyzou 2015: 131-134).

Perspectivization is a discourse strategy that conveys involvement or distance with the issue discussed (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 95). This can be done through the use of deictics, direct or indirect speech, metaphors, particles, or animated prosody. Much like the case with nomination and predication, perspectivization in morphological analysis pinpoints the ideational background that defines the process of conceptual decontestation. For instance, when the far-right actors speak of "normalcy" with regard to environmental protection, they offer an authentic setting of

boundaries, hence decontestation, to the understanding of that concept. All the relevant cases of perspectivization were brought down to a single code, from which I identified those deemed the most relevant in denoting the substance of the ideological morphology. Through the focus on diminutives and augmentatives, modal particles, hyperboles, and litotes, mitigation and intensification strategies offer an insight into the style of far-right rhetoric, or, as Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 45) point out, the "epistemic or deontic status of utterances". As the case with perspectivization, mitigation and intensification strategies were singled out under one code and served as an addendum to the construction of categories and morphological analysis of FRE.

The task of providing an in-depth analysis of the particular figures of speech and linguistic tools used in the texts was hindered by the nature of the different languages I was working with and the subsequent attempts to provide sufficient and reliable translations of the transcripts in English. While I tried to work with the original language, I also relied on translations in order to compare and contrast the meanings of particular words or passages. To ensure correct translation of the texts, I consulted with a variety of native speakers of Hungarian and Polish.³⁴ This is why the only "in vivo" verbatim code used in the analysis was that of "eco-terrorists" (see Chapters 7 and 9).

Much as they may seem to emanate from somewhat different epistemological and methodological grounds, DHA can serve as an addendum to the loosely envisaged qualitative text

³⁴ In an ideal world (perhaps not that of a PhD student), this task would have been completed by the official, sworn translators to avoid the possibility of mistakes. In an even more ideal world, I would have started preparing for the project years earlier by learning Polish and Hungarian, which I was only vaguely familiar with at the time of writing the PhD proposal (which did not focus on the particular countries). Given the (limited) funding and the precarious position of PhD students conducting their research, I had to rely on the support of my fellow colleagues and friends, who ensured my translation of the documents used in the analysis was correct. All possible mistakes that may have been left uncorrected remain one of the limitations of this research, which I acknowledge as my own.

analysis method. First, both approaches are derived from traditions that claim to be pragmatic, although principally they point to hermeneutical epistemology. Second, although on different levels, qualitative text analysis, but particularly DHA, focus on intertextuality and the settings in which the texts were produced. While it may seem that qualitative text analysis and Grounded Theory approach look at the texts in isolation, Kuckartz (2013) rightfully notes the importance of reflecting on the “conditions of production” and the “preconceptions or assumptions” which are imported to the text under scrutiny. In her attempt to advance the original theory of Blaser and Strauss along the lines of hermeneutic principles, Charmaz (2017) advocated for a "Constructivist Grounded Theory," which will pay due attention to reflexivity, context, and the conditions of production for a given text.

Finally, both qualitative text analysis and discourse analysis are approaches suitable for exploring ideologies, although it is important to note several reservations. Ideology may seem like a hindrance to a Grounded Theory approach, in the sense that the process of open coding will ultimately result in the formulation of an ideological morphology and not a freely-constructed "theory." What both methods offer to the morphological study of ideologies is the systematic approach to texts (and images) in order to sufficiently account for the offered narratives. Thus, combining these methods (but keeping qualitative text analysis in the center) means ensuring the triangulation of methods but also opening GT to methodological pluralism and reflexivity (see Brennen 2018: 16). Thus, DHA in this thesis addresses the ambiguities arising from the abstraction of ideological morphology through Grounded Theory and qualitative text analysis. This does not mean that the use of discourse analysis, in particular DHA, serves to enhance the precision of analysis provided by the qualitative text analysis method. Instead, the idea is to have parallel, albeit

comparative interpretive frameworks, which will level the caveat of selective contextualization to avoid venerating particular normative arguments.

Summary

Staking out the building blocks of an ideological morphology cannot be simply deduced to an act of "theorizing." Much like the encounter with Agata has shown, the aims and objectives of this thesis posit an endeavor to interpret my interlocutors' accounts to adequately grasp the ideology. Building on the principle of the "hermeneutic circle," a continuous examination and (re)visiting of the seemingly "objective" meaning, laid out in recordings, transcripts, and field notes, this thesis places considerable emphasis on the abductive reasoning. Even though the research paradigm is based on hermeneutics, the methodological framework for this research is based on the Grounded Theory approach.

The data collection process consisted of three main pillars. First, document and web analysis of relevant content posted on the official web or social media pages, including (but not limited to) party manifestos, blog posts, news concerning the environment, and speeches of the prominent party representatives. Second, 51 qualitative, in-depth interviews, out of which 41 were with representatives of the far right in Hungary (18) and Poland (23), and 10 were interviews with the purpose of triangulating the findings, conducted with scholars, activists, representatives of green parties in Hungary and Poland, etc. Third, ethnography accounting for the fieldnotes and participant observation gathered in three major phases between November 2017 and July 2020. As per the data analysis, the main method was qualitative text analysis, mixed (for triangulation purposes) with the discourse-historical approach. The outcome of this analysis, the exploration of

the constitutive elements of Far-Right Ecologism, but also the ways in which these elements converge into specific policy contributions, will be explored in the following three chapters.

Chapter 5 – The core values of FRE in Hungary and Poland

I don't really have a good opinion about them [environmental organizations]. They are eco-terrorists, narrow-minded, and self-infatuated people. What they do is fundamentally wrong, and the worst thing is that the people who, for example, see the content of their propaganda, believe that and any activity against pollution or rubbish in the forest is created by these radical left, green organizations. (Paweł, Młodzież Wszechpolska, 06/07/2019)

I met Paweł on an oddly humid June afternoon in one of Warsaw's working-class neighborhoods. A promising leader in his early twenties, he was just about to take an exam as a part of his MA in International Relations. In spite of the delicate moment in which we talked, Paweł appeared surprisingly calm and confident, speaking with untroubled candor veiled in a brisk and know-how manner. Yet, it was impossible to avoid noticing that some of Paweł's own thoughts seemed fairly imported to him. He has only once participated in an environmental activity of Młodzież Wszechpolska and does not express much concern for environmental issues. In short, he does not appear to be a textbook case of a (far-right) ecologist. Nevertheless, he is a firm believer in anthropogenic climate change, proposing an authentic "greening" of nationalism as a response to the environmental organizations he loathes, and he holds immigrants accountable for environmental degradation in his beloved homeland.

After talking to a few other like-minded compatriots of Paweł, I noticed the feeling of "taught" certainty behind these raw outlooks on the environment, unraveling the more substantial ideological layers at stake. While Paweł and others from MW may not be personally invested in ecologism, the fact that they had elaborate opinions on a number of environmental issues points to

a systematic, ideological interpretation of these topics that, to them, do not seem at all complex or difficult to grasp. This seemingly simple and mundane ecologism is not just a peculiarly populist tendency to simplify but an example of how quotidian well-communicated ideologies appear.

The following three chapters will present how these assumptions about the world were conveyed in the empirical analysis conducted for this thesis. The analysis can be separated on the grounds of outlining the ideological morphology of FRE (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6) and presenting the specific policy preferences and proposals coming from far-right actors examined in this thesis (Chapter 7). This chapter will explore the main elements, the mandatory concepts characteristic of any far-right ecologism, hence not contextually bound to Hungary, Poland, or Eastern Europe. As the previous chapter has shown, this task can be fulfilled on the grounds of the emblematic features of the far right in Hungary and Poland but also the topics of engagement, which are no different than that of other countries and contexts. Individual codes were grouped into categories, and these categories (for the most part) created the basis for developing the ideological morphology (see Appendix 5).

It is not particularly surprising that (by far) the most represented category in the corpus was Manicheanism (43 codes, coded 288 times), which was split into two categories (Manicheanism_evil – 11 codes, coded 110 times and Manicheanism_nationalists – 13 codes, coded 109 times) and 19 independent codes. In fact, it could be argued that Manicheanism is a characteristic of political discourse and virtually any ideology, in its attempt to differentiate itself from competing accounts on the world and politics. Though this may be characteristic of increasing political polarization, Manicheanism is an indispensable component of the far right (ecologism),

as such a vision of society rests on the ability to discursively cast off the “unwanted” elements in a polity. Much as any ideology seeks to do that, ideologies such as liberalism or conservatism do not rest on demonizing the political “other” by presenting it as an existential threat to an ideal society.

To reiterate Paweł’s attitude towards green (as in left-leaning or liberal) politicians, far-right framings are based on contrasting and impermeable moral containers. The cognitive distinction between the “self” or “us” and the “others” is not necessarily a pathway to hate: in fact, it is fundamental to developing important emotions such as empathy and solidarity (see Hollan and Troop 2008). Nevertheless, its role in far-right ideology is unambiguous exactly because of the necessity to establish a moral distinction between those who are on “our” side and those who are not. In opposition to narrow-minded and deceitful “eco-terrorists,” the role of such binary interpretations is to offer a counternarrative to whatever may be denoted as “mainstream” ecologism (on framing in environmental communication, see Entman 1993 and Hansen 2019). In doing so, FRE comprises absolute distinctions, discerning between natural and artificial, good and evil, true and false, ours and “foreign”. While this is the essence of any identity, FRE proposes this distinction with an aim to expel or eliminate the unwanted part of this dichotomy from a society in order to preserve or restore its purity. Thus, the analysis of FRE commences by looking at the binary, Manichean division, which constitutes the core of far-right argumentation in the environmental sphere.

The choice of the term “Manicheanism” is deliberate, although it stands as a synonym to other notions, such as “binary,” “dualistic,” or “antagonistic”. This is due to the somewhat

paradoxical origin of the term, which reflects the considerable internal contradictions of the far-right's ideological morphology.³⁵ Regardless of the word choice, Manicheanism constitutes a fundamental concept of populist radical right (Mudde 2007) ideology and a Janus-faced (Nairn 1997) notion purporting to challenge the status quo. The far right, irrespective of its political stances or modalities within Hungary and Poland (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 3), uses Manicheanism to differentiate the wrongdoings of the contemporary environmental movement (as diversified as it is) and its presumed ideological grounds. Therefore, the overview of Manicheanism in FRE begins with that of the “foes”: those who resemble the others against whom a comprehensive ecological counter-agenda must be developed. The presentation of unwanted elements, including communists, international organizations, and greens, is followed by the articulation of positive actors within the Manichean conceptualization, the “nationalists” or “patriots.” The rest of the chapter outlines the remaining two building blocks of FRE: naturalism and organicism.

Who “we” are not: the threefold axis of meta-enemies

Enlightenment led to the absolutism of man, pulling him out of the social context and the natural environment. First liberalism and later Marxism sought to subdue Nature and its forces. Man became caught up in this conflict, believing that the natural environment was his enemy. An enemy which had to be tamed. Adam Busse, Szturmowcy, 2018

One of the (rare) proponents of Polish FRE I did not have the chance to interview, Adam Busse is one of the most renowned authors of Polish nationalist ecologism. His account of the

³⁵ The term “Manicheanism” refers to a pseudo-Christian religion established in the third century by Mani from Babylon. Even though Manicheans recognized Jesus Christ as the deity, their teachings diverged from those of Christianity, in the way that the notion of “evil” is emphasized as incessant and equal to the “good”: hence, there is no possibility of resurrection as both depart from the same origin.

ideological origins of the environmental crisis is representative of the far-right stances not only in Poland and Hungary but also elsewhere. Building on these generalizable intersections, the task of providing a “sleight-of-mind” of a far-right ecologist may appear difficult and even preposterous. Yet, the list of ideological adversaries to FRE is rather clear. While there are many concepts deemed problematic by the far right, “cosmopolitanism, globalism, and the liberal world government” (Forchtner 2019: 312) serve as the most commonly used nomination strategies – ideologies responsible for environmental destruction. Since the notion “far right” comprises a wide spectrum of actors, as explained in Chapter 1, the archenemy of the natural environment depends on the actor’s position on the ideological spectrum. For those belonging to the extreme right (in Hungary: *HVIM*, *Légió Hungaria*, formerly *Erő és Elszántság* (Power and Determination); in Poland: *Ecolektyw*, *Szturmowczy* (Stormtroopers), *Autonomous Nationalists*, *Niklot*, and *ONR Podhale*), the fundamental issue is not liberalism per se, but modernity as a process which brought about the liberal consumerist society.

As a meta-enemy of the far-right ideology in general (Minkenberg 2000), modernity (coded 8 times) is not only tied to the negative effects on the environment. The principal perversion or the foundational flaw of modernity, according to the far-right interpretation, is in “removing” the human race from the natural surroundings in which it was originally embedded. According to Bogdan Koziół, the late influential figure of the extreme-right *National Rebirth of Poland* (NOP) and the author of the manifesto “The National Ecology” (*Ekologia Narodowa*), the contemporary advocates of environmental protection are nothing but blind followers of modernity and Enlightenment thought, lacking substantial insight in environmental and societal problems.

Following this inferred (unidirectional) causal process, modernity evidently stands as a meta-ideological construct, responsible for the emergence of first liberalism and then Marxism (Schwartzmantel 1997: 63-87).

Man has been marginalized, torn out not only from the social context but also from his natural surroundings. The principle of individual freedom, with all its consequences, was at the heart of the ideology of liberalism. This was only a step away from Marxism, which advanced the concept of 'the subjugation of the forces of nature by man' as the main engine of human development. The man was put against nature in an antagonistic relation, the natural environment was his enemy. An enemy that must be tamed, subdued, enslaved, harnessed to his service. (Bogdan Koziel, *The National Ecology*, 1991).

Thus, “declaring war on the modern world” (Greenline Front Manifesto, 2016) presupposes effectively challenging “liberalism” as its offspring. Securitizing this struggle through “war” metaphors (Blain 1994) between the two opposite poles of “evil” and “good” creates a vantage point for framing strategies in the environmental context. For instance, referring to the dialectical and almost eschatological battle of humankind and nature, usually explained by an “independent” albeit never detached observer, brings about the image of forcible removal of human beings from their authentic (i.e., natural) surroundings (Phelan 1992).

Zooming out, the abovementioned paragraph may read as characteristic of any (radical) ecologism. The same may be argued with consumerism (10 times coded), another pillar of anti-environmental evils within FRE morphology. A consumerist society exists only due to modernity deliberately skewing the understanding of human freedom to present the individual/consumer as the central actor that has more (perceived) freedom to choose than ever before. However, much like Horkheimer and Adorno argued in their seminal "Dialectic of Enlightenment," this freedom, foundational feature, pride and joy of capitalist societies, is essentially chimerical, the "freedom is

choosing what is always the same." (2002[1944]: 167) Consumerism in FRE is nothing but a "throw-away society" (Cooper 2010: 4-6), the "antithesis of a healthy living space" (Graham 2019: 61), accentuating the Manichean enemy. In the accounts of my respondents, metaphors of a disposable, "fast-food society," (Toroczkai, Mi Hazánk, 12/17/2018) figure as ingrained symbols of the "materialistic destruction" and "the selfishness of modernity" (Kónyi-Kiss, HVIM, 01/09/2019), "the darkest and absurd consumerism" (Laszlo, Légió Hungaria, 11/23/2018), which resulted in "the sedentary and consumer lifestyle" juxtaposed to "the joy of those who spent the time in Nature's bosom" (Szturmowcy 2020).

But even modernity and the consumerist lifestyle resulting in the plundering of natural resources do not explain what caused the communitarian mindset to ebb from human nature. In FRE, this missing link is provided through an emphasis on individual well-being and rights as harmful to the environment. The opposition to basic human rights marks another, clear difference between FRE and other ideological appropriations of ecologism or environmental thought, e.g., ecological modernization (Hajer 1995). Simply put, the individual's desire for social recognition through consumerism, at the expense of the natural world, is incompatible with the ideals of balance and moral purity of (ethno)nationalism. The emphasis on (individual) liberty, the core value of liberalism, as a source of environmental harm denotes another "despicable other" in FRE.

³⁶ Much like any other ideology, liberalism (coded 12 times) is perceived as the most concrete outcome of the Enlightenment and the ideology associated with the most of contemporary

³⁶ Liberalism is a complex ideology that has a number of different and mutually contradictory varieties (see Freeden and Stears 2013). Without delving into (any of) them, the far-right's criticism of liberalism is predominantly oriented around the latter's "Millite core" (Freeden 1996: 144): liberty, individualism, and progress.

incarnations of animal welfare (or the lack thereof) (Garner 2003: 234). Though it may differ in terms of intensity, FRE's criticism of liberalism is similar to other varieties of ecologism, focused on "the individualist tendency of making ideal consumers out of humans" (Jarosław, ONR, 10/23/2018). A pre-eminent ideology of Western political thought and a "grand project" (Freedon 1996: 141), liberalism indeed has a rather tenuous relationship with environmental politics (see Eckersley 1996; Hay 2001: 194-254; Hailwood 2004; de Geus 2004; Wissenburg and Levy 2004). This is mostly (though not only) due to the economic push of (neo)liberalism since the 1970s, congruent with the careless devastation of the natural environment, "the insatiable transformation of nature into property" (Rodman 1973: 580).

The "individualistic fallacy" of liberalism brings forth the problem of the market (and the way in which it values or commodifies the environment) and the conception of rights in FRE. This sentiment is captured by the far right both in Hungary and Poland, referring to liberalism as "subversive" (Botond Kónyi-Kiss, HVIM, 01/09/2019) to the natural environment, responsible for the individualistic and "cultureless" behavior towards it. Bringing in the context of the data, this aversive interpretation of liberalism departs from the rising social inequality and the arbitrary redistribution of public property in the post-socialist era. For instance, such interpretations raised the pertinent conceptions of Budapest-based (liberal) Hungary and the "rural" rest (Hann 2015), or the "two" Polands, in which one is a morally corrupt and privileged liberal elite, and the other is *naród* (people) (Bill and Stanley 2020). To Bogusław Koniuch, one of the former leaders of NOP (now a member of the Białystok city council not affiliated with the far right), liberalism is morally incompatible with the idea of nature protection, since the latter rests on the "power of

community” (Interview with Bogusław Koniuch, ex-NOP, 06/30/2019). This communitarian reconfiguration is not necessarily a far-right one: however, the community as the unit of analysis is exclusively referring to the nation.

Fighting liberalism is more important than environmentalism itself, as only those people who were manufactured by liberalism - the modern individualists, who live only for today and can only think about their own life cycle – can be the idiots willing to destroy the environment in which they live in without thinking about the future. (Botond Kónyi-Kiss, HVIM, 01/09/2019)

As noted, the conceptual triad (modernity-consumerism-liberalism) of “enemies” to the natural environment is established through far-right metapolitics. Departing from this conceptual link, tracing a plethora of dangerous entities or processes to the nation’s nature (Drake 2011) becomes much easier. However, many other threats to the environment (communism, international organizations, elites, conglomerates) remain connected to this threefold meta-categorization.

The concrete opponents: communists, international organizations, and greens

The perception of “communist enemies” to the natural environment builds on, for the most part, far right’s hostility towards socialism, but also the assumed ideological unsuitability of Marxist economic determinism to the ecological polity. The communist “avant-garde of progress” (Kozieł, 1991) refers to the critique of the Enlightenment project: consumerism, liberalism, capitalism, and communism are fundamentally overlapping and denoting the ideological other. Much as the tension between the latter three is compelling, this conceptualization departs from the “lived experience” of Eastern European societies with environmental degradation under these systems, as compared to the perceived purity of the past (nationalist) kingdom. Within the narrative of rampant degradation under communist rule, the Hungarian and Polish communist governments

are devoid of agency, serving as the “rubbish-bin” of Russia (Interview with Kuba, ONR, 10/21/2018). In addition, the upsurge of consumerism, hence environmental degradation in the post-communist era, is a direct consequence of communist rigidity paired with a liberal international order championed by the international organizations and other multilateral bodies.

Most frequently, the allegations of “wrongful environmentalism” are aimed at the European Union, and less so at international environmental organizations, such as Greenpeace. Interestingly, the role of the EU is mostly absent from criticisms coming from the extreme right, as Euroskepticism is a more prominent feature of the radical-right parties (e.g., Polish Ruch Narodowy). From disapprovals of the Common Agricultural Program (CAP) for “wanting to destroy Polish agriculture ... [by] rewarding farmers for abandoning agricultural production” to the cases against foreign citizens owning land (Gonda 2019), the environmental regulation of the EU is perceived as a major hindrance to both economic growth and an ecological polity. In Hungary, this opposition to land ownership by foreigners eventually led to unexpected ideological alliances between the far right and greens, signaling troubling overlaps between green and far-right politics (see also Lubarda 2021). The perceived detrimental effect the EU has on the natural environment is mostly in its incentivization of single-market policies, prioritizing large agribusinesses, and centralizing trade. In the words of Krzysztof Bosak, the vice-chairman of Ruch Narodowy and a member of the Polish Sejm, the “dogmatic liberals” sitting in Brussels are not pragmatic enough to understand the need for protecting the home soil:

They use these soulless terms such as “unnecessary labor,” “useless human resources”... they are like communist planners with a liberal facade. In my opinion, they believe in social

engineering as much as feminists, not in moral planning but market-oriented. (Krzysztof Bosak, *Ruch Narodowy*, 11/14/2018)

The intensification propelled through Bosak's rhetorical build-up reiterates the link between liberalism and communism evident in the far-right's imaginary of the EU. Bosak's "pragmatism" (as opposed to the "dogmatic" approach of the EU environmental policy) is certainly incompatible with radical ecologism, but it points to how alternative environmental discourses of the far right may be constructed without simply resorting to the "ecofascist," revolutionary rhetoric.

From the meta-axis (modernity-consumerism-liberalism) to more concrete actors (communists/socialists, international organizations), the list of those "in the wrong" peaks with the proponents of the "flawed ideology of ecologism" (Kuba, *ONR*, 21/20/2018) – "the greens": environmental organizations, activists, and politicians. Greenpeace is one of the most commonly noted proponents of this detrimental or pseudo-ecologism. As Piotr, a forester and one of the most-renowned ecological thinkers of MW argues, the major issue of contemporary greens is their ideological unilateralism.

I think these organizations: Greenpeace, WWF are full of left-wing views. They have a very common background in Deep Ecology, they are very radical because they use the ideology of deep ecology from people like Peter Singer. (Piotr, MW, 06/13/2019)

Accusing green organizations and politicians of being proponents of "deep ecology" as something overly radical and delusional in its goals is yet another ambiguity of FRE on at least two levels. First, on the basis of facts: Singer, animal rights philosopher, departs from Humean moral extensionism (in which moral positions are derived from anthropocentric sentiments over reason) incompatible with deep ecology's intrinsic valuing of non-human nature (Lynch 1996: 149). To Piotr, both moral positions, that is Humean anthropocentric extensionism and deep ecologist

ecocentrism, are simply “radical”. Second, on the basis of values: the criticisms of deep ecology as irrational and detached from reality are sharply diverging from, e.g., Pentti Linkola’s misanthropic, authoritarian, and ecofascist strand of deep ecology, with its followers in the extreme-right and accelerationist circles (e.g., *Ecolektyw*). There is not an easy way to bring these separate positions under a common ecologist umbrella: Piotr’s Christian anthropocentrism and scientism hardly meet the ecofascist idea of human contamination of “Average Joes” (Linkola 2011: 17) and the disdain for technocracy. Amid this irreconcilable ethical discrepancy, both strands inherit the difference between nationalism and “others,” subsuming the natural and social domains under its guise.

In this revulsion towards various forms of green ethics, the span of negative nominations and predications (see Reisigl and Wodak 2001) referring to its proponents is diverse, albeit drawing similar conclusions. Examples of these references are: “having a Hidden agenda,” “Money-making,” “Extremists,” “Agents of outsiders,” “Craving for popularity,” and “Anti-religious” (Table 5.1).

Nomination	Times coded	Structure of the codes
Hidden agenda	29	11 (HU), 18 (PL) 14 (RR), 15 (XR)
Money-making	17	3 (HU), 12 (PL) 3 (RR), 12 (XR)
Extremists	12	5 (HU), 7 (PL) 7 (RR), 5 (XR)
Agents of outsiders	11	1 (HU), 10 (PL) 7 (RR), 4 (XR)
Craving for popularity	11	4 (HU), 7 (PL) 5 (RR), 6 (XR)

Anti-religious	4	0 HU, 4 (PL) 3 (RR), 1 (XR)
Total	84	24 (HU), 60 (PL) 39 (RR), 43 (XR)

Table 5.1 Nomination strategies for the “greens”

HU – Hungary; PL – Poland; RR – Radical right; XR – Extreme right

Referring to environmentalists as dishonest and mal-intentioned presupposes a lack of genuine interest in topics associated with the natural environment. The idea that the environmentalists have a “hidden agenda” was present in the extreme and the radical-right circles, although more noticeable in the Polish case. The “hidden agenda” refers to the alleged intention of green activists and politicians to, using movement surrogacy (Dawson 1996: 6-7), attempt to permeate debates on “LGBT rights” or “neo-Marxism” (István Gazdag, 12/02/2018). Another example is a commonly used far-right trope inaugurated by Jean-Marie Le Pen of “green as watermelon” (green-on-the-outside, red-from-the-inside), which captures the perceived interconnectedness of environmentalists and Marxism (Flipo 2019: 129). Such accusations are often followed by a range of intensification strategies, such as modal particles (in Hungarian), but even more often, the augmentatives:

Unfortunately, they don’t make their policies strictly related to environmental issues, but connect it to some mega-gender ideology, left-wing political ideologies, and that is why it is a bit disgusting for me that they use these pure, natural topics and mesh it up with feminism or such ideological constructs. (Elek, HVIM, 11/05/2018)

In marking the difference between the purity of nature and the artificiality, the “dirt” of ideologies, the perceived social degeneration comes to the fore. Under the pretext of a “cultural war” or the more eugenicist ableism, the battle of ideas is taking place in the environmental domain

as well. This “battle” hints at some of the salient debates in far-right’s Manichean agenda, such as the distinguishable component of “gender ideology” (see the volume by Köttig, Bitzan, and Petö 2017), but also of environmentalism (Plumwood 1993). The appropriation of the “gender debates” from a FRE standpoint attains rather grotesque and banal features. In responding to why ecologism is an ideology associated with the left, Paweł resorted to an argument on the alleged sexual proclivity of females towards the proponents of such ideologies.

For once, pro-ecologists are women, and women are generally associated with the left. There is even statistical data showing that women are more into leftists, and this is why. (Paweł, MW, 06/07/2019)

Regardless of this argumentative logic, echoing male supremacism and misogyny in a manner characteristic of the diverse far-right strands in the US, the reference to nature in FRE is admittedly contrasted to some of the (many) feminist interpretations, but it remains profoundly genderized. Most often through the reference to “Mother nature” (*Anyatermészet* in Hungarian or *Matka Natura* in Polish), far-right ecologists uncritically integrate the masculine outlook on the feminine origins of the personified natural environment. This vivid deviation from post-patriarchal impetus of most contemporary ecologisms (see Capra and Spretnak 1986: 107) pinpoints the anti-egalitarian principles of FRE. Obviously, FRE is not about fighting the domination of nature as a result of patriarchal or class oppression (Stavarakakis 1997: 278-9), but the notions of “nature” and “people” are dialectically separated (and brought upon, depending on the need), through the concept of the (organic, naturalist) nation.³⁷ Interestingly, the actual gender parity among the

³⁷ However, Stavarakakis also claims that there can be no far-right “green” ideology, because it constitutes “the periphery of the articulatory chain” (Stavarakakis 1997: 290). His assumption of “green ideas” as subordinate to the concepts of “nation” and “race” is wrong on at least two levels. First, no “green” ideology, as he rightfully concludes elsewhere in the text (1997: 278), has been purged of ideological influences in an attempt of discursive

activists is more a case of Polish than Hungarian far-right ecologists, particularly on the extreme right: the leading ecologists in ONR, Ecolektyw, and Praca Polska are female. Therefore, and unsurprisingly, Paweł's statement (which I used as a probe later on in my conversations with future respondents) was not well accepted among the extreme-right groups in Poland. In Hungary, the majority of far-right leadership, and the same can be argued about their ecological sections, refrained from drawing similar comparisons.

Returning to the (modernist) dichotomy between purity and pollution, the Manichean morality of FRE defines greens as moral polluters, referring to environmentalists as "money-making" professionals with financial interests concealed behind the care for the natural environment. Unlike with the "hidden agenda" reference, this discursive strategy is applied predominantly by the Polish extreme-right circles due to the allegations concerning the links between the "green" actors (Greenpeace, WWF) on one hand and international financial conglomerates on the other. From this, it follows that greens are "agents of the outsiders," such as the argument that Greenpeace has been funded by the Russian government (Interview with Kamil from Trzecia Droga, 06/13/2019) or Germans/Austrians (Interview with Ziemowit Przebitkowski, 11/15/2018, the leader of MW).

Likewise, labeling greens as "extremists" is equally common among the far right in Hungary and Poland, regardless of the ideological background. Within such a view, environmental

homogenization – there is no such thing as "stealing" green ideas. Second, in accordance with Lacanian totalizer of the ideological field (to which Stavrakakis subscribes), the concepts such as "nation," and less so the "people"/"Volk" not only totalize but also become engulfed by the notions of "nature," "environment," or "ecology," standing as virtually synonyms and variations of a same, totalizing signifier: the point of caption.

activists and politicians are on the cusp of (ir)rationality and overtly emotional and illogical in their demands. The motivations behind such behavior are not necessarily linked with foreign interference but may point to the alleged atheistic background of green politicians/activists, again placing the moral grounds of such activism into question. Those engaging with environmental topics (and particularly climate change) are also perceived as attention-seeking individuals who, besides financial gain, engage with this topic to enhance their personal relevance or popularity. The greens are thus brought down to "leftists," "crazy," and "dishonest" individuals who "care only about the PR" (Alicja, Młodzież Wsczehpolska, 11/12/2018).

Overall, these negative referential strategies are equally popular in the extreme- and the radical-right organizations (see Table 5.1). Somewhat surprising is a remarkable difference in the popularity they have in Poland as compared to Hungary. There are a few potential reasons explaining this difference. First, the Polish far right has never been a part of the popular environmental movement since the 1970s and 1980s, which existed on the margins of the acclaimed Solidarity (*Solidarność*) movement. The same cannot be argued for the Hungarian nationalists, who have been involved in or cooperated with some of the environmental organizations and parties in Hungary (Laszlo Perneczky, LMP, 10/03/2018). Unlike the far-right Jobbik coquetting with green LMP in Hungary (Lubarda 2020b), the far right in Poland has had a number of conflicts with the green party and environmental activists over specific policy-related debates. Some of these will be particularly explored in Chapter 5.

Who “we” are: tradition and power in the (reasonable) people

Against the outlined backdrop of opponents to the nationalist, environmentally prosperous polity, far-right alternatives depart from placing considerable value on the green national history. This appreciation can take many forms: from celebrating historical figures, such as nature conservationists or poets, to nostalgia for idyllic landscapes (see Chapter 4). In 2019, HVIM launched a series of posts celebrating the key figures of early conservation in Hungary: Otto Hermann, (Austro)Hungarian nature conservationist, Jakab Vönöczky-Schenk, ornithologist, or Károly Kaán, forester. Likewise, Marian Raciborski, and even more, Jan Gwalbert Pawlikowski, are recognized as the main protagonists of the early “nationalist ecologism” in Poland (Busse, Szturmowczy, 05/26/2015). Pawlikowski’s “Nature and Culture” (*Natura i Kultura*), based on Ernest Haeckel’s vitalist ecological principles, is considered the “first ecological manifesto” in Poland (Gawor 2018: 90; Okraska 2010: 21-22). Since Pawlikowski was a self-described nationalist, active in the peasant National Movement (*Galiczyjska Endecja*), he has been feted by MW (patron for the year 2019) and Autonomous Nationalists for his political and conservationist work.

Situating FRE in a historical context, through reference to particular individuals, serves to establish and assert continuity – tradition (17 codes) in the existence of a distinctive, nationalist, and organic approach to the natural environment (SC, Autonomous Nationalists, Poland, 11/20/2009). The natural environment molds the nation and cannot be separated from it.

I cannot understand how we could like or love the Planet, love the nature, how we could love the forests or the rivers if we don’t like our culture, our villages, our towns and cities, architecture, our arts, and...everything. All of these form the essence of national identity.” (Laszlo Toroczka, President, Mi Hazánk, 12/17/2018)

However, apart from this “integrated,” holistic vision, Toroczkai's quote points to a major contradiction with the far-right's interpretation of modernity and the Enlightenment. This is related to what Latour (1993: 10) calls an act of *purification* – an attempt to establish a partition between a natural world and the society's products. The issue is that fighting against this (invented) distinction, as the far-right claims, requires doing away with its fundamental tenets and presumptions. In other words, the often-mentioned distinction between the “natural” and the “built” environment is nothing but a construct appropriated by, *inter alia*, the far right.³⁸

Moving on from the ethnonationalist to populist principle, FRE claims to represent the interests of “the people” by utilizing a *pars pro toto* model of representation. Be it in claiming that “people are not stupid to be fed propaganda” (Toroczkai, president, Mi Hazánk, 12/17/2018) or wanting ecological activities “to have a human face and be understood and adopted by the people in my neighborhood” (Rex, Ecolektyw, 06/15/2019), the code “Power in the people” (coded 9 times), comprises the sovereign, demos, but also “the ethnos” (Wodak 2019: 26). An argument widely accepted by the proponents of FRE is the anti-elitist vision of the “little man” (Bjerre-Poulsen 1986: 32), burdened by the costs of the green transformation or unequally suffering the environmental harm. While this may not necessarily lead to a substantial ecologist narrative (but instead represent a pretext for neglecting environmental policies), such eco-populism is at odds with “globalist” worldviews. The two visions are discursively differentiated as contrasting, most notably in the Hungarian case, where the far right operationalizes the virtually ontological division

³⁸ This argument points to the essentially modernist nature of nationalism, which in a dialectical manner conducts the task of the “Moderns” of carefully separating Nature and Society, yet this task is completed only by an endless combination of the two, through both mediation and purification (see Latour, 1993).

between the *balliberális* (left-liberals) and the “real,” ideologically-enlightened Hungarians. The “ontological condition” is perhaps a misnomer, as it points to an essentially epistemological rift of acquiring knowledge and emotions about the environment, fundamentally dependent on ideology. In the dichotomy between the “borderless environmentalism” (Sun and Tysiachniouk 2008: 178) and reclaiming control over the natural resources, the notion of responsibility (Topos of Responsibility coded 41 times) for protecting the environment becomes conceptually stretched, from calls to ecological stewardship to individual action for the common good.

Within this epistemological struggle, the argument of “reclaiming environmentalism” by situating it in a particular geographic location infers that (far-right) nationalism once had the prerogative over ecological thinking, eventually lost in the 1960s. While the Introduction and Chapter 2 have shown that such conclusions are not entirely unwarranted, the far-right’s “right to the environment” within the Manichean vision of the righteous representatives of the people is partially contradictory. The coding shows that the environment is simultaneously perceived as a “naturally right-wing” (29 times coded) and a “non-ideological” (12 times coded) issue, the latter conforming to the antipolitical vision of the environment as being beyond ideological distinctions. Such accounts, coming from even the sections on the extreme-right (such as the now-inactive Erő és Elszántság in Hungary or the Third Way – Trzecia Droga in Poland), downplay the role of ideology or point to its pejorative dimension. Not only that to some respondents, “ecology was not an ideological issue” (Marta, MW, 06/13/2019), but it is a topic that “does not require politics” (Barnabas, Jobbik, 11/28/2019), indicating the obviously non-ecologist position. Disregarding the ample literature on the dangers of depoliticization, coming even from their own ideological ranks

(e.g., Julius Evola), the refusal of the far right to acknowledge the fundamentally political nature of the ecological crisis may come as a surprise.

In spite of these “apolitical” arguments, viewing ecological concern as a right-wing value still dominates as an alternative to “globalist environmentalism”. For radical-right organizations (mostly parties), “right-wing” is a marker of rationality (“reasonable environmentalism,” coded 11 times) against the emotional attachment of a nationalist to its own land. In the words of Márton Gyöngyösi, Jobbik’s vice-president and current MEP, it is important to remain pragmatic in “choosing between the eco-fanaticism and safeguarding the national interest”. Even the more extreme variants (given Jobbik’s shift to the center) recognize the importance of being ideologically-balanced: NOP’s manifesto speaks of the “creation of a real and genuine understanding between nations of one another’s needs” vis-à-vis “the ideological, New Agers’ Global Policing” (NOP Manifesto 2020). The counterdiscourse of embeddedness of nature in the ideology of nationalism, provides the base for another foundational concept of FRE and the category in this analysis: naturalism and naturalness (63 times coded).

Naturalism

Even though nature protection in itself might not be among the priorities of the far right, the conceptualization of “natural” occupies a central position within both far-right ideology and FRE. Be it the opposition to “gender ideology” (coded only once), abortion, or rights of the perceived outsiders, the Manichean element of far-right ecology requires a clear distinction of what it is to be enunciated as “normal,” hence natural. The *Topos of naturalness* (in the words of Alicja from MW, “If we want a good nation, we must take care of the environment”) was coded a total

of 23 times in the corpus. From this perspective, the care for the natural environment comes as of second nature, a prerequisite to what a (true) nationalist is. This tautology sets in motion the “family resemblance” of Wittgenstein’s philosophy, by providing a common frame – that of nationalism.

Nationalism – this is our nation, our society, our history. This connects us with the area, with the ground, the soil in which we grow. In my head, it is natural: I am a nationalist, and I have to care about this [emphasized] generation. (Lech, MW, 06/13/2019)

For Lech, who is a young lawyer from Poznań, a stronghold of the Polish Antifa but also the birthplace of Ziemowit Przebitkowski (the current leader of MW), this nationalist gestalt is built on the well-established ecofascist notion of “Blood and Soil” (see Chapter 2). Through intensification and the use of possessive pronouns, Lech did not only establish a deterministic equivalence between history, environment, and the collective but a definition of what a “good nationalist” stands for (22 times coded). This holistic anthropocentrism alludes to the notion of responsibility and stewardship.

For me, it is automatic that I feel responsible for preserving the values owned by the community, including the natural values, but also the built culture, inventions, discoveries, everything that is of importance. We feel that we have the mission to protect nature, including the fact that we should preserve our nature, our culture, for our children. (János Árgyelán, political director, Mi Hazánk, 10/31/2018)

But assessing the naturalist appeal of FRE as one of its fundamental components requires defining it – outlining several competing accounts on what naturalism stands for. The definition used in this thesis points to the unity between human beings and the environment in which they dwell, between the natural and the social domain (Olsen 1999), which can be tailored to both ecocentric and anthropocentric outlooks. In essence, eco-naturalism is based on the “reading-off-hypothesis”

(Barry 1994), which suggests that the rules for social life should mimic nature or that the processes and relations existing in "nature" should orient the ways in which we set up the life of humans. While the former are usually deployed by extreme-right and ecofascist movements, there are also forms of anthropocentric naturalism, which have long been incorporated within the ontological order of "new pragmatism," accounting for human experience as constitutive of nature (Dewey 1920, 1925, 1927; Macarthur and De Caro 2004, for criticisms see Santayana 1925; Cohen 1940). That human beings are rooted in nature denote holism as the core concept of "green ideology" (Freedman 1996: 527) of ecologism. However, it is difficult to contend that "holism," a concept pointing to the indivisibility of nature, can be present in nationalistic interpretations of protecting the environment only within given national borders. The question is, what makes such an interpretation particularly (far) right? After all, interdependence, equilibrium, and communality are, to a greater or lesser extent, all present in established ecologisms. From the technocratic and neoliberal calls for "sustainable growth" and "ecological statism" (Luke 2009) to social and deep ecology, naturalism is a concomitant of all these distant ideological variations. Perhaps apart from anarcho-ecology or ecological libertarianism, holistic orientation remains a centerpiece of ecologism.

The far-right understanding of holism is tightly knit with the admiration for "the natural order". While some far-right actors, depending on their position in the ideological spectrum, may be critical of the adjuration to undermine the centrality of human beings, they will almost unanimously agree as to who belongs to that order ("Nature's law," coded 12 times). This "natural order" (Kristian Bosak, MP, Ruch Narodowy, 11/14/2018) may as well be based on critiques of

veganism and eroding distinctions between human and non-human entities (as the case with the radical-right parties), but it cannot be explained without the appreciation of “true” Poles or Hungarians, the authenticity and cultural relevance of their nature. Thus, naturalism in FRE cannot exist without the “social” dimension.

Social naturalism, originally a term used in Polanyian critiques of (political) economy, refers to the presumed naturalness of human behavior in relation to economic activity. Since economy is a “natural” activity (implicitly discarding early societies as “unnatural”), society cannot be governed by socially-defined or institutional regulations (Block and Sommers 2014: 102). Under the banner of “naturalness,” such logic justifies the neoliberal logic of market fundamentalism (or as its proponents would insist, “Classical Liberalism”), defining humans in rather Hobbesian terms, of rational beings predominantly focused on maximizing self-interest through conflict. This “epistemic clout” (Block and Sommers 2014: 184) purports that any form of societal interference in the economic activity as the only natural course of events creates ever-more dependency, thus disparaging the structural explanations of poverty. Following this timeless, natural feature of humankind, the laws of social life ought to be adjusted to fit this supposedly unquestionable and self-evident order. Other than naturalizing the market and supporting the *laissez-faire* logic, this somewhat finite and irrevocable biologization (coded 11 times) of human nature consequently frames the stance towards the natural environment. Therefore, the invocations of lessons of economy may be of use in grasping the relevance of naturalism for the far right. What makes this dogma of free-market fundamentalists different from far-right articulation of naturalism, is the binding factor of the “national” environment.

Without the need to impose a logical equivalence, it becomes apparent that applying the rules of ecology as a scientific discipline to social order or advocating for a form of Social Darwinism can be made potentially appealing. Social naturalism is a right-wing value because it justifies inequality as a fundamental feature of human societies, and serves to amplify the existing antagonisms, framing them as irreconcilable rifts, even setting the basis of prospective violence. Since “all knowledge comes from nature” (Ecolektyw Manifesto), social policies should be designed to mimic even the viciousness of natural laws. This tense relationship between human beings and nature, the latter articulated as unwelcoming but just, calls for avoidance of a futile conflict with such a mighty opponent. Indeed, the tropes of “fighting nature” as a fallacy of humanity are all but absent from such discursive configurations. This invokes the "Topos of naturalness" (If we behave in a natural way, the environment will be protected, coded 23 times), pointing to how successful FRE may be in normalizing-as-naturalizing its ideological tenets.

Situated between the populist radical-right prioritizing “standing up for the people” and the extreme-right definition of ecologism as a, once again natural “self-defense” (2 times coded) against the decaying system (Jozsef, 04/29/2019), the uneasy likelihood for “eco-terrorist” activities or other forms of violence justified by ecological means remains present.³⁹ Building on the experience from Christchurch and El Paso attacks, paired with the tweets on “eco-fascist death squads,” this may signal a potential for violence towards those who are engaging in environmentally-harmful activities. There are also those who point to a range of “good practices”

³⁹ For a more detailed discussion on eco-terrorism or other forms of direct action in light of a democratic polity, see Humphrey 2005.

in dealing with the environmental culprits, including physical violence, destruction of property, and other forms drawn from a staple repertoire of cost-levying direct action against companies engaging in environmentally hazardous conduct (see *Zöld Ellenállás* Facebook Page 2019). Nevertheless, to date, there have been no records of physical attacks in the name of ecological aims or by independent, eco-fascist organizations (such as *Ecolektyw* in Poland).

Apart from violence as the most forceful expression of naturalist stewardship, the calls for “becoming one with nature” as the most suitable way to address the ecological crisis are imbued with an understanding of a separation between the natural and social domains. This is common across the political spectrum, nonetheless, its troubling invocation of biologism or sociobiology is almost exclusively associated with the far right. These ideas rest on an imagined and idealized ecosystem with its discernible symbolic, but sometimes also very physical boundaries (see Barham 2001), implicitly voicing antagonism towards immigrants through the concept of “eco-bordering” (Turner and Bailey forthcoming). Przebitkowski argued that “society is an ecosystem – it has its order. If you are mixing it – you are creating disorder”, using The Balkans, that well-established case of everything “uncivilized,” oddly enough constructed by the very “West” Ziemowit is fighting against, presents the negative example of what happens when the “natural borders” of nations and cultures are not fully respected. Although Polish nationalists have ostensible difficulties in conceptualizing the “naturalness” of their borders based on the diversity of regions comprising Poland today, for Hungarians the notion of The Carpathian Basin (8 codes) resembles this ecological container, the “natural dwelling place” (László, *Légió Hungaria*, 11/23/2018), the “genuine Hungary,” and the “indivisible unity” (Gábor Barcsa-Turner and Botond Kónyi-Kiss,

HVIM, 01/09/2019. The territory of pre-Trianon, “Greater” Hungary (with the Transylvanian forests in Romania, or Tatra mountains on the Polish-Slovak border), The Carpathian Basin stands for a self-sufficient entity. Through dehumanization strategies and outright insults, the expulsion of non-nationals from the idealized “pure” ecosystem is commonly framed as an act of protection from invasion (15 times coded). An example of how conditions propitious to the perpetration of genocide can be construed is the reference to the Roma community in The Carpathian Basin.

...the brutal destruction of nature made by gypsies, like illegal deforestation and landfill dumps can be avoided...Gypsies represent a considerable environmentally damaging factor in Hungary. I cannot tell the exact extent because the system is PC [politically correct], and does not make such surveys, but it is a fact that all the hovels of gypsies, and there are many, are dumps and carcass holes at the same time, and we can be sure the nearby forests are cut illegally, the streams and rivers are littered, car wrecks are left behind, houses are demolished illegally. Not to mention the unlawful dog fights, if we consider the favorite topic of the liberals in Budapest. (Gabor Barcsa-Turner, HVIM co-leader, 01/09/2019)

The environmental portion of the “Gypsy-crime” (2 times coded), a coinage campaigned by Jobbik in Hungary (Halasz 2009), but commonly used among the far-right groups in the region, silences even the slightest possibility of integration. Since the Roma population in Poland is too small to be perceived as the rapacious Other, the “matter out of place” (Douglas 2002[1966]), the out-groups prioritized as harmful to the ecosystem are migrants. From simply “not understanding the value of nature” (Adam, HVIM, 04/29/2019) to being the “plants destroying the beautiful, old garden” (Andrzej, MW, 06/07/2019), migrants are continuously envisioned as fundamentally anomalous to the perfect (and static!) symbolic order of the nation’s nature (see Bauman 1989).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Bauman uses the metaphor of a garden to expose the artificial nature of modernity, which nevertheless rests on an image of sharp distinction and separation between entities (us-them). The “endemic distrust of spontaneity” (Bauman 1989: 84) rests on the continuous and diligent work of the “gardener,” the monopolizer of violence, towards the maintenance of purity.

This becomes even more vivid with the "tree of life" (Kónyi-Kiss, 01/09/2019), or "algiz," which is even the symbol of a Polish far-right ecological section, *Ecolektyw*.



Figure – the symbol of Ecolektyw

The symbolism behind this logo points to the operationalization of the runic alphabet adopted in Nazi occultism (see Dahmer 2019). The "life rune," an identitarian symbol, is appropriated by Ecolektyw (but also by the now-defunct German far-right ecologist magazine, *Umwelt und Aktiv*) as the "tree of life," assuming harmony and functional growth. Bringing this argument back to the issue of migration, the fear of disorder, the "many eyes moving in the darkness" (Alajos, Mi Házank, 11/26/2018) in reference to illegal immigrants, are all symptoms of the inability to come to terms with the fissure, the inconsistency which has affected the far-right's immediate environment. Research has shown that the social prevail over ecological conditions in the social perceptions of invasive species (Kapitza et al. 2019: 59) – for this reason, the nativist logic of naturalism in FRE needs to be examined further. However, the number of codes indicates that eco-

nativism and anti-immigration sentiments are not as prominent as other scholars have indicated (see Malm and The Zetkin Collective 2021; Turner and Bailey forthcoming).

Logically, the references to sociobiological and nativist elements of naturalism (Olwig 2003), discounting immigrants and the internal outsiders (Roma, Muslims, Ukrainians) are characteristic of the extreme right and are rarely openly expressed by the now-established radical parties such as Jobbik and Ruch Narodowy. Sociobiology, to some still a "mainstream social theory" (Barry 2007: 9), enunciates the broader idea(l) of equilibrium (coded once) between the species in nature, consequently framing the natural environment as an ideal-type of stability and symmetry. The problem of equilibrium in FRE is that it does not portray the "human species" as a single unity but accentuates national, cultural, or religious differences. The existence of "foreign species" is nothing but a symptom of dislocation from this perfect, garden-like state. Indeed, the metaphor of garden has occasionally permeated the debates in the overlapping fields of environmental theory, politics, and sociology, accentuating the appreciation of garden or the countryside as middle grounds between wilderness and the artificial (Rennie-Short 1991). That environmental change is a symptom of an ailing society where this equilibrium is disrupted is at the helm of such naturalist invocations. Simultaneously, it evokes a conspicuous repugnance of contemporary (modern) society, set up in the works of Oswald Spengler and ideologically developed by Julius Evola (see Furlong 2011). However, such biological accounts could only be held valid if nature and nation are one, a single organism, susceptible to both thriving and decay. This concept represents the last and potentially the weakest pillar of the core substance of FRE, which deserves closer examination in light of the Hungarian-Polish far right: organicism.

Organicism

Together with naturalism, organicism is yet another residue of sociology from the 19th and the early 20th century. The basic assumption of the organicist logic rooted mostly (though not only) in the vitalist philosophy is that the object under scrutiny (nation, nature, in this case) operates much like a living organism. Just like "languages have lives" (Mufwene 2017: 73), so do nations and their environments. In this analysis, this outlook on nations as species points to a category coded 57 times, comprising 8 codes: *Blood and soil*, *collective logic*, *Nation: a family of families*, *Authenticity of the Carpathian basin*, *diversity as a problem for genetics*, *regional cooperation*, *organicism*, *tradition (roots)*.

Although now scientifically discredited, organicism has remained as one of the central elements of far-right ideology, and consequently, conceptualizations and framings of the natural environment. Much like other concepts presented in this thesis, organicism can be present in various ideologies, including the green one(s) (Freeden 1996: 535). For instance, organicism is an important feature of socialism because of its emphasis on the mutual interdependence, vigor, and emancipation as preconditions for collective prosperity. Through its appeal to technocratic and cornucopian allusions of endless growth, or the preservation of social order on the basis of hierarchy, organicism is also an adjacent or peripheral component of neoliberal or conservative utopias. All these competing interpretations point to overlaps in political thought and tradition. The liberal one following the British tradition that adapted Continental idealists (Simhony 1991) justifies rational democratic control based on the interdependence of individuals (Morefield 2002). In contrast, the French variant is based on Comte's functionalistic holism (Freeden 1996: 213).

The far-right derives (eco)organicism (coded 14 times) from a romantic, dominantly communitarian, Völkisch, and culturally essentialist conceptualization of the “womb” of the landscape (Bassin 2005: 220), “the nation [that] cannot exist in isolation from its nature” (Szturmowcy, canonical texts, 2020). Unlike in the Benthamite-liberal writings, the organicist nation resembles a distinctive and anthropomorphic entity that prevails over the individual interests of the members of this organic community. This “national organicism” presupposes a form of a corporatist or a distributionist (Koniuch, 06/30/2019) state which relies on the logic of guild rationalism to protect the natural environment – something which liberals are averse to. Since the nation is imagined as a living organism, the current generation with its needs and lifestyles may be sacrificed on the grounds of the well-being of future upbringings. Therefore, organicism has the potential to subsume the notions of “responsibility” and the calls for intergenerational equity present in mainstream environmental discourse, in order to defend the “natives” from “invasive outsiders” in the name of the holistic purity and superior interests of the nation (Cassata 2008). Under such a functionalist, yet a distinctively holistic conception, a central authority (or the lack thereof) defines the role of “organs” within the body of the nation (see the following chapter).

The analytical perspectives of eco-organicism (see Olsen 1999) and its foremost expressions in Hungary and Poland, regardless of their origin (radical-extreme), revolve around the metaphor of “roots” - traditions (17 times coded). The roots invoke “traditions based very deep in the surrounding environment” (Jozsef, HVIM, 04/29/2019), extolling the (disrupted) communion between human beings and their natural environment. Having roots in Greek mythology and being (much later) promoted by Heidegger, the discourse of autochthony and roots

is attendant of mainstream environmentalism. Eliciting the nexus between nature and traditions, such tropes become a potent linguistic tool for far-right political parties, such as Jobbik and Ruch Narodowy, in advocating for particular environmental or agricultural policies. Justifying their programmatic support for organic farming, Ruch Narodowy establishes interdependence between tradition and the general health of the population:

By fostering local culture and tradition, rural communities affect the spiritual condition of the nation, and even the spatial, environmental, and aesthetic order of the whole country. (Ruch Narodowy, Electoral Program, 2019).

The support for organic farming could easily become the central policy of FRE, as it feeds into the wider organicist simile of agriculture as the “spine of the nation” (Zoltan Magyar, Jobbik, 10/24/2017). However, this is not really the case. The only “honorable mention” among political parties is Jobbik, where the “eco-social national economy” (Kyriazi 2019: 187) was based on the idea of organic (although primarily family) farming, articulated as an environmentally-friendly return to traditional livelihoods. When it comes to far-right non-party actors, only Hungarian HVIM and Betyársereg have openly supported organic farming thus far.

Nevertheless, apart from Jobbik, far-right parties in Hungary and Poland have not substantively engaged with organic farming or other environmentally-friendly forms of agriculture (coded 27 times). This can be mostly explained through the overwhelming support Fidesz and PiS, the ruling right-wing populist parties in the respective countries, have in rural areas (for Hungary, see Kovács and Vida 2015, in Poland see Bilewicz 2020). This is why agricultural politics and rural discourse in general signal an important topic for far-right and populist politics. However, the disengagement of far-right movements can be primarily explained by the lack of resources,

paired with the traditional dubious stance towards parties, overly strategic and experimental in their ideology. Another potential reason for the lack of substantial far-right interest in organic farming (amid the ideological connection provided by FRE) is the fact that such stances are usually monopolized by green or even radical socialist parties. Although the possibility for the "horseshoe effect," the meeting of far right and "far left" actors was overwhelmingly rejected both by this research and its participants, (informal) contacts between ONR and Autonomous Nationalists with radical left movements on such topics in Poland, in all their ambiguity, challenge watertight ideological distinctions (interview with Alek, ONR, 11/15/2018).

Whatever the case may be, organic farming remains wedded to the ideal of the peasantry as the backbone of the national, organic community, a repository of "naturalness" and the optimal conditions for the natural environment. As such, it signals the operationalization of organicism as a somewhat abstract ideation in contemporary far-right politics. Of course, the far-right endorsement of organic farming as a pathway towards an ecologically sustainable polity does not exclusively emanate from organicist tenets. Instead, it is mostly associated with the nostalgic idea of homemade food free of chemical fertilizers or genetically-modified crops. The imagery of "grandmothers who knew best how to produce safe food for a healthy nation" (Judith, Jobbik, 07/10/2019) links the production of safe food with the dying, albeit relentless tradition (immune to the Communist hardships), that requires continuous preservation.

Summary

Within its calls for a radical change in defense of an ailing nation, the core values of FRE accentuate the tradition-longevity of and the venerated stability and equilibrium in the natural

environment. The radical impetus of FRE is primarily reflected in Manicheanism, the division of good and evil (see Bramwell 1989; Kirkman 2002). In their attempt to differentiate themselves from the ideological-other, the proponents of FRE discursively frame “greens” as representatives of modernity, consumerism, and liberalism/cosmopolitanism: concepts constituting the axis of evil in far-right ideology. Green politicians, environmental activists, or academics dealing with the impact of environmental issues on society are referred to as “money-making” or “extremist” individuals with a “Hidden agenda” or fame-seeking individuals as “Agents of anti-religious outsiders”.

Contrary to these perceived wrongdoings, far-right ecologists in Hungary and Poland assert the importance of “naturalness” in environmental activism and ecologism. This notion provides necessary leverage for a variety of interpretations. For instance, viewing nature as stable and in a state of “equilibrium” legitimates the expulsion of non-native species (migrants, The Roma), building on the naturalist unity of natural and social laws. Similarly, naturalness may refer to the organicist interdependence of human beings and nature as a part of a unique, evolving and potentially decaying organism: the nation. Be it “The Carpathian Basin” in Hungary, the Podhale highlands or Mazurek lakes in Poland, the bioregionalist symbolism of idyllic landscapes as the authentic living place of the nation put forward the arguments for being “rooted” in the soil. In the policy domain, this becomes operationalized through calls for environmentally friendly agriculture and practices such as organic farming and permaculture, particularly evident in Hungary. Apart from the vitalist imaginary of nurturing the nation through caring for the land, organic farming remains a powerful tool in the hands of right-wing (and not only right-wing!) populists, in their

discursive crusade against the outsiders, multinational conglomerates, and foreign landowners or farmers. These nostalgic and autarkic elements are adjacent to the ineliminable set of concepts outlined in this chapter and constitute the open-ended repository derived from the Manichean-naturalist-organicist nexus of FRE, enabling an extensive (albeit not endless) combination of ideological varieties curbing the far-right discourse and policies on the natural environment. It is to these, peripheral values, this thesis now turns.

Chapter 6 - The Perimeter: Nostalgia, Autarky, Spirituality, and

Authority

Our movement is totally pro-Kingdom, all the way. This is the base. It is very interesting that Hungary had, for over a thousand years, quite of an interesting legal system which was not based on the persona of the King, but the authority of the Crown. All the land was owned by the Crown, so the people were not really in possession of the land, but just borrowing it by the Crown. Therefore, it was kind of proved that if they were destroying or not taking adequate care of the Crown's property, it could have been taken from them. In this way of thinking, it would totally fit ecologism. Because, if the government says – if you don't take care of the land and you are destroying it, we will take it away because it belongs to the Crown. So it is like [...] green royalism. (Elek, HVIM, 11/05/2018)

Out of all the encounters with people from the “other” side of the empathy wall (Hochschild 2016), meeting Elek was a particularly uncanny and mindboggling experience. Dissociating himself from the myopic understandings of nationalists as uneducated and easily deceived individuals, Elek is finishing up his doctoral research focusing on organic farming at one of the most renowned universities in Hungary. He is a serene believer in “ontological bridges” between the separate ends of the political spectrum: George Soros’s world, to which I was inadvertently assigned based on my institutional affiliation, and the fraternity of patriots defending what is left from the cosmopolitan plunder. In a different and more soothing world, perhaps even that of ours, he would have been accused of being a horseshoe theorist.

Despite his undeniable intellectualism and amiability, one should make no mistake – Elek is a far-right activist with years of experience, both in the “ideological domain” and the streets. He

takes pride in demolishing the shackles of tyranny, as well as a few skulls along the way, which have led him to much trouble with the law. Apart from partaking in (various forms of) violence, Elek is also a leader of the informal environmental section of HVIM, set up by and led by himself. Our meeting supposedly inspired him to establish a Facebook page, leaving me pondering about the ethical consequences of my research: Green Resistance (*Zöld Ellenállás*, ZE), his pride and joy, is entirely dedicated to environmental issues from a FRE standpoint. However, the content posted on Zöld Ellenállás page is not always easy to situate on the ideological spectrum. From providing practical advice on planting seeds and reducing ecological footprint through recycling, the page also accentuates the harmful effects of invasive species (migrants included) on the ecosystem and the importance of economic nationalism in dietary choices (see also Forchtner 2019).

Like any ideology, far-right ecologism is an inevitable generalization, and this recognition should not serve to downgrade its intricacy. Pages such as ZE provide a (patchy) contribution to the ubiquitous yet continuously modulated and evolving structure of FRE ideology. This chapter explores the adjacent and peripheral concepts of this ideology, not necessarily found in all of its instances. As such, the perimeter cannot stand alone: it rests on the core values explored in the previous chapter, adding a vital gloss to an(y) ideology. This chapter will present Nostalgia, Autarky, Spirituality, and Authority as distinguishable components of the “Green Perimeter,” noting how they converge (or diverge) back to the conceptual core outlined in Chapter 5, and which role they occupy within the discourse of a heuristic, ideal-type far-right ecologist. As the last chapter has shown, FRE’s endorsement of organic farming is associated with the appreciation

of the authentic, “rooted” family. This sentiment captures two values that are adjacent to the core of FRE: nostalgia and autarky.

Nostalgia

The role of nostalgia – longing for an unattainable past embodied in “better or cleaner environments” (Howell, Kitson, and Clowney 2018: 306) has been long recognized in environmental theory. In this research, nostalgia refers to a category comprising 8 codes coded a total of 74 times: Aesthetics, countryside experience/rootedness, environmentalism vs. tradition, Topos of history, positive nostalgia, palingenesis, rational nostalgia, tradition (see Appendix 5). The primary separation is usually drawn along the lines of *environmental* and *ecological* nostalgia. In this duality, reminding of Dobson’s (1999) distinction between the two terms, “environmental” is being associated with the social impact of such tendencies, whereas ecological nostalgia is attuned to the ecosystems and non-human agents (see Lambacher 2017).

While such separation is not apparent in FRE, nostalgia presumes imagined geographies (Gregory 1995), resting on a never fully valid interpretation of the past, thus potentiating an attainable future (Sedikides and Wildschut, 2016; Davies 2010: 264, for the appropriation in political ideologies, see Kenny 2017: 15). As Latour (1991: 76) once noted, nobody is born nostalgic, becoming “traditional” is a choice – it is a process requiring continuous innovation as the rupture, however radical it may be, entails a sense of *episteme* that enables the very recreation. In other words, nostalgia is continuously (re)invented, it requires adjustments in order to be more appealing. It is not surprising that nostalgia is particularly powerful in Eastern Europe, where, in most areas, looking back to socialism has been displaced in the public sphere by the more resilient

imaginaries of the earlier eras (Hahn 2015: 886). In the words of Gábor Barcsa-Turner, the co-leader of HVIM, “returning to the roots requires adjusting our traditions to the contemporary circumstances” (Interview 01/09/2019). This hints at how nostalgia may be revived in (far-right) ecologism: in Children’s Camp (*Nemzeti Gyermekek és Ifjúsági Tábor*) organized annually by HVIM, children are not only taught survival skills in nature (making food, self-defense, cleaning up), but also attempt to recuperate the (environmentally-friendly) society. These activities show that, contrary to modernity’s orientation towards progress and future, many nationalists share the reactionary and restorative desire for returning to imagined ecological pasts. Their nostalgia is situated in between the “restorative” (goal-oriented) and “reflective” (intellectual relationship with “past” ecologies) form (Boym 2001).

For a study of ideologies, the reflective component is indispensable. Through a recreation of how nature, particularly landscapes used to look, one willingly engages in the myth-making (Schama 1995), enabling ecological restoration to subsume multifarious ideological motivations, hence, not (necessarily) far-right (Schlosberg 2016). Through restorative nostalgia, e.g., reforestation campaigns and revival of small-scale farming, such as those promoted by the Greek neo-nazi Golden Dawn (see *Volksland project* 2013), nostalgia may also converge into an essentially reflective appreciation of the peasantry as honest and diligent caretakers of the land. There are also other historical examples of nostalgia bordering with FRE. For instance, the German *Wandervogel*, a “right-hippie,” anti-modernist movement from the late 19th and early 20th century, advocated for a return to nature through hiking, adventure, and recreation of pristine landscapes

(see Williams 2007), or the “alternative” conservationism based on local, indigenous knowledge in rural Canada (see Loo 2006).

Whereas restorative nostalgia enables a range of discursive explorations, to date, there have been no far-right initiatives dealing with the restoration of landscapes in Hungary and Poland. However, nostalgia as an ideation remains closer to the extreme, revolutionary forms of right-wing organizations, more likely to implore a “return to the once-existing closeness with nature” (Szturmowcy 2020). For instance, HVIM appeals to Hungarian pre-Christian, nomadic tribes as role-models for constructing a well-balanced relationship with nature. Reference to agriculture as a mean to relive this past is, inter alia, provided by the support for organic farming, having the “nature in our hearts,” (Luty, MW, 11/12/2018) and "bringing back families together on our soil and farms." (Kamil, MW, 11/15/2018) This yearning for tradition resonates with the anti-urbanist position, logically following the support for small farms and return to the countryside. In the words of Kacper from *Trzecia Droga* (Third-way) (interviewed 06/13/2019), people outside of the city are “more attached to the ground, soil, with a clearer idea of their own identity, of what it means being a Pole.”

These are all examples of “positive nostalgia” (coded 13 times), a guilt-free imagination of the past (Göpffarth 2021). In line with the Manichean division, there is also a negative nostalgia - embodying resistance to harmful practices or particular historical periods, such as the environmental degradation under real-socialism. Calling for a revival of traditions lost under the communist or post-socialist, liberal oppression is particularly visible in extreme-right organizations, though radical-right parties do not shy away from such statements. When asked

about the potentiality of obtaining a radical change in environmental protection, Jozsef, a member of HVIM, linked the nostalgia and call for the revival with autonomy.

For me, this is definitely to be welcomed, as many plants and animals of the *Hungarikum* live their renaissance, the majority of which were almost disappeared by the 1980s. Nowadays, they are the basis of sought-after and recognized products, so the traditions that strengthen our identity and strengthen our identity are preserved. (Jozsef, HVIM, 04/29/2019)

Even though “Hungarikum” may read as the far-right appropriation of a pseudo-Roman tradition, it is a (relatively) recent coinage. A program sponsored by the Hungarian government, “indicating a value worthy of distinction and highlighting within a unified system of qualification, classification, and registry and which represents the high performance of Hungarian people thanks to its typically Hungarian attribute, uniqueness, specialty, and quality.” (see Hungarikum 2020) From *pálinka* and *Szegedi paprika*, to *Aggtelek* karst and the *Hollóháza* porcelain, Hungarikum invokes the perceived greatness of the national polity, but also placing emphasis on learning from history. For a far-right ecologist, history is an unfathomable well of blueprints-traditions from which one can dig up solutions to the perversions of consumerist liberal societies.

Interestingly, the far right (particularly in Hungary, which had a somewhat successful agricultural transition during Kádár’s rule) speaks favorably of environmental and agricultural practices under communist rule. Therefore, history is always a *mnemohistory*, selective past from which one takes what is needed (Assmann 1997). Therefore, the best ecological practices will be invariably associated with the established reference point – the glory days of the nation, which provides an added layer of justification (e.g., palingenesis – rebirth, coded 9 times). Much as it is difficult to argue for such an epoch in Polish history, the pre-Trianon Hungary is the ideal polity

of the Hungarian far right. The nostalgia for a lost kingdom and its territories can also be ecological: Jobbik has introduced the concept of “Green nationalism” (*Zöld nacionalizmus*) to Hungarian mainstream politics. By linking environmental protection to future generations, but also to the past, pre-Trianon Hungarikum, Jobbik stresses the importance of responsibility and continuity for conceptualizing an ecologically-oriented nationalism (Picture 6.1).



Picture 6.1 – Jobbik’s Youth: Green Nationalism (*Protect your environment, protect your country!*)

This symbolically-savvy portrayal of Jobbik's ecologism (Figure 3.1), posted by its youth section, (*Jobbik Ifjúsági Tagozat, Jobbik IT*) and its anchorage: "Protect your environment, protect your country," evokes the German National Party's (NPD) slogan *Umweltschutz ist Heimatschutz* (environmental protection is homeland protection, see Forchtner 2019). Given that this image was published on Jobbik IT's social media in 2017 when the party tried to clean up its reputation of an extremist actor in Hungarian politics, it is a bold reminder of at least two ways in which anthropocentric FRE can be conceptualized. First, it is the hand holding the tree, unfolding the much-desired, yet carefully ideologically crafted understanding of human commitment to nature. Second, the historical symbolism at play - the tree is in the shape of the pre-Trianon boundaries of the Hungarian Kingdom, points to how rooted this feeling of responsibility and commitment is in the affection for the nation. This argumentation (of history as a teacher, coded 26 times, see also Forchtner 2014) was also employed by the extreme-right, non-party actors, such as the Hungarian HVIM and Erő és Elszántság, and the Polish NOP.

Although rebirth is one of the most-notable, core concepts of ideologies such as fascism (Griffin 1991), nostalgia, and the process of learning from history is not as central in ecological discourses across the far-right spectrum. Yet, the fact that nostalgia is no more derided as a "world that never was" (Seabrook and Blackwell 1993: 30), but a potent concept bringing together diverse political platforms (including the far right), signals its relevance for contemporary environmental politics. However, what happens when the traditions are harmful to the environment (code environmentalism vs. tradition, coded once)? Bullfighting or beating roosters (*Kakasverés*), traditional practices now considered unacceptable due to concerns over animal welfare, are worthy

of preserving as re-enactments of chivalry, noble culture purged from the post-heroic societies of today.

Autarky

Regardless of its diverse manifestations and decontestations, the nostalgia in FRE fundamentally refers to a polity that sufficiently operates on its own resources. Nostalgia may entail a flawed understanding of past livelihoods, but the quest for autarky in a globalized world is constitutive of any ecologism. Autarky is a category comprising of 9 codes: Environmentalism as Self-Defense, Grassroots as small-step, Power in the people, Reclaiming space, Regulations as an issue, anti-globalist environmentalism, countryside experience, local/small as better, self-sustainability, coded a total of 63 times (see Appendix 5). Not all of these codes have to unambiguously imply a self-sufficient, autarkic polity, but they all have to point to statements that give prevalence to decentralization and local governance of the environment. Similar to other concepts in the ideological morphology of FRE, autarky is also the core concept in other, notably distant ideologies, such as anarchism or liberalism – through the concept of autonomy. Autonomy and autarky are kindred terms, denoting self-governance and the entity making laws for itself (see Humphrey 2005: 89 or Dworkin 1988). Yet, being able to “live free and blossom,” that is, unaffected by other agents (Eckersley 1996:223), is not entirely attainable in a world comprising non-human entities.

In principle, both nostalgia and autarky refer to atomized, self-reliant communities and lifestyles, meaning these can be easily presented as threatened or bygone in a globalized world. For this reason, it may be difficult to envisage such a concept can operate, even as peripheral, in

an ideology that is so deeply reliant on the state. The autarky in FRE may point to two distinctive ideas. The first one, localism (25 times coded), is a value mostly present in ecologist (but also anarchist and socialist) morphology corporatism⁴¹, whereas corporatism is derived mostly from far-right – fascism in particular. The self-reliant communities are not envisaged as outliers detached from the nation: instead, the interdependent, mutually-supporting structure of otherwise autarkic communities is constructed on the basis of the ethnos, the blood principle. The corporatist decontestation of autarky, departing from the idea of a nation being “the family of families” (coded 3 times), presupposes an interaction of self-sustaining communities insulated from the economic influence of everything that is considered “foreign” or globalist (coded 2 times).

The other decontestation of autarky potentially overlapping corporatism, but also signaling the potential for overlap with other ecologisms, is related to localism. This is another point of divergence from other forms of ecologism, such as social ecology, which rejected localism as “parochialism” and instead opted for a liberation of settlements while encouraging interdependence vis-à-vis the central authority. This “libertarian municipalism” (Biehl and Bookchin 1996) is a form of communalism considerably at odds with the “belonging principle” in FRE and other identitarian ecologisms, usually defined by ethnic or racial (or both) features of the

⁴¹ Corporatism as a concept and an idea of how a society should be organized borrows its content to several concepts within FRE. First, it can be incorporated into the organicist-holistic outlooks on the wellbeing of the nation (and its nature). It may also represent an addendum to Manicheanism, representing the positive alternative to the market economy, suggested mainly by extreme-right circles. Furthermore, it can also be a concomitant of Spirituality or Nostalgia, for its endorsement of teachings outlined in the Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, promoting social justice but also rejecting liberal capitalism (Nentjes 2017). Finally, directly borrowing its content from fascism (see Pinto 2017), corporatism provides grounds for the dictatorial vision of an ecological polity, thus adding to the conceptualization of Authority in FRE. Amid this overwhelming presence, the reference to corporatism as an organizing principle for the nature-loving far right is greatly absent from the accounts of their representatives.

individual. Such an understanding of an autarkic community opens up space for a conceptual nexus between localism and nationalism (see Park 2013). As in Naturalism, the perceived threat of foreign influence identifies “outsider” ecologists as a threat to the domestic environment. In explaining Greenpeace’s ineptness, Kamil, an activist from Polish MW, argued that “nations should preserve their own ecology” since a “Brazilian knows nothing about protecting żubry [bison].” (interview 11/15/2018) Likewise, Polish Autonomous Nationalists argued for rolling back responsibilities in a globalized world, resting on response skepticism of climate change (Autonomous Nationalists website, 11/20/2009):

And it is not about us suddenly moaning over global warming or the fate of tropical forests. We have no influence on this. However, we do have an impact on our immediate surroundings, and we should remember that. Who would want to live in the dirt surrounded by rubbish? Except for squatters - to a large extent biased youth from wealthy homes - probably nobody.

The essence of “local ecology,” as Autonomous Nationalists articulate it, is in stewardship: prioritizing “immediate surroundings” over greenwashing marketing strategies of polluting companies or PR-oriented ecological activism of international organizations with remote headquarters. Arguments in support of localism are mostly associated with food networks, ignoring the bifurcation between “local” and “organic” (see Lockie and Halpin 2005; Hess 2008), or a range of other debates and complexities concerning the placement of local products on the market (e.g., local foods sold on nonlocal markets).

Smaller farms are better from a social perspective, you have your small place on the Earth, your job is valuable, you make your own food. That is something that we should push for, not to have the centralized economy, where everything is divided, where everyone owns something – it’s better from the perspective of human dignity and building the society of

citizens, not only from the environmental perspective. (Krzystof Bosak, *Ruch Narodowy*, 11/14/2018)

The social dimension of environmental issues, documented in this passage, has been unevenly incorporated into the contemporary far-right discourse (see Shoshan 2016: 34). This may be in line with Eger and Valdez's (2015) argument on far right being neo-nationalist in a sense that it pairs economically left policies with socially-culturally "right" positions. The emotional bond with the local environment is a powerful mobilizer for environmental activism, though "localities" are, in fact, never entirely homogenous (Marvin and Guy 1997; Davoudi and Madanipour 2015). The value of experience and reflexivity, of "being situated and affected by the place is the only way in which it can be valued," (Alek, *ONR*, 11/15/2018) serves to draw the boundaries of acceptable ecologisms. The extreme-right organizations, whose members are experienced in grassroots organizing (see Castelli Gattinara and Froio 2018), utilize the notions of "local" and "space" to advance their ideological agenda. The ambiguity of such concepts as "empty signifiers" (Laclau 2005) waiting to be filled with desirable content, warns against essentializing "local" causes as necessarily welcome or politically desirable outcomes. A specific example of how these conceptual abstractions and ambiguities serve to mobilize and "hijack" the socially-progressive agenda is the established notion of "environmental justice."

Understanding ecologism as conducive to the social mobilization and grassroots activism (coded once) also implies the reassembling of the social forces occurring in many bottom-up initiatives. Building on the Manichean discourse explored in the last chapter, this potentiates FRE as an environmental justice movement (on "Green populism" see Szasz 1994 or "Environmental populism" of Beeson 2019) of the environmental underdogs. Following this discourse, the people

(hence, the environment and the nation) are endangered by the reckless acts of foreign or global corporations detrimental to the public health, economy, and the livelihoods of those who count. This continuous assertion of “being close to the people” (Bálint, Jobbik, 02/15/2018) is reminiscent of how populist radical right may affect environmental debates on a larger scale.

Thus, the central issue of both localism and autarky in FRE becomes that of spatialization: can “our” space be deduced to the nation? In establishing the equivalence between the local and national levels, establishing the well-defined ladder of spatial containers (local, (rarely) regional, national, international), the far right enforces the antagonism towards the “other,” globalized conception of space. Since locals are nationals, the most equipped to nurture nature and address environmental issues affecting their own realities, the idea of self-reliance or self-sustainability in a(n u)necessarily international world completes the framing sequence of autarky. From “working closely to where you live” (Winnicki, Ruch Narodowy, 11/15/2018) and thus reducing the ecological footprint, to producing organic potatoes in the Hungarian far-right stronghold in Ásotthalom “deliberately conscious of the environment,” (Alajos, Mi Hazánk, 11/26/2018) autarky in FRE has various practical justifications. Most commonly, autarky is referring to economic and financial independence, where the safe and clean environment is an inevitable outcome, a by-product of the concentration of economic power within a nation-state.

Moving again from identifying to designing solutions on how an autarkic nation can address the ecological crisis, it is exactly the family agricultural holdings, guilds, artisanal associations “decentralized to the smallest viable units” (NOP Manifesto, 2020) that may or may not have to be linked to a central authority, but enable financial independence at a reduced

ecological footprint. While the links between an autarkic community on the local level and the nation remain blurry in this decontestation, this also means that FRE could easily offer alternative ethics and norms in localized food networks, also claiming to resist capitalist encroachments by “re-embedding food in local ecologies.” (DuPuis and Goodman 2005; also see Murdoch 2000) This endorsement of decentralization and its social impacts has been used as an argument of the alleged third-wayism of far-right nationalism, foregrounding anti-capitalistic nationalism, characteristic of its current “nativist economics.” (Pirro 2017)

Spirituality

Spirituality is a category comprising 10 codes (Alienation, Church as a Problem, Eternity, spirituality, symbolism, church, religion and environment, Christian environmentalism, nature as a God’s gift, pre-Christian), coded a total of 56 times. As it can be seen, *spirituality* is yet another example of a broad, contested, and a rather unclear concept (see Hood et al. 1993). This is mostly due to its conflation with *religion* or *religiousness*, as they usually stand as synonyms and were treated as such during the coding (see, for instance, Miller and Martin 1988; Zinnbauer et al. 1997).⁴² The relationship between spirituality and ecologism has been continuously evolving, with both understandings of theology and nature being continuously in flux. In spite of the “relationship

⁴² Zinnbauer et al. (1997: 550) note that the two terms were used as synonyms until “the rise of secularism in this [the 20th] century”. They also indicate (focusing only on the United States) that spirituality as a concept has gradually taken over many of the features of what was considered as “religion” since the 1960s, acquiring a more positive connotation in the wider public than the structured religiousness. The most often noted distinction is that religion stands for an institutionalized practice of spirituality, in which the latter is no more than a subjective conception of what occurs beyond life (see Vaughan 1991). However, the distinction between spirituality and religiousness should not be taken as a matter of individual vs. collective dichotomy, as given the salience of the term, spirituality signals a broader concept not merely deducible to religious beliefs. Hence, this expanded though polichrome understanding of spirituality, arbitrary as anything in conceptual demarcations, assure mutual sustenance and point to a relatively coherent concept to be used as a building block of FRE.

of ecologism with religion being distant,” (Flipo 2019: 222) as supporters of green parties are generally atheistic or agnostic, it can be rightfully argued that spirituality has been a part of ecologism since its onset. From romanticist accounts in conservationism to contemporary green parties or Greenpeace's emphasis on moral regeneration and the sense of harmony (see Gottlieb 2006: 28), the spiritual component has mirrored the ecologist appeal.

In spite of this, spirituality cannot be considered a core element of FRE, for the simple reason that the divine and spiritual renditions are not always present in far-right accounts of the environment. Besides Christian ecologism of radical-right parties or mysticism and occultism of the extreme-right, the spiritual or religious components of ecologism are undermined in particular countries, e.g., German eco-nationalist tradition (like the *Umwelt und Aktiv* magazine). Amid the faint resonance to the environment, the spiritual quandaries should not be downplayed, as they speak to some of the fundamental issues of ecologism, as in defining the role of human beings as "a part yet apart from nature" (Rolston III 2006: 378), or the ethical boundaries through Manichean distinguishing of the “evil” from the “good” (see Gottlieb 2006: 24). This "greater than" affiliated and meta-political element of spirituality to environmental thought can easily make it an ontological marker that shapes political action in the name of a common good bestowed by the deity or sentient beings representing life forces.

For the far right in Hungary, and particularly in Poland, incorporating the Christian, Roman Catholic teachings into any comprehensive outlook on the environment is a must. What falls, however, under the Roman Catholic teachings is rather unclear. From instrumental renditions (see Hart 2004, 2006: 64) of the environment being a tool for human prosperity, to a more intrinsic

appreciation of environmental values building on, e.g., the teachings of Francis of Assisi (see Sorrell 1984), nationalism's position towards nature has been strikingly ambivalent. However, one may be poised to assume the instrumental approach, treating nature as "a gift" (formulated as a topos, "If nature is God's gift then we should use it for us," coded 8 times) being more dominant. Arkadiusz, a local leader from MW, argued that Christian identity requires protection of "our nature as a gift from the Lord, but it means also that nature was created for us and our needs" (Arkadiusz, MW, 11/15/2018). In explaining how ecology is just a domain-like concomitant of the Christian political theology, the leader of MW, Ziemowit Przebitkowski, offered an account of how far-right ecologist articulations can be subsumed under the notion of "love."

Our faith is the most important aspect: ordocaritatis – order of love. As I said about the family: it is normal that I am taking care of my family and other families – it is our catholic faith. Nationalism is only the political implementation of that Catholic faith. The same goes with nature, ecology, protection of the soil and so on. It is not only politics, it is metaphysics, it is much higher. (Ziemowit Przebitkowski, MW, President, 11/15/2018)

A necessary element of the successful framing is the establishment of analogies and equivalences. Viewing nation as a family (of families), or loving as serving, the allegiance to environmental protection is a sense of responsibility towards a deity (Christian environmentalism, "If you are a Christian you have a responsibility towards protecting the environment," coded 6 times), or in the words of Jobbik's Botond: "Just like we serve God, we serve our nation, we serve our people, and we have to do it responsibly, we have to serve the environment, a gift to us." (Interview, 02/15/2018).

However, framing ecological stewardship as an act of love towards God's gift, to be freely used (and plundered, if need be), has not been unanimously accepted by the far-right circles. This

instrumental view has been under harsh criticism, mostly by the extreme right: HVIM, Ecolektyw, Niklot, Autonomous Nationalists, and ONR, for its “sinkhole” approach to nature. This has caused far-right activists, such as ONR’s Stella, to treat Catholicism and the Church as protagonists of the inflexible dogma (coded 2 times):

In Polish Catholicism there is an ideological problem – human beings being in the center of everything, and everything being subordinated to humans, including animals. So, we can eat them, we can hunt them, and anyone who believes in Catholicism believes also in that ideology. In small towns, the influence of the Church is very big, and it can be detrimental, harmful for these places. The teachings of the church can be problematic for protecting the environment at the moment. (Stella, ONR, 07/01/2019)

The distrust in the capacity of the Catholic Church to adequately address environmental issues, building on the instrumental approach to nature is not unwarranted. Yet, the ongoing rapprochement, featured in the *Laudato si’* encyclical, signals an ecological theology that celebrates plurality as the principle of process theologism (see Birch and Cobb 1981). Although the extreme-right spectrum in both countries gathers many Roman Catholics, Stella's view is still present, if not dominant, in the extreme right. For instance, Elek voiced the exactly same concern regarding the role of the Catholic Church:

Unfortunately, nowadays, it's very hard to convince the Church to make a statement on a topic that is not strictly related to the faith. Nowadays, the church is scared to make an announcement, not to be attacked by the left-liberal media. I am talking about the Catholic Church. The protestant church is much different – it is more open to national issues, for instance, in Slovakia, and is very engaged. (Elek, HVIM, 11/05/2018)

For the far-right ecologists, retaining the “Christian outlook” (a topos coded 6 times) on the environment was only possible by connecting it to the intrinsic values against the “ecological sin.” Thus, some of the NOP members were admittedly affiliated with *Święto Stworzenia* (Feast of Creation), the Polish ecological movement celebrating St. Francis of Assisi. For some extreme-

right organizations, such as *Legio Hungaria*, the particular religious denomination (or even Christianity) was not deemed essential for a “true ecologist.” What matters more, for Laszlo, was that one belongs to a “traditional” (monotheistic) religion which nurtures the environment as a part of the holistic state of equilibrium, with a vivid nostalgia:

In the old world, or we can say, *Ancien Régime*, the people lived and worked for God, King and Homeland - also for Family, of course. It was a basic value to live with the Nature in harmony, and it is also the way to be in harmony with God and with ourselves. Today we [Legio Hungaria] try to continue this way of Christian thinking, and I am sure that other traditional religions also have these basic ideas. (Laszlo, Legio Hungaria, 10/23/2018)

That nostalgic yearning for a better life, spiritually balanced with the natural environment, can also be polytheistic, shows *Niklot*, the Polish neo-pagan movement. In what turned to be a profoundly awkward encounter during the Warsaw Pride (which entailed belligerent behavior and repeated slurs towards the participants), Gniewomir, Niklot’s representative, explained how ecology and spirituality can be conceptualized in the Slavic tradition (pre-Christian, coded 6 times). Even though Niklot did not place a high value upon the environment⁴³, Gniewomir (06/08/2019) envisaged "nature, spirituality, and nation as intertwined," avowing equilibrium (naturalism-organicism) as the fundamental value of ecologism.

The polytheistic appropriations of mysticism, here understood as outside of the realm of Judeo-Christian conception of spirituality, are particularly popular on the extreme right. Hungarian

⁴³The content on their official Facebook page was sharing the Manichean conceptualisations of "left environmentalists" and memes referring to "eco-hypocrisy," which is no different from that of the other extreme-right movements in the two countries. For instance, similar content was posted on the Hungarian *Green Resistance*'s webpage, referring to environmentalists who criticized the fundraising process for the renovation of the burned Notre Dame cathedral in April 2019, as "The Green Proletariat".

movements, such as HVIM and the paramilitary formation *Farkasok* (wolves), embrace the Turanian tradition of “becoming closer to animals” through occult practices and telling analogies:

There is an ancient knowledge that characterized mainly the Turanian nomadic people, and this knowledge can be found in the indigenous people, from the Indians of North America, through the Vikings to our ancestors, the Scythian-Hun tribes. In each of these nations, there was an identification with different animals. The emperor of the ancient Hungarians was able to appear in the form of a wolf (even the great warriors of the Viking or other peoples) and even ruled over them. We also encounter wolf depictions on Scythian-hun motives, so we can say that, due to our ancestors, we have also been a minimal symbolic being. (Farkas, 2018)

Although such statements may seem to lack direct reference to environmental protection and FRE, following up on these motives with the representatives of these organizations point to a clear, logical connection with environmental protection:

Since environmental pollution is the physical manifestation of the spiritual and psychical darkening, sickness, and contamination, emblematic of the modern people's condition. Therefore, for us to stop environmental pollution, we should start cleaning the minds and souls. This would directly result in the decrease in pollution. (Barcsa-Turner Gábor, HVIM/Farkas, 01/09/2019)

Somewhat similar ideas of “indulging in nature’s beauties” were nurtured by the representatives of Polish *Ecolektyw*, who embraced the solar-mysticism of the *Völkisch* culture and reverence for “Blood and Soil,” derived from the Jewish/Old Testament concept of *Ha'adamah* (of the earth-ground):

I very much appreciate the *Völkisch* culture. But I don't believe in this s**t about killing others blablabla, only in the symbols of connecting people with nature and insisting on these. I am not sure how to name this, but I like symbols. It's not like I believe in magic, but for me, symbols matter. So Algiz, our logo and the tree of life. Doing something connected with souls in the direction of nature is a nice thing to put people on a good track towards solving problems with nature. Now we have, in my opinion, problems with good connections to our family: for instance, the cities. Many people are going from towns to cities, never going back, losing connection, and living in completely different world. They

don't remember where they came from, where they were born and raised etc. So, you could say that this is my connection with Hitlerism. (Rex, Ecolektyw, 06/15/2020)

Insisting that he "does not live in Hitler's times, nor did Hitler live in his time," Rex eschewed the Nazi taunt (for which he and Ecolektyw were accused of, see Witkowski, 2019) by establishing logical equivalence between Hitlerism, Wotansvolk, and oikophilia. Tempering such outlooks under the virtue of localized affections signals the pliancy of ideology. The more I insisted on Rex's self-positioning in the world of modernity and its impermeable containers, the less likely it was to distinguish between the "immutable" and "alternative" elements of his worldviews. Still, far-right mysticism enables the analogy of nature as territory, which situates the kinship with land with political and revisionist claims. Either through the lament over nature lost under the Treaty of Trianon or over the symbols of Polishness and its nature located outside its borders (Lviv, Brest, Vilno), mysticism sources the Geist of the land with its (very tangible and strategic) importance for the nation.

The common point of departure for far-right ecologists subscribing to both Catholic tradition(s) and the polytheistic and neo-pagan cults is alienation (coded 2 times), a formative component of any ecologism. Conceived as the absence of conditions enabling "the creature...to lead the life for which it has been adapted, within the appropriate habitat, its attainment of maturity and its carrying out of the functions normal for a specimen of that type amount to a perfection of its existence" (Baxter 1999: 167), alienation opens the issue of sentience and the non-human agency. Yet, alienation in FRE is anthropocentric and Spenglerian, in eulogies for (hu)man's detachment from the blood-soaked land and its true being. Quite simply – "if one is alienated from the land, then one cannot truly care for it" (Forchtner and Özvatan 2019: 229), alluding to the

organicist-naturalist conception of rootedness. This “human chauvinism” (Sylvan and Plumwood 1980) – the overwhelming focus on human beings as the single bearers of intrinsic values, is criticized in a statement by the HVIM-funded Szent Korona Rádío: “Modern man is alien in nature and therefore afraid of it. Our goal is to showcase practices that promote prosperity, survival, and relaxation in nature.” (Szent Korona Rádío, 2019). It may also take the form of a malady, the “cancer of individualism,” (Greenline Front Manifesto, 2017) a creation of multiverses which do not resonate with one another, and constitute a mirror, alternative world. The essence of this alternative world, which in itself poses a troubling ontological problem even to the metapolitical writings of Evola, is the untroubled belief in individualism as a precondition to all solutions.

In this alternative world, people are God in themselves, enthusiastic about technical progress, they live in the belief that they are able to create the universe, drawing without limits from the gifts of Nature, at the same time violating its eternal laws. (Greenline Front Manifesto, 2017)

The assertion of a mirroring, empty, void society, also explains the perceived shallowness of some ecologists in addressing the environmental crisis. This was noticeable in an (unanticipated) sorrow with which Robert Winnicki, the leader of Ruch Narodowy and one of the most renowned far-right politicians in Poland spoke about the “eco-ideology,” clearly equating it with the left, fundamentally mistaken way of perceiving the world. However, as he was elaborating on what he considered to be the fallacy of this eco-ideology, the remorse for “letting go” of this topic was evident.

It is an ideological and spiritual construct, searching for something that will fulfill the emptiness of modern society, a spiritual and cultural emptiness. They found it not in Christianity, not in spiritual values, but in that [emphasizes and takes a deep breath]...however, we were also lazy, too much deluded by consumption, and unwilling to

engage with this topic with due reflection. We are both, the right and the left, lumped into this, without any sense of belonging. (Robert Winnicki, Ruch Narodowy, 11/15/2018)

Hence, alienation refers to the feeling of being “lumped into” *anomie*, without any teleological sense or clarity about the direction in which the world is going, as if the movement is always supposed to be with a purpose and an endpoint. Although this stance is shared across contexts and geographical areas, it is not a surprise that such lament comes from a far-right politician from Eastern Europe, still essentially-othered semi-periphery, the half-orient, in spite of the existing political and economic integrations. However, a green theorist would be poised to think that the sense of alienation and life in ghettoized societies would lead to something different than their seclusion on the basis of race, culture, or their environments, as the naturalist and Manichean imaginations imply. To help escape this feeling of convalescence, which I even for a brief moment caught in Winnicki’s otherwise confident presentation, nationalism offers the power of a group. In this (lengthy) passage by Adam Busse from the Stormtroopers, it is possible to identify how putting an end to alienation becomes envisaged in line with the Manichean worldview:

...the exploitation of the natural environment combined with rapid industrialization and urbanization has created a new type of human. An alienated, lonely, mechanized man, pressed into the cogs of the System, who is not aware of his spiritual emptiness and is only an object of existence based on the ideology of "progress," the ideology pushing for a hedonistic and consumerist lifestyle, attachment to worldly goods and lack of any depth...these factors want to bring man to the role of not a creature who has a mystical connection with nature, land, homeland, and nation.

That is why modern, revolutionary nationalism should focus on the struggle for saving and contaminating the natural environment in all its aspects, both economic (such as limiting industrialization), social (i.e., limiting urbanization and redefining the existing population and spatial policy to one that will promote proper development of the environment) and education. Here we must emphasize the education of a man in the attitude of feeling love

for nature, experiencing bonds with it as one of the formative elements of our national identity. (Adam Busse, Stormtroopers, 2015)

It may come as surprising that the response laid out in the second part of this quote does not read particularly nationalistic (apart from the use of the terms “nationalism” and “national”). Logically, to overcome the continual alienation of the "modern man," FRE necessitates a form of redemption. This redeemed spirituality can, to reiterate the interconnectedness of these concepts, be established through the nostalgic and autarkic ideal: returning to smaller communities and thus ameliorating the effects of environmental degradation, but also of the population's alienation from the (home)land (Lekan 2005: 85). Apart from the spiritual detachment, alienation can also presuppose a state in which citizens don't anticipate the representation of their interests by the politicians (see Edelman 1971), a conception which has since been criticized for being in line with Adorno's delusive concept of consumer capitalism (see Blühdorn 2007: 261).⁴⁴

Authority: ‘The Green Royalism’ or away from eco-dictatorship?

It may seem unexpected that the schematic overview of peripheral concepts in FRE ends with authority, as the concept has been long considered central to understanding the far-right (and right-wing in general) connection with ecologism (see e.g., Hay 2001; Olsen 1999). In this analysis, Authority as a category consists of 11 codes, coded a total of 55 times, hence lesser than any other category in the corpus (although Spirituality has only one more, see Appendix 5). Eco-authoritarianism and neo-Malthusianism coming from the far right seem to have faded over the

⁴⁴ Blühdorn (2014) appropriates Baudrillard's notion of the simulacrum to argue how concepts such as alienation, emancipation, and false consciousness have simply run out of steam in a world where identity needs are completely immersed and foreclosed by the system. Blühdorn calls this the “post-ecological turn,” in which the potential for a critical project is depleted due to the continuous calls for “flexibility” and “adaptability,” leaving no space for a fundamental exclusion from the consumer capitalist system.

last few decades. In Hungary and Poland, such connections were only found as isolated cases in some of the extreme-right groups (such as HVIM in Hungary), against the commitment to the (ideological) emphasis on grassroots engagement. To understand this decontestation of authority as a concept in FRE, two core sentiments of authoritarianism require further exploration: the eco-authoritarianism, rooted in overpopulation, neo-Malthusian concerns, and misanthropy, and far-right authoritarianism, belief in charismatic, hierarchical leadership.

Neo-Malthusianism, the fear of overpopulation building on the finite nature of Earth's resources (building on the work of the 18th century economist Thomas Malthus) has been a permanent shadow of ecological politics and not a separate "school" within the green political thought, belonging to both ecocentric and anthropocentric strands (Barry 1994: 377). It has, however, gained periodical popularity, particularly thriving in times of crises, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic or the scientization of the environmental crisis in the 1950s and the early 1960s. The crises allow for new albeit not so original framings, such as the misanthropy embodied in pandemic-laden "humans are the virus" argument or the "tragedy of the commons." (Hardin 1968) Even though they are sometimes labeled "bad environmentalism" (Seymour 2018; Bosworth forthcoming) because of their artificial separation between the natural and the social, the exact same separation rejected by FRE, such neo-Malthusian affective framings add to the confusion of the meanings-decontestations of "nature." Thus, these arguments signal the inability of conventional politics to address the existing challenges. Indeed, the vivid imaginary of the "population bomb" (Ehrlich 1972) had been the driving force behind draconian proposals aiming to curtail the population growth that peaked in the late 1960s and 1970s, in the work whose most

renowned representatives were Hardin and Heilbroner (1974). The solution to this crisis suggested by neo-Malthusians is an establishment of an ecologically-sound dictatorship, wielding incorruptible power by bringing forth the most educated representatives of the population (Hay 2001: 174).

Yet, to argue that the far right has been a significant force behind such framings would be preposterous, as the doomsdayists come from all ideological backgrounds. Moreover, the anti-immigrant stances of neo-Malthusians are constructed on misanthropic rather than nationalist or racist/cultural grounds, implying an argument of mere numbers. Sometimes, the more extreme end of the right spectrum substitutes the “lack of education” argument of immigrants with naturalist stances on genetic degeneration wrought by the technological innovations. In the writings of Ernst Jünger, the right philosopher particularly important for influencing the “conservative revolution,” this impact on technology on children was called the “total mobilization” (see Obodrzycki, Szturmowcy, 2019), which weakened the human race. Nonetheless, the calls for “ecological expertocracy” were picked up by Mi Hazánk and also some members of Młodzież Wszechpolska, Ruch Narodowy, and Trzecia Droga. This indicates friction with the populist conceptualization of FRE, resting on the knowledge and capabilities of “ordinary” citizens.

“I think it [environmental crisis] is a more serious problem than what the people say and think about it. The main reason is that people don’t have enough education and knowledge about these issues. The ordinary people don’t really know how to save the environment and protect everything around them.” (Krisztina Csereklye-Klapwijk, Mi Hazánk, 06/06/2019)

“We would like the support of true scientists, not emotionally-invested citizens without knowledge on these topics.” (Krzysztof Bosak, Ruch Narodowy, 11/14/2018)

“How could we possibly believe in conspiracy theories when we have a specialist, scientist in our ranks.” (Jerzy, MW, 06/07/2019)

Much as this belief in “expert knowledge” on environmental issues coexists with the populist predicament of far-right politics, the conceptualization of authority in FRE is complemented by the “original” ingredient of far-right ideology: charismatic leadership. Under this explanation, the far-right’s predisposition to authoritarian leadership is embodied in the sometimes-abstract imaginary of order (“If we have order, the environment will be protected,” coded 11 times), as environment is yet another domain of politics which is to be incorporated in the authoritarian polity.

I don't believe in democracy. I believe in dictatorship, and I think it would be very useful for nature, to have a wise dictator who is connected to a number of institutions. A dictator can protect the nature and has good institutions to protect. In a democracy, protecting nature, this ecological system would just be part of the debate, and left would drive it to this way, the right would to other way – if we really want to get something done, we better make sure that we have the right guy to lead the story. (Piotr, ONR, 11/24/2018)

Piotr’s vision resembles the form of “Green Royalism”: a conception of an ecologically-oriented monarchy from the introductory quote to this chapter. The “Green Royalism” (a topic coded 4 times) is a recreation of Kantorowicz’s (1952) argument of the “King’s two bodies” – alluding to *body natural* and *body politic*, of which the latter constitutes the fundamental element of Medieval political theology.

It is clear that the far-right appropriations of order are diverse, ranging from calls for centralization (as an institutional arrangement, e.g., central ministry of environment) to taking pride in carbon-free, nature-loving events. A notable example of the latter was *Magyar Sziget*, a far-right music festival (organized by HVIM) held in Verőce (see Kürti, 2012). A pride and joy of

right-wing music, the organizers indicated that "even the leadership joined efforts to keep the place spotless, unlike the case with left-wing music festivals." (Zöld Ellenállás Facebook Page, 06/23/2018) Even though such understandings of "order" and "leadership" are often wedded to the far-right relationship with nature, they are at considerable odds with the principles of autarky and decentralization.

This is not to claim that the FRE is bereft of the vestigial traces of the *Führerprinzip*, but the hierarchy in this conception of authority is envisaged as a natural, not structural condition. In other words, the leadership in a far-right polity is "organic" and based on the "natural" managing capabilities of an individual, and not on education or expertise. What is common for these differentiated conceptualizations is the lust for a strongman prepared to exercise authoritarian frugality in addressing the ecological crisis. This is an inadvertently contextual presumption in the imagined predisposition of Eastern European societies for tyranny.

We like to have a strong leader, but we like democracy, which comes from the West, in the sense that we want to choose our own leader. We like that part of democracy. But after this point, when the leader is chosen and selected, we like to assign the powers to the leaders, the authority. So, there is this ambiguity. We want to have the choice to choose, but once we do, we delegate the authority to the leader to deal with these issues[...]Eastern Europeans, like those in Hungary, like to have a strong leader. The typical democracies don't work here. (János Árgyelán, the political director of Mi Hazánk, 10/30/2018)

Perhaps unwillingly, Árgyelán's assertion casts light on the half-hearted natures of modern democracies, in which the elected leader is not merely an executioner of the will of the *demos*. It captures the essence of illiberal democracy (coded once), usually entailing forms of political messianism (coded once), an untroubled rendition of *history as progress*, a belief in the end-point, or the promised land at the end of complex political processes (see Talmon 1960). Political

messianism, and messianic nationalism in particular, have long been recognized as a feature of Hungarian, and less so Polish post-socialist politics, where these have been not only exclusive to the far right (Gyurcsány, Orbán, Kaczyński brothers). With the cult of strong leaders spanning across decades (in Jobbik, Gabor Vona, Toroczkai in *Mi Hazánk*, previously Csurka in *MIÉP* and Winnicki/Bosak in *Ruch Narodowy*), the far right has followed a similar pattern. Political messianism is also present in extraparlimentary organizations, taking a multitude of (spiritual) forms. An example is Savitri Devi, popular in eco-fascist circles for her theistic notion of Avatar, the deity descending to earth in a superhuman or animal form (see Goodrick-Clarke 2002: 96). Regardless of these differentiated understandings of authority as a concept and its role in the prosperous "green nationalism," this concept has not been paramount to FRE today, and it has obviously lost momentum since peaking in survivalism of the 1970s and early 1980s.

Summary

The perimeter of FRE, comprising its not-so-central concepts, points to values seldom present in far-right discourse on the environment. The formative and peripheral concepts of any ideology require decontestation: this task, as arbitrary as it is, enables pinpointing the features of an ideology from otherwise general and perhaps even vague standalone concepts such as nostalgia, autarky, spirituality and mysticism, and authority. The far-right's ideological interpretations of the natural environment are imprinted with nostalgia for traditional natures and livelihoods, indicating the ecologically-minded reform of the morally decaying society. Be it the return to pristine nature and countryside through small-scale farming or an idealized "green nationalism", nostalgia shifts between stewardship-oriented anthropocentric gust and an ecocentric, extreme-right hippieism

(Staudenmeier 1995). Regardless of the “right” decontestation of nostalgia under FRE, such concept presupposes self-dependence and autarky, signaling the need to organize the economy on naturalist postulates. Partially kindred to autonomy, one of the building blocks of liberalism, autarky can be extended to non-anthropomorphic entities and used to justify localist policies. This “local ecology” can be a compelling appreciation of what is considered domestic, but FRE also requires a Manichean distinction from other nations or corporations contributing to the pollution of the home environment (be it a German, Russian, or “Brussels” other).

That local, grassroots type of activism is envisaged as a remedy to the environmental crisis induced by the big, outsider actors, carries with it a distinctive spiritual component. While FRE of the radical right is generally associated with “Christian Ecologism” in the investigated contexts, indicating possible congruence with both wider right-wing and clerical circles, the extreme right in the two countries seldom rejects the Judeo-Christian tradition, as the case with extreme-right Niklot in Poland. Such actors, usually more embedded in local communities and grassroots ecological activism, offer stern criticism of the anthropocentric teachings of the Church for its detrimental effects on the natural environment. These decontestations also indicate an authentic vision of authority. Amid its revival in the recent covid-19 crisis, the calls for eco-dictatorship have widely waned from far-right circles. Still, some extreme right organizations (e.g., HVIM in Hungary or ONR in Poland) continue to nurture the imaginary of “Green Royalism.” What is interesting, however, is that the calls for a centralized and hierarchical leadership are justified through cultural adjacencies: alleged unsuitability of democratic governance in the rigid realms of Eastern Europe. The answers to these questions formulate how FRE looks in action,

particular policy positions, and activism of the far right with regard to the natural environment. This book moves on to explore these more tangible ramifications of FRE on environmental politics in Hungary, Poland, but (possibly) even beyond the Eastern European, post-socialist realms.

Chapter 7 – Far-Right Ecologism in Action: Policy and Activism

The first aim of our ecological program is growing the index of forests. Then, making the inventory of the species of wild animals – but doing it much better than now, because now we have some data which is not very detailed. Third, fighting against illegal hunting with the forbidden and unethical methods. Then, increasing the punishments, building the government agency which would be focused on the environment and be independent. Last year, we had big scandals when trash was imported to and burnt in Poland because it was profitable to do so. The companies that run this trash system, the landfills told us these were “accidents.” However, there were way too many accidents - it started really looking like a business model! The last point is, fighting against the smog, because we have severe air pollution in the cities. (Krzystof Bosak, Ruch Narodowy, 11/14/2018)

The vice-president of Ruch Narodowy and the presidential candidate for the 2020 elections (in which he won 1.3 million or 6.78 percent of the votes), Krzystof Bosak is the poster-person for the Polish radical right. Neatly dressed, eloquent and brittle in political debates, Bosak was nevertheless often perceived as a bit too elitist for the emerging wave of Polish nationalism. The café in which we met over lunch on a gloomy day in November did not paint such a picture. While being reserved, disinterested and focused on his meal, Bosak’s ability to convincingly convey Ruch Narodowy’s environmental policy, adding detail to its economic aspects may well indicate the potential of the “professional” far right and its ecologism.

After exploring the central and peripheral concepts associated with the ideology of far-right ecologism in an effort to offer an ideal type, this chapter moves on to examine how this modular and potentially abstract conceptualization becomes/remains murky in practice. In spite of detailed elaborations of the far-right’s environmental program by the people like Bosak, the far

right is mostly reactive when it comes to “progressive” proposals concerning the broad spectrum of environmental policies and the subsequent sociotechnical transitions (Schmid 2021). At the same time, the status of *niche* or challenger, anti-establishment parties of the opposition, allows the far-right parties to focus on the new policy issues and policy innovations (on the broader argument on niche parties, see Adams and Merrill 2006).

Paradoxically, by showing the discrepancy between an ideal-type FRE and environmental politics of the far right, this chapter and the thesis show why both are needed as sets of lenses that allow for a closer examination of modulations and idiosyncrasies. Instead of reinforcing the watertight distinction between ideology and activism as the two separable and distant poles, they point to different angles of the same “object”. The “green nationalists” of FRE invest a new meaning in the political vocabulary, as seen with, e.g., Naturalism, Organicism, and Nostalgia in the previous two chapters, and they do so also by conducting activities and engaging in debates on environmental politics. To grasp how these conceptual clusters unfold in action, this chapter illuminates the forms of policy interventions far right takes in the post-socialist environments of Hungary and Poland. Starting from the outlooks on some of the most salient contemporary topics, such as anthropogenic climate change and energy politics, the far right today also engages with the social construction of various forms of environmental contamination, such as air, water, land, and noise pollution. This chapter then moves on to examine the positions of far-right ecologists with regard to the topics that emerged from the data, such as biodiversity, hunting, and animal welfare, outlining the articulation of crisis and breakdown in radical nationalism.

Climate change acceptance: This may change everything

In 2014, Naomi Klein, a Canadian author, and activist, famously announced that framing climate change as an inevitable consequence of capitalism “changes everything.” Indeed, such arguments can be perceived as game-changers in our perception of the thrust behind the environmental change. In perhaps a less elated manner, this chapter challenges the prevalent, although empirically warranted perception on the far-right actors figuring as deniers of anthropogenic climate change. The assumption that everyone on the right is a climate skeptic has been extrapolated from the research on conservative or right-wing voters in some countries (see Jacques et al. 2008; McCright and Dunlap 2011; Painter and Gavin 2016; Jaspal et al. 2016; Krange et al. 2018; Jylhä and Hellmer 2020), but also the anti-intellectual predilection towards conspiracy theories (c.f. Butler and Knight 2020). Indeed, climate change skepticism or outright denialism has been duly noted by the scholarship on nationalism and the far right as well (see Anselm and Hultman 2014; Forchtner et al. 2018; Forchtner 2019; Schaller and Karius 2019; Conversi 2020; Kulin et al. forthcoming). Likewise, Chalmers University of Technology’s *Center for Climate Change Denialism* indicate “right-wing nationalism” and “conservative think tanks” as the main contributors to disputing scientific findings in relation to climate change (see CEFORCED 2019).

This correlation between climate skepticism and the Right makes drawing causal explanations difficult because of the terminological choices, as in the use of “right-wing populism” denoted as the ideology behind such stances. One of the main arguments in (right-wing) populist rhetoric is that of climate change being an artificial and abstract construct invented by the liberal elites, prompting an ideologically-driven response in defense of the underprivileged who have to pay the burden of the climate transition (Lockwood 2018: 722). The link between

environmentalism and elitism has been around for quite some time (see Morrison and Dunlap 1986), serving partly as a logical extension of postmaterialist logic of the environmental protection being the “thing of the rich” (Inglehart 1995). Looking at the survey data on right-wing populist supporters, Huber (2019) suggests that climate skepticism of right-wing populists is derived from perceived under-representation, a feeling somehow independent of ideological tenets. However, arguments that populist attitudes (as in the distinction between people and the elites) are orthogonal to the left-right spectrum and devoid of ideology fail to grasp the very ideological impetus behind the resentment of elites and policy positions that are informed by such attitudes. The argumentation associated with climate skepticism spans from evidence skepticism (denying the harmful effects of CO₂ to the climate), process skepticism (distrust in scientific findings, their presentation, and dissemination), and response skepticism (avoiding hardline measures to tackle climate change) (van Rensburg 2015). Whichever typology one subscribes to, the far right is widely recognized for its outspoken criticism of the “climate agenda”. This is echoed in the words of Arkadiusz (MW), “the concept of Global Warming is just a fable used by international organizations and some naïve people.”

However, it is often forgotten that one can acknowledge the anthropogenic background of the ongoing climate change, and still express skepticism towards the policy process (Forchtner and Lubarda forthcoming). This is contrary to the analytical rendition of Malm and The Zetkin Collective (2021: 102-103), who perceive "green nationalism" (their term for FRE)⁴⁵ to be

⁴⁵ Here, “Green Nationalism” is characterized by Malthusianism and “the mysticism of national nature” (Malm and The Zetkin Collective 2021: 95). This rendition of Far-Right Ecologism is closer to the definition of ecofascism, focusing only on the very extreme end of its morphology.

"spilling into flat denial of climate change," or at best "being the subsidiary" of climate denialism. The nexus of the two is constructed through arguments on immigration to the Global North that drives climate change, which are, as this thesis shows, relatively present. While climate change denialism or skepticism is still strong in the far right of today, Malm et al.'s insistence on one side of the coin (denialism), all while timidly acknowledging FRE and the (increasing) cases of acceptance among these actors appears unhelpful in keeping track with far-right's continuous morphing and (d)evolution.

Returning to Klein's framing that is becoming increasingly popular with the increasing scope of the climate problem, it may well be argued, that this thesis, in its focus on this complexity, also "changes everything." Nevertheless, far-right climate change acceptance is not particularly novel: there have been (rare) cases of acknowledging the existence of anthropogenic climate change (see Voss 2014), although widely unsupported by other authors (see Forchtner 2019). Assumptions that the far right in Hungary and Poland take up stances of climate denial tend to draw on the ideological conflation of the right-wing populism with the entire far-right spectrum, in the former's negative impact on climate policy (Lockwood 2018: 712). Indeed, high-ranked officials from the ruling Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) party in Poland denote environmentalism and climate change a part of "The Marxist model," a derogatory reference to a mishmash of cultures, races, and questionable moral tenets (Żuk 2018). This feeds into the broader conceptual link between cosmopolitanism and climate-change acceptance (see Beck and Grande 2007).

PiS in Poland and Fidesz in Hungary are certainly not among the most vociferous proponents of climate-change policy in the European Parliament, and even less so in domestic politics (see Malm and The Zetkin Collective 2021; Lubarda and Caiani in review). This does not mean that these discursive ambiguities of populism are sufficient for assigning the label of climate denialism to the entire far-right spectrum. In their 2018 report on the link between right-wing populist parties in Europe and environmentalism, Schaller and Carius (2018:11) indicated that Fidesz is "affirmative" whereas PiS is "disengaged/cautious" on recognizing and accepting climate science. Although PiS has opposed "ambitious climate policies" (Żuk and Szulecki 2020: 8) since this party re-entered government in 2015, such stances have been largely conditioned by the attempts to achieve energy autarky in the coal-based economy. The importance of coal as the "strategic raw material," but also its materialistic imaginary as the "indigenous fossil fuel fused with nothing less than the fate of the nation" (Bridge and Kuchler 2015: 136), conditions the refusal to curb carbon production as a part of climate policies.⁴⁶ Even right-wing populists (in both Hungary and Poland) are beginning to acknowledge the threat of climate change, such as Orbán's 2020 New Year Speech (Kormány, 01/11/2020).

⁴⁶ The coal mining industry has long been central to the economy of Poland, and its extraction has been recognized as one of the main drivers of communist modernization after the Second World War. Its immense symbolic potential paired with (rather rudimentary) infrastructure amplified its symbolic power and instigated a path dependency in energy policy. Amid numerous attempts to diversify energy sources to avoid overreliance on coal, Poland's carbon-based energy sector has been effectively securitized by the government through the use of Schmittian politics of exception (Szulecki 2020). The Polish energy industry is dominated by state-owned companies producing energy from coal, and Poland's energy import is one of the smallest as compared to the other EU member states (Szulecki 2015). In fact, it was mostly due to the tendencies associated with European renewable energy policy that climate change has entered the fore (see Jankowska 2010; 2012). With all this in mind, for a long time the predominantly negative stance of Polish political parties towards renewables has not differed across the ideological spectrum, characterized by the lack of awareness and concern about environmental issues or climate change (see Jankowska 2010; Szulecki 2017).

Against this background, the timid recognition of far-right (and right-wing populist) climate acceptance can be partly rendered as strategic, given the fact that the far right in the two countries is in opposition to the ruling right-wing populist parties. The opposition profile increases leverage, allowing those parties to even advocate for "extreme" positions on a certain issue, especially if their vote share is relatively small (Wagner 2012). However, discounting ideological preferences behind the various degrees of climate change acceptance and skepticism would be a reductionist mistake. On the one hand of this spectrum of degrees, climate-change regulations are perceived as an infringement upon the sovereignty of the nation-state and its citizens by scientific (and globalist) elites detached from the local contexts. On the other hand, the increasingly tangible effects of climate change on the survival of the nation enable the far right to discursively position themselves as saviors of the decaying nature, in accordance with the Manichean imaginary of decadence and rebirth. The polarization occurring in the far right, between denying climate change as a globalist construct and calling for action on it in defense of the national particularities, could define future developments regarding FRE and its overall relevance for environmental politics. This "climate polarization" is particularly pronounced in Poland, where there is a sharp rift between the radical and extreme right' positions on anthropogenic climate change.

Even though this research is not based on quantitative analysis of a large-scale number of respondents, there is a potential to draw some conclusions from respondents' positions on anthropogenic climate change for the near future. This claim is supported all the more because of the fact that the respondents are highly influential individuals within the far-right organizations in Hungary and Poland.

Anthropogenic climate change is real	#	Structure of the answers
True	24	14 (HU), 10 (PL) 9 (RR), 15 (XR)
False	7	0 (HU), 7 (PL) 5 (RR), 2 (XR)
Not sure/no opinion	4	1 (HU), 3 (PL) 2 (RR), 2 (XR)
Total	35	15(HU), 20(PL) 16(RR), 19(XR)

Table 7.1 – Opinions on climate change among the respondents

HU – Hungary; PL – Poland; RR – Radical right; XR – Extreme right

In spite of the small sample and the potential nuances in argumentation (such as the ranges of climate skepticism, see van Rensburg 2014), there are at least two major conclusions that can be drawn from this table. First, the Hungarian far right almost unanimously acknowledges the existence of anthropogenic climate change, with 15 respondents accepting the need for concrete climate policies and 2 who had no specific opinion on the topic. Second, the extreme-right organizations (see Chapter 3) are more likely to accept that anthropogenic climate change is a problem, or at least less likely to refrain to evidence skepticism.

One of those who recognize the existence of anthropogenic climate change is arguably the most influential figure on the contemporary Hungarian far right and the leader of Mi Hazánk, László Toroczkai. To him, the validation of his claims come through "those who know nature best," his supporters and farmers:

I believe in this [anthropogenic climate change] because I see the change...it is a very important topic. I don't think it's just fake, a hoax, because as I said to you, we see the proof

in agriculture. There is proof. Although I don't understand it, I do know a lot of people who think the same in political questions as I do, but they don't believe in climate change. It is a very big problem. If they wanted, they could have done the research. Because this is a very simple question –it either exists, or it doesn't exist. Go and talk to the people working in agriculture. They will tell you this exists, this is a problem. (Laszlo Toroczka, Mi Hazánk, 12/17/2018)

In this populist (and anti-intellectual) episteme, the “globalist science” is replaced by the ordinary, working people, who happen to have first-hand experience with the impacts of this process. A similar justification was present in the Hungarian extreme right organizations such as HVIM and Légió Hungária, where the recognition of climate change as self-evident, “common sense,” simultaneously prevented these actors from substantially engaging with the subject. Within this framing, the real causes of climate change coagulate with the “enemies” from the Manichean differentiation (ch. 5): avaricious multinational corporations, lenient international organizations, but also the short-sighted and contemptible environmentalists.

At times, however, the acceptance of climate change by the Hungarian radical right may also be voiced through the argumentation of mainstream green actors and movements. Márton Gyöngyösi, Jobbik’s vice-president and the MEP, infamous for his anti-Semitic remarks in the Hungarian Parliament during Jobbik’s “extreme” years (2004-2014), not only claimed the conservative, centrist position of his party (see Lubarda 2020) but pointed to the obsolescence of national borders in dealing with climate change:

When it comes to efforts to reduce carbon emissions or protecting the environment, we are searching for a global solution. If there's one thing where national sovereignty doesn't matter, it is the environmental problem. Whichever strategy Hungary has regarding the pollution on the Danube, it will not matter because the Danube flows through quite a few countries, so we have to cooperate. (Márton Gyöngyösi, Jobbik, 02/06/2018)

Recognizing the porous nature of national borders in addressing climate change among the far right is not a rarity since Polish nationalists have also indicated the necessity of cooperation with Slovakian colleagues (*Kotlebists – Slovak People’s Party*) in the Tatra Mountains region, in southern Poland and Northern Slovakia. Even if intentionally sidelined to the more advantageous nationalist arguments, the implicit recognition of the transnational nature of climate change constitutes a meeting point with (mainstream) green politics.

Thus, even those who reluctantly acknowledge the existence of climate change on the far right for the reasons above nonetheless remain adamant on the parity-rule in commitments to climate policy objectives. Whereas the necessity to protect the climate is hardly ever put into question, the unfair burden of the costs on (Eastern) European countries, as opposed to the most polluting world economies (e.g., China, US, and India), is a justification from abstaining from climate talks and more stringent policy objectives.

Until Asian countries and the US make a move, we can’t expect Europe to solve the problem. (Kristina Csereklye, Mi Hazánk, 06/06/2019)

This (partly) explains why climate change has not been recognized as a priority for the far-right parties thus far. However, some of the far-right actors have used this ambiguity even to bring the existence of ACC under the spotlight:

In Africa, more and more land is becoming barren, that in Bangladesh the sea level rises, but from our point of view, Poland hasn't got any role to play now in those issues. So those processes will happen one way or the other.

Not every ecological issue is about climate change. Of course, it is very good that the right-wing asks questions about climate conditions. And I think we need this discussion here. It's not a religion, we don't need dogmas here. We need discussions, scientific discussions about it. There is a problem that a lot of people from the right-wing deny any ecological problems, especially I find it in the US and North America.

Our position on that subject [climate change] is not ideological. It is one of those things that we really want to research and investigate. In Poland, we have problems with air pollution, especially in winter, due to coal heating. So for us, it isn't a problem to modify our opinion about it. We of course want to protect coal production energy, we have a lot of coal in Europe. (Robert Winnicki, Ruch Narodowy, 11/15/2018)

Putting in question the very existence of climate change and its anthropogenic origin, van Rensburg's "evidence skepticism" has been most notably articulated across the Polish radical-right sections: Ruch Narodowy and the All-Polish Youth (7 respondents, including the leadership). This dubious attitude has been mostly induced by the strategic interests associated with the carbon energy but partly also bolstered by the epistemic suspicion and ideological distance to the possibility of attaining universal scientific knowledge. The pronounced pragmatism ("that subject is not ideological") and the assumed middle grounds of radical-right parties alleviate the hardline skepticism/denial. The fundamental issues of denialists remain the scope and the "intensity" of climate policies, feeding into the portrayal of shrinking freedom:

This is my personal statement, not an organizational one, but to me, this is all a big rumor about nothing. Climate has always changed, they were talking about global warming, and now they started talking about global cooling, so...I don't believe that, for example, the politics of reducing carbon emission are important for the EU, which contributes only with 2% to global emission. I believe a lot of stupid people in those green organizations will start dah-dah-dah-dah blabbering, indicating that people must follow suit – for instance, splitting and separating all of our garbage in order to recycle. Something is smart, such as collecting batteries or collecting tops of plastic bottles or cups. I can understand that. (Alicja, MW, 11/12/2018)

The concern that climate change policies are nothing but a breach of liberty (to pollute) and subordination of nation-states and international conglomerates (such as the EU) to intangible global principles is common in far-right argumentation, shown once again during the COVID-19 pandemic (see Summa 2020). Beyond the Manichean distinction of FRE, this argument undertakes to view human volition as a threat to an organic order constituted through the decontestation of the

core and peripheral concepts. To Hungarian columnist István Gazdag, frequently posted on the official page of the Hungarian extreme-right *Betyársereg*, “global warming” is a construct serving to justify the “invasion of migrants” and eventually lead to the eradication of the white race (see Gazdag 2019). It is worth noting though, that Gazdag’s racist rendering characteristic of white supremacist movements and accelerationists has been the only case in which the far-right in Hungary has promoted climate change denialism:

"Global warming" is, in fact, a re-labeled version of "climate change," by which hundreds of billions of euros are pulled out of the pockets of Western countries, more precisely their taxpayers, productive white people, by invoking the so-called “carbon tax” on all products and services, thus trying to force environmentally conscious consumption. This is perhaps the greatest tax evasion in human history, in order to alleviate the general government deficit in the countries concerned.

Climate change will trigger global mass migration, and dark-skinned people will colonize the countries of the white-skinned, resulting in a new and advanced genetic cocktail. Basically, "global warming" is good because it objectively promotes white genocide by racial diversity. Gazdag, columnist (republished by Betyársereg), 05/24/2019

The findings from the Table 7.1 should be taken with a pinch of salt. The intervening factors are not only the number of respondents but the disproportionate sample, as well as the number of those respondents who were less inclined to speak on this topic. As it will be indicated in the conclusion, future studies need to take into account the attitudes of voters and supporters of the political parties examined in this thesis. This is important for at least two reasons: first, the supporters may not share the attitudes of my respondents, and second, the differences in particular arguments could indicate a relationship between, e.g., response skepticism and climate acceptance, which are still analytically treated as two separate domains. Although this discrepancy may plug a gap between the supporters and the leadership of the far right in the two countries, it can also be

read as an indicator of a forthcoming change in the way the far right (but also right-wing populists) deal with climate policy.

Energy and pollution

The inconsistencies of the far right in the climate change debate did not significantly transfer to energy policy, which has long rested on the autarkic ideal of self-sufficiency. The important contextual marker of the debates on energy policy and renewables in Eastern Europe is the lucid memory of the Chernobyl disaster and the narratives interpreting it as a by-product of the decaying socio-political system. For the far right, the appropriation of the consumerist lust for profit enabled by the degeneration of an organic pre-War order, and purged Hungary of prospects for energy autarky. Lajos Kepli, Jobbik's leading environmentalist until 2019, reiterated the analogy between the wrongdoings of socialists and Fidesz, previously made on Jobbik's official page (Lajos Kepli, 10/17/2017). His call for "responsibility" and "green patriotism" reinstates the moral high grounds of radical nationalist stewardship over technocentric cornucopias, devoid of a sense of care for the homeland. This form of social responsibility towards posterity accentuated in e.g., nuclear energy debates is articulated in a fundamentally anthropocentric sense, as the concern for non-human forms of life is entirely absent from the argumentation of the far-right parties.

In Hungary, such analogies were mostly drawn with regard to the hot-topic of energy policy related to the construction (and expansion) of nuclear power plant PAKS-2. The agreement was initially made with Russian state-owned company Rosatom, and the Russian Federation was supposed to contribute with a €10 billion loan (Than-Reuters, 2015), although Rosatom was not supposed to sell electricity on the Hungarian market (unlike with some other Russian energy

investments, e.g., in Finland, see Aalto et al. 2017: 402). Logically, this situation pointed to a major geopolitical interplay, given the prospects of a long-term loan from Russian companies potentially increasing Hungarian energy dependency. At that time being close to the politicians in Kremlin, Jobbik sided up with ruling Fidesz in supporting the investment during the vote in the National Assembly on February 6th, 2014 (Aalto et al. 2017: 403). In endorsing the PAKS-2 power plant in 2014, Jobbik indicated the lack of „viable alternatives to nuclear energy," then-welcoming other arrangements in the field of energy policy, including the South Stream Gas supply contract (see Jobbik 2010 and 2013).

However, the tides have changed in 2014, with the arrival of Kepli as the party's leading environmentalist (see Jobbik, 2014). The increasing criticisms coming from the far-right party were mostly aimed at the lack of transparency and corruption allegations. In spite of these allegations, Jobbik's position on nuclear energy remained ambiguous. In 2017, the then-party leader, Gábor Vona, announced that, while Jobbik wants to secure energy independence in Hungary, the party is „very interested in renewable energy," though their position in PAKS-2 depends on the expert opinion „once they enter the government” (Facebook, 04/05/2017). Such a stance on renewables is in opposition to (then) green LMP (Kyriazi 2019), as Jobbik's overall endorsement of environmental policies was more in line with the *pars pro toto* representation, linking environmental and energy issues with the economic burdens on the taxpayers. The autarkic concern over energy (in)dependence, however, has been the most pronounced element of Mi Hazánk's program for the European Parliament (Mi Hazánk 2019). The party supported the expansion and construction of PAKS-2, although calling for the government to obtain greater

transparency and oversight of the project in a timely manner, given the urgency of the subject paired with climate change (Mi Hazánk's EP Elections manifesto, 04/30/2020). Following the established representational argumentation, the current contract is denounced for „standing for the interests of oligarchs.”

In Poland, although incomparable to Hungary in terms of scale, the far-right's positioning on nuclear energy has also been burdened by the geopolitical concerns.⁴⁷ The endorsement of nuclear energy is conditioned with the position on the imagined ideological spectrum: whereas the radical right actors (Ruch Narodowy and MW) are among the supporters of nuclear energy, mostly due to the increased prospects of energy export, the extreme right (other than Ecolektyw) tends to oppose such projects due to safety concerns. A common thread in far-right energy policy regardless of the position on the political spectrum (radical-extreme), is prioritizing the national interest (over the EU). Much like the ruling PiS, Ruch Narodowy (as a part of the *Konfederacja* coalition) has rejected the 2020 EU climate and energy package on these grounds, as it „burdens our companies and drains the budget” (Winnicki, BiznisAlert, 12/09/2019), although not taking into account the coal subsidies. As an opposition party however, Ruch Narodowy challenged PiS's inconsistent energy policy: Robert Winnicki, the leader of the party, has raised concerns over the tempo of energy diversification and reductions in coal mining. Coal resources remain „the natural wealth of Poland,” and it is through technological advancements that the Polish far right envisages „greening the coal” (Ruch Narodowy in Ecowyborczy, 05/07/2019). This invokes yet another contextual

⁴⁷ For instance, the 2019 electoral program of Ruch Narodowy (p. 50) states:

“Poland is geopolitically in a difficult energy situation - most of our gas and oil supplies come from Russia, which does not hide that blackmail is a normal tool for its foreign policy. Poland needs to retain its asset in this trade system of controlling gas and oil transit to Western Europe.”

adjacency, as the protection of coal mining industry is simultaneously a symbolic marker and a motivation in material terms. Its argumentation situated between the protection of mining livelihoods and the "stabilization of the coal market" Ruch Narodowy articulates its role as a guardian of the blue-collar workers and the national economy, even if at the expense of the environment. Similar argumentation came from Mi Hazánk, whose local representatives questioned the government's decision to close down the Bükkábrányi mine affiliated with Mátra thermo-power plant by switching it to gas, claiming to stand in protection of the mineworkers and their families (Mi Hazánk 04/09/2020).

Within the same operating logic, investing in and subsidizing particular technologies related to renewables are perceived as improper ways of developing energy policy due to the burdens this imposes on state-owned energy companies (Winnicki BiznisAlert, 12/09/2019). Unlike the Hungarian far right, with Mi Hazánk and Jobbik mostly promoting solar energy, the Polish far-right organizations remain suspicious of investing in renewables, given the time required for their development. In terms of specific sources, wind and solar energy are not considered viable enough for the Polish economy, and it is only geothermal energy perceived as „the valuable addition to the current energy mix” (Ruch Narodowy in Ecowyborczy, 05/07/2019). A country considered to be the negative example of implementing energy policy based on renewables is Germany, which has „not been calm with the CO₂ emissions due to the harmful effect of green ideologies” (Winnicki, BiznisAlert, 12/09/2019). Thus, the emphasis on autarky and self-sustainability through a “tranquil” approach to energy supply is discursively embedded in the prioritization of economic stability. The attempt to rationalize the energy (and other political)

debates by reducing them to mere pragmatic decisions devoid of ideological interventions is the most salient feature of far-right energy discourse.

Administrative matters, pollution, biodiversity, and forestry

Be it due to the ideology of FRE or the (still very ideological) “pragmatism” in decision-making processes, the far-right positioning in the energy domain is well-trodden. Ideologically, it is primarily based on the conceptualization of autarky and authority as peripheral concepts of FRE (see the previous chapter), the centrality of state, and its role in developing an ecological polity. What these ideological positions amount to are calls for centralization of administrative powers dealing with environmental and energy policies, present across the two cases and the ideological spectrum of the far right. Therefore, Jobbik and Mi Hazánk have both called for the restoration of the Hungarian Ministry of environment (dissolved under Fidesz), much like Ruch Narodowy, which criticized the “scattering of competences of the Polish Ministry of Energy” (Ruch Narodowy 2018 electoral program). Although it may be argued that the extreme-right groups (such as e.g., Ecolektyw or Niklot in Poland) put greater weight on decentralized communities, the state remains an indispensable element of organizing policies amid frequent administrative metamorphoses. Thus, MW, together with Ruch Narodowy, has called for a creation of an in-depth inventory of wild animal species which is to be centralized and administered by the responsible ministry.

Such an ideological preference generally traverses to the debates concerning air, water, land, and noise pollution. Since the pollution divide between what is considered Eastern and Western Europe being popularly deemed „The New Iron Curtain,” (Banovic, 01/09/2019) the

salience of various sorts of pollution has prompted increasing involvement of far-right actors.⁴⁸ This has been particularly the case with air pollution and smog, which has been long observed (see Peters et al. 1996) as the cause of a myriad of health issues in Eastern Europe. In Hungary, the number of premature deaths connected to air pollution is contributing to 10,000, which reportedly makes it the second most polluted country in the world (Euronews 2019). Likewise, Poland's Małopolska region (with Krakow as its capital) is one of the most polluted regions in the EU (see Horwacik 2020).

The response of far-right parties to air pollution (as with the other forms of environmental degradation) are generally aimed at the ruling Fidesz and PiS, hence the “state,” though they most certainly do not encapsulate the extent of far-right's engagement with these matters. Jobbik's environmental spokespeople: Kepli and later Tibor Nunkovics, have both indicated the importance of engaging with the topic, although there have been no substantial policy proposals with regard to curbing the air pollution in Hungary. Although the position of the Polish radical right is conditioned by their support of carbon-based energy, this has not prevented MW activists from Krakow to resort to symbolic forms of protest, such as putting masks on the monuments of Polish national heroes across the city. This historical symbolism offered a textbook example of how FRE operates at the level of practice, using monuments as the foci for collective participation and the reminders and the guardians of “imagined communities”. In doing so, MW indicated the

⁴⁸ Potential examples include Mi Hazánk and Jobbik reactions to the incidents in the Mátra coal power plant in Heves country, Hungary, where three poisonous gases were detected, and the pollution of landfills and water by the agricultural company of Lőrinc Mészáros, one of the Hungarian oligarchs and childhood friends of Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán. Likewise, Jobbik has engaged with the issue of the improper treatment of wastewaters in Székesfehérvár.

importance of "reaching the broadest possible consensus on the issue, irrespective of the political views," emphasizing the importance of individual responsibility in reducing the level of pollution (MW, 01/12/2019). Extreme-right non-party actors, both in Hungary and in Poland, have not substantially engaged with air pollution, apart from sporadically posting content on social media pages.⁴⁹



Figure 8.1 – MW anti-smog performance in Krakow (Source: MW)

Water and land pollution are closely linked to the struggle for clean air, so endorsing an impermeable separation between policy proposals in these domains is futile. However, both water

⁴⁹ An interesting example is the content posted on the Zöld Ellenállás Facebook page (affiliated with HVIM), where the administrator ridiculed the "Clean Air Premium" oxygen bar in New Delhi, India, as a prime example of greenwashing (see Zöld Ellenállás Facebook page, 11/17/2019).

and land pollution are no less represented in the far-right public appearances and policy proposals. In Hungary, apart from the pollution on the Danube, one of the most polluted rivers that flow through the country is Tisza. Mi Hazánk has thoroughly engaged with this topic (see Chapter 5), pointing to the need for „protection of our national waters” from the pollution coming from Ukraine “endangering the lives of Hungarians.” (see Hirado.hu, 06/22/2019) In Poland, the cases of water pollution in Warta near Poznań brought together far-right movements such as MW, ONR, and even Autonomous Nationalists and Ecoloktyw. Similarly, Jobbik’s Tibor Nunkovics protested against hydrocarbon mining, indicating that the party “does not want guest workers to be deployed to extract hydrocarbon fields under Budapest, similar to the investment in Tiszaújváros.” (Jobbik Környezetvédelem 08/11/2019)

Jobbik has long been engaging with illegal landfills and waste disposal, filing a criminal complaint about the property damage associated with improper waste treatment in Abaúj-Zemplén (see Jobbik, 01/07/2015) or the storage of hazardous waste at different locations: Kiskunhalas, Balmazújváros, and near the Budapest Chemical Works (BVM) company (see Jobbik, 06/11/2015). The non-party actors have engaged with these issues to a lesser extent, although there are a few honorable mentions: Hungarian HVIM has protested against the Danish-owned hog farms in Csallóköz (Žitný ostrov), an island in the Danube extending from Bratislava (Slovakia) to Komárno (the Hungarian border) due to the excessive water pollution and the odor. The same day, this post was republished by Zöld Ellenállás.

But what should a Western country that does not have enough agricultural land but has more money do? "Of course" - head east! There one finds no shortage of farmland or corrupt politicians. So it happened that Csallóköz's famous farmland was slowly acquired

by the Danish investors and pig farms were quickly lined up. There are always a few willing mayors who, after some “encouragement,” made room for such investments. It is none but the locals who pay the price and “drink the juice” of such “improvements” – more precisely, they smell it.

As the company continues to ignore the will of the residents of the area, we sent a new, simpler message: DSA! VIDD HAZA A SZARODAT! – DSA! TAKE YOUR SH*T HOME! (HVIM Website, 11/09/2019)

The nativist element of FRE pointed towards “polluting outsiders” (Lubarda 2017) is an extension of the organicist logic, also present in, e.g., cases of protesting against foreign companies importing waste to Poland. Such ideations clearly stem from the Manichean imaginary of the nation being the only valid signifier of the collective identity. Autonomous Nationalists have engaged with the topic (republishing the content from dziennik.pl portal), pointing to the burning of the hazardous illegal landfills imported from Western Europe and China at several locations in Zgierz, Trzebinia, and many others (see Autonom.pl, 05/05/2018). However, even the legal import of waste to Poland has been increasing over the last couple of years, mostly due to a lack of strict regulations related to its management.

Over the course of the last few years, the far right has also been increasingly engaging with a vast array of debates concerning biodiversity and forestry. While some of these debates fall under the naturalist interpretations associated with invasive species polluting the imagined national and environmental harmony, others are rather topical and global in their scope. Thus, Zöld Hazánk has posted on the health benefits of wild garlic or the importance of beekeeping. Over the last couple of years, the environmental Facebook pages of the two Hungarian far-right parties are also posting content in celebration of internationally-established days with regard to the environment, such as The Earth Day, World Environment Day, or Bee Day. The rising awareness of the global impact

of environmental change among the far-right groups, judging by their social media posts, inadvertently points to the future trends of bringing ever closer the Far-Right Ecologist outlook on the environment with that of the more established greens.



Figure 8.2 – Zöld Hazánk (the quote of A. Einstein: “If bees become extinct, humanity will become extinct”)

However, the celebration of bees and beekeeping portends a distinguishable naturalistic framing of foreign species endangering the idyllic landscapes and ecosystems. To introduce and frame the

dangers stemming from globalization, ZH published a post on how the inflow of “fake honey from Asia” threatening the US market (Facebook, 02/05/2020).

In Poland, most of the debates on biodiversity in which the far-right partakes are associated with forest management. One of the most salient topics over the last couple of years, which brought the far-right actors to the spotlight, was the case of logging in Białowieża Forest (*Puszcza Białowieska*), one of the last remaining parts of the primeval forest which existed on the Eurasian plain. The debate around Białowieża was initiated because of logging conducted in 2017, allegedly to prevent the spread of the spruce bark beetle pest, dividing the Polish public into two opposing camps. The Polish far right (apart from *Ekoektyw* and some members of ONR) has sided up with the government’s Ministry (of the Environment) and against most of the environmental organizations, heralded by Greenpeace. While in “green” circles this has been recognized as a dividing moment between “pro” and “anti” environmentalists (with the far-right falling under the latter category), the debate around Białowieża has been one of the most often raised topics among my Polish respondents. It also reinstated the belief in the “expertise” to the disadvantage of “common and emotional” knowledge, however implying an epistemic rift between the rational (pragmatic) and ideologically invested nationalists.

An example of how this epistemic rift operates includes the interview with Piotr, a professional forester and a member of MW, who emphasized the importance of logging for the preservation of the forest. Refusing to denote Białowieża the “primeval forest” (due to ongoing human interference) and arguing that logging has been an indispensable part of forest management ever since 1924, Piotr argued that Donald Tusk’s center-left government from 2010-2014 has

succumbed to the "environmental lobbies" which led to the reduction of logging (Autonom.pl; 11/04/2017). Mirroring Christian ecologism, Piotr's argumentation revolved around the fallacy of ecocentrism, arguing that "those who think only about nature as an intrinsic quality can only hurt it". Explaining the contested decisions over Puszcza, my respondents would often resort to the doomsday, litmus-test perspectivization, framing this issue as an ultimate revealing moment for all the actors involved, as an "excellent example of fighting for power." (Jarosław, ONR-ABC, 10/23/2018) As this section has shown, amid numerous common threads, including the naturalist "defense" against outsider species, policy proposals coming from far-right actors are diverse and even mutually conflicting. Another interesting yet contested aspect of FRE is concerning animal ethics and the attempt to expand the scope of its morphology to non-human entities.

Animal Welfare and decision-making

Last but not least, an overview of how proponents of FRE engage with policy domains contains an exploration into some of the values deemed borderline by environmental theorists, such as animal ethics and animal welfare. For various reasons, animal welfare has been the "bread and butter" of both the radical and extreme far-right organizations, who often referred to this subject as their "proof" of being environmentalist. This is unsurprising, all the more because animal liberation is an integral part of radical and revolutionary politics (Staudenmaier 2005: 1). Akin to the conceptual core of FRE, the engagement with animal welfare addresses the boundaries of membership to the political community: who is to be considered an independent moral agent?

The ambiguities of animal ethics have been examined and revisited (see Hsiao 2015), and providing an elaborate survey of these outlooks is not conducive to examining how far-right actors

in Hungary and Poland engage with this topic. Most of the decontestation of animal ethics of vegetarianism and veganism, as well as the stance on hunting focuses on the notion of sentience – the existence of a central nervous system entailing the capacity to experience pain (see Singer 2002). Most of the criticisms of sentience revolve around the selective utilitarian logic that entailed the logical permissibility of killing of those animals that are not apprehensive of their identity and welfare (see Cahoone 2009). Another issue raised by the arguments for and against hunting refers to the difficulty of delineating categories, such as those between domestic and wild animals, sentient and non-sentient animals (e.g., some insects, etc.).

The political morality of FRE with respect to animal ethics has been developing in two radically separate strands. The first, “carnivore,” follows the established Manichean logic of animal rights activists as overly radical “eco-terrorists” who are aiming to infringe on established food politics – that is, the “right to eat what one wants”. In response to parliamentary debates regarding the Animal Protection Act in Poland (which entailed the possible prohibition of fur farms), Mateusz Marzoch, the spokesperson of MW and an assistant to Robert Winnicki in Sejm has argued that “humanization of animals” is fundamentally problematic for its divergence from Christianity and the presumed natural laws. At the same time, it reminds of the normative standard of ideologies, converging the question of what is natural to what is human. His framing, characteristic of the pro-hunting right-wing lobby, is replete with nominations, predications, and perspectivizations pejoratively representing environmental activists in Poland, denounced as lacking substantive affection emanating from the close contact with the environment and (the domesticated) animals.

They [animal rights activists] usually come from the city and the only contact they had with animals or nature as such, was with a dog/cat at home or in the park. For the most part, they did not study natural sciences, and they learn about nature from the Internet without exploring the essence of its functioning as a whole...

It will be difficult to find the case of an activist of such an organization, coming from the countryside or from the area where contact with animals and nature and work with them was normal. They only think that they know what animal welfare means, what their needs or problems are. It seems to them that the animal farmer running the farm, say, his grandfather, doesn't have a clue about his work. For them, it will always be a soulless monster that torments animals to meet their own needs or for fun. "Eco-friendly" organizations are constantly articulating themselves as the good side that leads the fight against animal bullies. The truth is, of course, different. These organizations are actually fighting Polish agriculture, which in our region is becoming more and more competition for, e.g., German agriculture. (Mateusz Marzoch, MW, Narodowcy.net, 08/20/2018)

Marzoch's remark on "outsider" influence – all those from the "evil" side of the Manichean coin, garnered by the seemingly emotionally invested activists is representative of the argumentation developed under far-right purview. This also evokes the populist critique of elitism, offering no reasonable alternative to dietary habits that are sometimes fundamental to the existence in a given ecological niche (such as indigenous communities). This, more subtle line of argumentation voiced by my respondents has also been raised by, e.g., social ecologists, who packaged such moral defense of hunting in logical caveats portended by animal rights defenders. What is common for both, is that the pro-hunting and "anthropocentric" (as a contradiction in terms) logic is resembling the moderate and rational approach to the environment, but also upholding the imagined equilibrium as the fundamental value of national ecosystems. In the words of Gniewomir from Polish neo-Pagan and nationalist organization Niklot, "Nature is not just the singing of birds, but killing to live." (Interview, 06/08/2018) Against this background, one finds the deluded "dark ecologists" who assume that the ecosystem can remain intact and stable without substantive management:

Yes, hunting and [those] oppose[d] to the hunting is becoming more and more popular among groups that personally I call "dark green". The extremists of the political left unfortunately produced many groups of self-environment, nature, and animal protectors who practically came into being following the so-called Antifa pattern, and created virtually religious dogmas along with a lifestyle, hating everyone who does not worship it. Even today, the ever more powerful vegan lobby relies on such groups in many cases, proclaiming the fight against animal husbandry, hunting, meat consumption, and the food consumed by the animal itself. I do not say that they do not [argue] rightly in certain issues, but overall their activities are based on half-truths and misconceptions.

The hunting for "game-management" is a different issue, obviously we have to make a difference between a millionaire shooting a rifle to kill a polar bear and a professional hunter.

The vegan lobby ignores the fact that, for example, in Europe, the untouched and large-scale wildlife is practically non-existent on the continent. It is an artificial medium where the self-regulating systems of nature can no longer balance. (Jozsef, HVIM, 04/29/2019)

The specific attributes assigned to opponents of meat-eating are very similar to Marzoch's referential strategies, signaling the need to look at cases of and rejecting far-right veganism in an idiosyncratic manner. Once again, this becomes a question of expertise: Zöld Ellenállás shared the interview with professor Sándor Csányi from the Szent István University in Gödöllő (Hungary), endorsing hunting due to its importance for ecosystem management. The criticism of "ethical shopping" and consumerist greenwashing stemming from these positions hint that the real source of problems (the conceptual triad of modernity-consumerism-liberalism) is marked safe from such assessments. What remains uncertain is the configuration of this argument and the ethical rendition of its borderline, more-type cases, such as sports/trophy hunting or hunting as a part of cultural practices or sustenance. The stance on the former depicts the majority of cases in which my respondents defended the right to hunting for food provided that the act of killing is done in the most effective manner, without causing unnecessary harm.

People say I am a real third-position, because I always try to find a compromise. The same goes with hunting: if it is a kind of tradition, then yes, it is okay for me. However, for example, if you will have old people hunting for generations and they treat animals with respect, not inflicting unnecessary harm. That's ok, but I would be against people who live in the city and they want to be real men and grab guns and go out and hunt. (Kamil, Trzecca Droga, 06/13/2019)

The assumed “middle grounds” of nationalism in (conditioned) support of hunting are peculiarly resembling the majority of Hungarian and Polish far right. However, there is also a significant portion of far-right organizations, mostly movements and non-party actors, opposing any form of harm done towards animals. Being articulated as an utmost expression of speciesism, hunting is depicted as the fundamentally immoral endeavor which contributes to the disruption of stability and the idealized homogeneity of the “national” environment.

The far right did not only limit itself to the arguments on food “production,” e.g., organic farming and hunting, but also to the food consumption.⁵⁰ The most pervading arguments in relation to the types of food consumed illuminate the naturalist component of FRE: an example is the Zöld Hazánk’s nativist critique of “wet markets” in China, or the post of Vietnamese guest workers allegedly devouring a dog's corpse in Romania (see Elemi 02/28/2020, Zöld Hazánk Facebook Page, 01/28/2020), further exacerbated by the fears stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. A similar example includes Zöld Ellenállás's "War on the Superfoods," which included a series of posts on the detrimental effect of imported highly-nutritional superfoods, as compared to domestic, “Hungarian” variants (rosehip, linseed, buckwheat). This gastronationalism is juxtaposed to the

⁵⁰ I thank Bernhard Forchtner for suggesting this analytical divide.

trading patterns bolstered by globalization (DeSoucey 2012), stressing the necessity of replacing globalizational homogeneity with national, imagined uniformity.

In this process of replacing or resisting the newly-establishing frames of reference, far-right ecologists prize not only tradition but also the conception of an insulated society. When fighting against the “dietary customs of foreign nations” becomes a priority for policymaking, imaginations of balanced, pure, and well-defined boundaries of the nature-nation communion become reinscribed in the social fabric. The debates on food, including what goes under the definition of that notion, serve as a potent marker of Bourdieu’s (1984) theory of distinction (see also Forchtner and Tominc 2017: 423). Much as with anything else related to political morality and ideology, such seemingly sharp distinctions nevertheless lack substantive rigor: quite a few times, I sat and talked with my respondents in Kebab or Chinese-food restaurants. When faced with such a contradiction, their acknowledgement of the situation was often portrayed as the harmless detour and brief break away from the disciplined and value-driven lifestyle of a far-right nationalist. Using food as a marker of nationalist identity is also present among far-right ecologist groups beyond the two cases under scrutiny in this thesis, such as Anastasia communities – reactionary, neo-pagan ecovillages that emphasize sustainable development, national traditions (Miller-Idriss 2020: 74).

While the radical-right positioning on animal welfare is rather conditional, extreme-right activism in this domain is particularly pronounced. Besides Mi Hazánk, the two most prominent extreme-right proponents of animal welfare are Hungarian *Szurkolók* (supporters) and Polish *Ecolektyw*. *Szurkolók* was founded in 2017 by Richard Kapin and a group of football fans, and has

since been supporting the construction of animal shelters, actively engaging in protests against animal (mostly domestic dogs) abuse. In the words of its founder, the organization is different from other animal protection organizations for its intimidation strategies, as it “represented strength, since nobody is happy to have 3-4 cars in front of their house to save an animal” (see Horvath, 888.hu, 03/12/2019). However, a lot of activities of Szurkolók were conducted in Roma communities across Hungary, which has brought far-right parties such as Mi Hazánk on board. The intimidation tactics of Szurkolók, particularly visible in their encounters with the Roma neighborhoods, have been appropriated by other far-right animal rights organizations in the region, such as Serbian *Levijatan* (see Čule 04/15/2020). Both Szurkolók and Ecolektyw claimed to be independent of other organizations. However, Szurkolók has been actively cooperating with Mi Hazánk (see Mi Hazánk Facebook Page, 12/15/2019), while Ecolektyw was previously a Polish chapter of an international eco-fascist organization called *Greenline Front*, with some of its members also belonging to Autonomous Nationalists.

It is not only Szurkolók and Ecolektyw that have engaged with these subjects: members of ONR and Praca Polska collaborated with local (non-nationalist) grassroots organizations on setting up animal shelters or fighting against illegal logging (see Lubarda 2021). One of them, Stella, an activist from one of the Polish south-western cities, persuasively explained the rift between the urban-based FREs and rural populations:

Despite the fact that there are family farms and that people have jobs from these activities, I don't agree with animals being used on these organic farms. We had plenty of disputes with the rurals...those who [have engaged in environmental] protest live in urban areas because in villages there is not much knowledge or education. Frankly, they don't care about ecology, they just live their lives and plunder as much as they can. I also cooperated with the forest protection organizations, especially the informal ones. Going back to

villages, there of course, are people who care, but they are a minority. (Stella, ONR, 07/01/2019)

The pronounced urban-rural divide and contempt towards the “uneducated” rurals resemble one of the fundamental fissures within contemporary far-right activism. It also points to the caveat of romanticizing social complexities, assuming that “rural” will somehow become automatically susceptible to far-right ideology, even if veiled in the “care for nature.” The political parties have been particularly careful in navigating such divisions to avoid antagonizing the electorate, as the animal welfare issue has been increasingly popular, perhaps even one of the central elements of FRE. This is mostly due to its endless potential for positive and even progressive framing: some of the extreme-right parties have used animal welfare to rebrand its hardline image of aggressive nationalists: Jobbik’s 2014 election campaign, with pictures of the then-leader Gábor Vona with puppies and kittens flooded the social media, indicating a moderation in the party’s ideological profile (Palfi, Euronews, 04/10/2015). The animal welfare issue remains a leeway through which far-right actors buttress an image of decency, care, and justice represented through such a benign, appealing, and seemingly aideological subject. Besides, it strengthens the grassroots aspect of far-right activism, bringing new (and mostly young) membership on board over animal rights issues. Through its own ways, these (de)contestations enable the far right to articulate itself as the representative of the “oppressed”, pointing to how framing inversions are far from unconceivable.

Summary

This chapter has looked at how the seemingly intangible conceptual decontestations in FRE impact particular policy debates across various fields. Although the direct influence of these actors

on policy remains dubious (to this day there has not been a single “environmental” proposal from Ruch Narodowy, Jobbik, or Mi Hazánk voted into a law), the potential of FRE to affect policy should not be disregarded. One of the central features of these policy positions is their malleability and susceptibility to change: increasing acceptance of anthropogenic climate change in Hungary, but also in Poland, or at least, changing patterns of skepticism are cases in point. Climate change denialism, mostly present among the Polish radical right, is generally warranted by the concern for energy autarky in the carbon-based energy sector. In Hungary, the debates on nuclear energy and other renewables have been mostly associated with alleged Russian influence, or “populist outsiders,” such as oligarchs or multinational corporations.

Building on the autarky in energy politics, far-right organizations also protest against different types of pollution. In advocating for stricter measures to curb air, water, and land pollution, the far right assumes a central role of the state in regulating the energy market. The measures against (non-native) polluters can also bear a distinctive naturalist component, which is also transposed to the debates on biodiversity. It is no longer a surprise to see the far right celebrating internationally-recognized manifestations such as Earth Day or World Bee Day, signaling the bridging of the gap with mainstream environmental politics and its “global” brand.

The same can be argued about animal welfare, where the far right has long been advocating the punishment of animal abusers, even if these calls are often used to point fingers at the Roma community. The ambivalent positions on hunting are also a feature of FRE: from viewing it as an indispensable aspect of land management to granting rights to be cruel, hunting is hardly a topic of unity for the far-right spectrum. There are no impermeable boundaries between the far-right

“vegans” and “carnivores,” at least those cannot be analytically drawn on the basis of “radical” and “extreme” actors, although there have been no far-right actors in Hungary promoting meat-free diet. Regardless of these inconsistencies, FRE’s impact on various environmental debates in Hungary and Poland is diversified and, albeit mostly excluded or taken as irrelevant by the mainstream actors, presents immense potential for contesting the environmental discourse and the institutions underpinning it.

Conclusion: ironing out the contradictions? The prospects of FRE

The discussion in the previous chapters served as a survey of relevant concepts comprising Far-Right Ecologism (FRE). Rather than offering an analytically precise exegesis of its morphology, FRE stands as a deliberately loose framework, being consequently faithful to the power of the “movement” and the idiosyncrasies in the social. Therefore, the conceptual decontestations outlined in chapters 5, 6, and 7, are not intending to serve as steel, immovable blocks of a construction that are itself waiting to be filled in with contextually-bound content. Instead, the decontestations presented in this thesis can be amended or skewed to serve one of at least two purposes: that of the far right and that of ecologism. Building on the value of ethnographic encounters, but also the current picture of the Hungarian and Polish far right (chapters 2 and 3), and the increasing influence of the ruling parties and the overall political environment on these actors, this study resembled a reflection on contextually- and temporally-bounded segments of FRE.

Reaching the aim and objectives

The central aim of this thesis was to assess the ideological features of far-right environmental agenda and its proponents, as well as their contribution to environmental politics in the particular, Eastern European and post-socialist context of Hungary and Poland. To reach this aim, the thesis had three main objectives: i) to identify the main far-right organizations, networks, and processes and identify their contribution to environmental politics in Hungary and Poland

(Chapter 3 and Chapters 5, 6, and 7); ii) To identify the ideological morphology of FRE (Chapters 5 and 6); and iii) to assess how these ideological intersections become operationalized “in practice,” through policy preferences and contribution, as well as the practices of “implementing” these principles in action (Chapter 7).

The answer to the central aim is that the contemporary far-right’s engagement with environment in Hungary and Poland points to a distinct ideological project, that of far-right ecologism, with a relatively limited impact on environmental politics in the two cases under scrutiny. The morphology of this conglomerate ideology, comprised not only of the “far right” and “ecologism,” but also of other (mostly) right-wing variants (Chapter 2), consisting of three core concepts: Manicheanism, Naturalism, and Organicism (Chapter 5) and four peripheral concepts: Nostalgia, Autarky, Spirituality, and Authority (Chapter 6). Even though the policy contribution of the far right to environmental politics in Hungary and Poland is rather limited, accepting anthropogenic climate change (in the Hungarian case), as well as the decision-making processes related to environment, show how the motivations for environmental activism can span from petty opportunism to well-thought and sophisticated attempts to offer a “genuine ecologism” (Maciej 07/06/2019).

With these questions and answers in mind, it is valuable to reinstate what this thesis has established. First, the question of whether all far right is ideologically preordained to be ecologist seems to be gradually moving towards the positive answer. Through its research design, this thesis has attempted to address the existing shortcomings of the far-right scholarship, including (but not limited to) externalism and electoralism (see Castelli Gattinara 2020). Moving from strictly party-

centered analyses to the role of other organizations with mobilizing potential, this work has offered a survey of the contribution of these actors to environmental politics. To understand how this contribution can further develop, obtaining insider information about the decision-making processes and internal dynamics of these organizations was particularly useful. The interaction allowed this thesis to, even if briefly, illustrate some of the everyday aspects of life in the far right, including the carefully sustained and not-so-carefully expressed cultural resistance to the post-socialist experience of detachment from the locus of (post)politics, such as the luxurious hotels where experts congregate. At the same time, these ethnographic vignettes are not employed to condone distasteful remarks and worldviews. Instead, they figure as a painful reminder that both the far right and some of the societal fissures that have contributed to its development are here to stay.

It is also important to outline the less pertinent findings for the thesis, raising questions that could be of relevance for the broader scholarship. For instance, the far-right component has, in most cases (with an exception of the “ecofascist” *Ecolektyw*) assumed dominance over ecologism. Thus, the environmental component in the more general understanding of the nation by the far right is likely to happen not only in Hungary and Poland but elsewhere. Even though it will be undoubtedly galvanized by those activists who have environmentalism close to their hearts, the change prompted by FRE is more likely to be championed by the “enlightened” far-right leadership, cognizant of the danger environmental issues present to the nation, rather than fringe, ecofascist organizations. While the latter are generally short-lived, the emphasis on ecologism can allow FRE to permeate local environmental networks (see Lubarda 2021). Such transitions also

point to the importance of structure and the membership of far-right organizations, given the increasing interest of the younger generation in Hungary and Poland in issues concerning animal welfare and pollution, as shown in Chapter 7 (even among those who consider themselves nationalists).

The existence of Far-Right Ecologism presents a challenge that ideological amalgamations, with all the richness of their internal incoherence, pose to contemporary environmental theory. Chapter 2 has shown how environmental (and consequently, biological) determinism is re-entering the doors of the mainstream discussions: in fact, it is questionable whether it had ever left them. One can go as far as to argue that it was exactly the troubling distinction between nature and culture that has kept at bay "the 'Trojan horse' of biological determinism" (Redcliff and Benton 2013:4). Conceptually, nature is culturally, hence ideologically embedded (Lévi-Strauss 1969). Be it a hybrid (Latour 1991) or necessarily distinct ontological zones (O'Brien 2006), this multitude of understandings renders the stance of FRE towards the nature-culture dichotomy, as seen in the accounts of its proponents, murky at best.

Ideological morphology, the theory used in this thesis has an ingrained morality, resting on the acts of prioritization and in this case, legitimation of – the “acceptable natures.” Nevertheless, in the production of its very accounts, ideology is never able to attain a satisfying level of coherence, thus mirroring the social reality as hardly deductible to a set of laws. The consequence of this is that such a theoretical outlook provides scarce space for ideological escapism on the grounds of reducing all social phenomena to propaganda (see McLellan 1995: 72). Ideology is never foreclosed – FRE can simultaneously derive its content from strikingly disparate ideologies

such as conservatism and anarchism, yet providing a visible continuity, from Mi Hazánk's anthropocentrism to Ecolektyw's eco-fascism. This evokes the point raised by Blackman and Moon (2014: 4), on whether the anthropocentrism-ecocentrism debate points to separate ontologies. If the answer to this question is positive, then the finding does not seem to satisfy the minimal requirements of viewing FRE as an ideology. There are two potential ways of addressing this deadlock. One is to point to the immense plurality of worldings as separate, albeit overlapping ontological entities, where this possibility of overlap allows for ideologies to appear as clusters of decontested concepts. The other is to object to the ontological rift between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism – and indeed, the findings of this research have shown that drawing clear lines among respondents on this criterion is an impossible task.

The ideological morphology of Far-Right Ecologism in chapters 5 and 6 has also shown how conceptual decontestation may offer a significantly different light on particular concepts. For instance, some of the peripheral concepts explored in Chapter 6, such as autarky or nostalgia, can assist in justifying environmental policies by a wide spectrum of green actors. Likewise, the conceptual explorations on the role of spirituality in ecological thought instigated by nationalists have found its endorsers in the Roman Catholic circles, also pointing to the integralism of using the Catholic faith as the basis of public law and policy (Holmes 2000). Finally, it could also be argued that Manicheism as both a rhetorical device and a concept that serves to distinguish the content of an ideology from that of others is present in any ideology. Indeed, arguably the best way to abate lack of internal cohesion is to establish the common grounds of opposition: what one ideology is against. If this was the rationale for exclusion, any remotely radical ideology, including

but not limited to socialism, feminism, ecologism, fascism (but perhaps even conservatism and liberalism) would cease to be recognized as such. Hence, the mere fact that Manicheanism is so central to FRE points to both its radical profile but also the limits of this ideology in obtaining greater clarity on its fundamental tenets.

Chapter 7 reveals how FRE impacts the currently dominant discourse of ecological modernization in at least two ways. One is to “rationalize” nationalism through the same discursive strategies underpinning a curtailed form of nationalist technocracy, which justifies particular outcomes (e.g., nuclear) through cost-benefit analysis in the name of “national interest.” The other is to point to deficiencies of such discourse – usually championed by the ruling, right-wing populist government, by enunciating a more ambitious pace of the energy transition veiled in an ideologically developed ethos of care. The troubling attempt of balancing between contradictory symbolisms creates the somewhat schizophrenic array of reactions where putting on the masks on the monuments (see p. 240) is followed by expressing support for the coal miners and “clean” coal (pp. 236-7). This disarray of environmental strategies can be interpreted as yet another idiosyncrasy of Far-Right Ecologism and the compendium of topics it attempts to address.

Establishing relevance: the (problematic) potential of FRE

Asking the Chernishevsky's “What is to be done” question about the relevance of FRE and its prospects is conditioned by the salience of this topic in far-right politics. The formation of environmental sections of far-right parties in Hungary which happened over the last couple of years, indicates an intention to engage with environment more thoroughly. This was not the case in Poland, where Ruch Narodowy and its coalition, *Konfederacja*, have not substantially increased

the number of commentaries or activities on these topics. Far-right movements and other non-party actors have been consistent in their engagement over the years, although my own encounters with representatives of far-right organizations have pointed to a potential for change in this domain.

Nevertheless, this potential for change is still far from being recognized by the far-right leadership in the two countries or elsewhere. It would be difficult to contend that a significant number of my respondents thought of the environment as the most pressing topic in domestic and European politics. In the words of László Toroczkai, prioritization of the Marxist base, the social aspects paired with the “cultural domain” (the issues of migration, religion, and freedoms) relegates environment as a trivial or even an ephemeral subject. In short, environment is not a priority for the far right.

Our situation is very difficult now, and we focus on those problems which are the most important problems for the Hungarian people. For example, the wages, the salaries – a very big problem. Because the prices are Western European, but the wages are not. It is a very big problem. Nothing changed since the EU accession. Therefore, we have to focus on these problems. The question you asked [on the relevance of environment and climate change] splits the society – somebody believes in it, somebody does not. We need time to explain this to the people, to show proof, but it's not a first topic for the party. Because the party is a new party. Still, I am a father of three children, so I have to think of their future. I cannot be silenced. So we have to talk about it, but right now we are very busy...(László Toroczkai, Mi Hazánk, 12/17/2018)

Such justifications, while being most common, are not the only ones in the far-right repertoire. Some arguments point to the self-critical lack of interest inherent in Polish nationalism (Mike Zajac, Celestyn), others indicate the issue of representation: the inability to find their constituency among environmentalists (Arkadiusz), or the domination of the “left.” (Kamil) Amid such remarks, environmental activism on the local level has been consistent over the years, particularly coming

from the youth sections of the parties and movements, including those led by the (relatively) younger individuals, such as HVIM or Ecolektyw. In party politics, environment remains a side-topic through which younger leaders can practice their organizational skills and develop their potential. The patterns of decision making, activism, and limited, albeit diverse policy engagement explained in Chapter 7 all attest to this claim.

Another element that should not be undermined in assessing the emergence and mainstreaming of the far right is the role of crises. From the economic downturn and the refugee crisis, the looming climate crisis, or the “lifestyle crisis” induced by contingent circumstances coupled with now a paralyzing pandemic with considerable economic consequences, the far right has continuously capitalized on the disruptive moments. Its persistence and position in Hungary and Poland signal the potential for mainstaying the framing of environmental debates. Much as framing environmental protection around the naturalist-organicist division between the national spirit being soaked in the land and dispersed in the authentic environment may sound dicey and potentially eugenicist, FRE may actually have a “healing effect,” characteristic of political extremisms mandated in “small dosages” (Backes 2009: 192). The global environmental crisis, epitomized in climate change and its leveling, democratic nature, affecting both the underprivileged and the rich (though certainly not on an equal scale) has been overlooked, ignored, and even ridiculed by the far right for decades (Malm and The Zetkin Collective 2021). Contrary to such stances, the increasing acceptance of anthropogenic climate change by the far right points to the recognition of salience but also of the ability to ideologically embrace climate change as a relevant subject of FRE.

Another interesting contribution of the far right to environmental politics is in its rhetorical ability to offer compelling (albeit simplifying) interpretations, which may prove conducive to radicalizing and motivating their supporters for action on environmental matters. Like other ecologisms, FRE departs from the idea of what Marx called the “metabolic rift”: modern separation of human beings from the natural world (much like the separation between the workers and their labor, see Hannigan 2006: 24). Such framings inadvertently contribute to the fundamental questioning of both the Anthropocene and neoliberal capitalism, befitting the metapolitics of the far right, as eclectic as they are. In standing up for the “people,” regardless of the exclusiveness of this definition on the basis of ethnicity, the far right offers its own interpretation of environmental justice. After all, expressing concern about the cost-bearers of an environmental transition to a just, carbon-free, and sustainable society is shared by green parties across the globe. Alongside, focusing on the local, topic-based environmental issues and activism, can render particular political views of individual actors behind the good cause irrelevant. As I have shown in Chapter 7, policy contributions of far-right organizations are not numerous or particularly influential, yet they pertain to a distinguished ideological engagement which may often find its allies in the opposite ideological strands, as we had seen in Hungary.

Nevertheless, the perils of far-right's engagement with the natural environment are numerous and outweigh the abovementioned benefits. The main problem of FRE is that it wakes up the “ghosts” of sociology and philosophy, such as vitalist organicism and its (manifold) interpretations that were thriving in the mid-to-late 19th century. One of those interpretations entailed the lenses of the nation, through which Aristotelian principles of entelechy upon which

idealism was developed came to bear profoundly threatening implications. The fundamental problem of this engagement is outlined in Chapter 5, that is, the decontestations of core concepts underpinning FRE. Manicheanism, Naturalism, and Organicism per se may not necessarily refer to eugenicist interpretations or the adherence to an ethnically homogenous polity, yet in far-right decontestations of these concepts, they unambiguously point to a nativist and exclusionary understanding of the people, nation, and the environment. The ideological substance of FRE may be derived from the broader right-wing front comprising conservatism and (liberal) nationalism, but its principal convictions are overloaded with subtle references to invasive elements and the revisionist narratives of the natural borders. Inroads to biodiversity point to blatantly racist narratives of particular ethnic groups having a detrimental effect on the nation's nature. Be it the Roma, Ukrainians, Germans, or simply migrants, the logic of these arguments leaves no space for incorporating these ideas into even the broadest and most eclectic ecologist fronts. In protecting the “authentic” species of the land, the existence of FRE also indicates formidable issues with integrating biodiversity into environmentalism (see McNeely 2003), not merely because of the inability to galvanize the public reaction, but because it constitutes a slippery slope for a vast array of arguments pointing to the dangers of overpopulation, conceptualizations of rootedness and purity.

Similar issues arise when looked at the adjacent and peripheral values informing FRE's agenda. Nostalgic appreciation of the past environments, which in itself is constitutive of ecologist claims, in FRE is articulated as a lament for lost traditions, landscapes, but also – territories. The spiritual component spans from the stewardship understandings of nature as a gift bestowed by the

deity, though it also may be used as a justification for anti-scientist spiritual awakening or contempt for “rationalizing” the debate on the climate crisis. Delegitimizing science and general anti-intellectualism have long been prominent features of far-right politics, and it has been reasserted amid the COVID-19 crisis.

Another significant danger lurking in the background of FRE, and particularly its interaction with other environmental organizations and networks, is the *movement surrogacy*. By claiming to “truly” represent the interests of nature, the far right integrates the nativist sentiment through which the conceptualizations of “natural” and “authentic” provide a powerful symbolic marker. More strategically, it is obvious that the increasing engagement of far-right parties with these topics has not only come as a consequence of some natural rediscovering of the environment as an important topic but as a recognition of its electorally-rewarding potential. Far-right ecologists always existed on the fringe of nationalist movements, yet gaining visibility in times of crises that, as a rule, reveal the ailing nature of existing regimes: the eco-nationalist movements in the socialist bloc of the 1980s served to timidly introduce the claims for national independence (Dawson 1996).

Yet, movement surrogacy bringing on board FRE is hardly emancipatory. Given the existing lack of interest of the far-right electorate in these subjects, also evident in my own encounters, environment may only serve as a topic which allows the far right to be a recognized actor, ignoring the far-reaching consequences of its discourse. Many have fallen into the trap of viewing “environmental populism” (see Szasz 1992, Beeson 2020) as a panacea to the ills of stolen politics and, in the post-socialist case, stolen transitions (Krekó 2020), embracing the agonistic conception of politics (see Mouffe 2018). There is certainly much to be learnt from the modalities

of far-right influence, its discursive strategies, and powerful framing. Moreover, the revival of nationalism capitalizing on the identity-lust makes all kinds of sense in times of such a devouring crisis induced by modes of production, consumption, and sustenance under neoliberal capitalism. However, developing counter narratives aimed at totalizing and essentializing the obscurities existing in social identities are bound to end up privileging some identities over others. Although this may be seen as the desired outcome given the looming environmental crisis, the process of stabilization (provided that such a totalization is successful) is ultimately going to lead to a retraction of totalizing identities, leaving space for nationalism to emerge yet again as the totalizing substitute.

On a theoretical level, there is also an issue concerning the validity of (far-right) rhetoric and ideological remarks, well-documented in the difference between the rhetorical devices and “true” ideological intentions (Freedon 1996: 35). While dependent on the context, the crucial element of the response to this issue is in how ideologies are not produced but consumed. Far-right ecologism as an ideological hybrid is not likely to be, in Latourian terms, purified for the cause. Instead, it is likely to get blurrier by the plurality of the appropriations of existing ideological messages. In post-socialist, Eastern European realms, where ethnonationalism is often conflated with patriotism, this is of particular importance. The existence of FRE points to the continuously evolving nature of political concepts: what nationalism meant in the 18th or 19th century is not entirely congruent with the contemporary arguments of its far-right proponents examined in this thesis. This plurality is unescapably defining not only the ideology but also the future of FRE.

Limitations and avenues for future research

Before turning to avenues for future research on FRE, it is first necessary to pinpoint the limitations of the research design, the process of data collection, and the actual analysis (some of which were also presented in chapter 4). For instance, this thesis could have potentially benefited from employing quantitative methods, e.g., a large-scale survey of far-right voters and supporters addressing topics related to environmental politics (e.g., anthropogenic climate change acceptance). Such an analysis would enhance and validate the claims concerning e.g., the nomination strategies and attain a better understanding of climate change acceptance and skepticism. This task would map the current support for environmental policies overall and predilection towards particular aspects of such a broad spectrum, but still prove insufficient to account for the meaning-making that morphological analysis is predominantly interested in.

Not all limitations are conditioned by the preference for qualitative methods and hermeneutics. This is best seen in devising the sampling strategies: while there was an attempt to construct a representative sample of far-right leadership in the two countries, it has not always been possible to obtain interviews from leaders of all movements (such as *Légió Hungária* or *Niklot*).⁵¹ While the number of interviewees was meant to reflect their overall membership and significance, this has not always been possible. Still, as Levitt et al. (2017) have argued, the trustworthiness of qualitative research emanates not from “the comprehensive mapping of the variation within the population, but rather from selecting experiences that map the variation of the population.”

⁵¹ I did encounter and spoke to Béla Incze (the leader of *Légió Hungária*) and Tomasz Szczepański (the leader of *Niklot*). However, I could not obtain a recorded interview from them due to the schedule of my respondents. Nevertheless, the leaders of these groups ensured I have respondents-representatives of their organizations.

Moreover, Chapter 7, exploring policy positions and contributions of far-right actors, could have entailed a list of formal policy proposals and voting patterns in the National (or EU) Parliaments. This task was not considered due to the inability to access such data in a coherent and identical manner in the two countries. The language barrier (as indicated in Chapter 4) impacted both processes of data collection and analysis, as ensuring the interpretation of documents and some of the interviews required frequent interaction with the translators. On one hand, this may indicate notable issues regarding the “ownership” of the analysis, which, due to personal convictions and biases, acts as a limiting but defining feature of this important process. On the other hand, ownership, which is undoubtedly that of the author of the thesis, can never be fully foreclosed. Meaning is always co-constituted and belonging to the social, it is constituted by and constitutive of the social in which it is generated. Ensuring the principles of validity and reliability, to the extent to which such an endeavor is possible in a qualitative study, was conducted through several circles of iterations not only with the interpreters and fellow academics working in this field, but with the respondents themselves. Eliciting confirmation and signatures on consent forms not during, but significantly after the interviews (and upon sending the transcripts), being consistently open to queries and feedback, ensured the validity and reliability of the personal accounts used in this thesis. Logically, such accounts are susceptible to my rendition in the analysis (and that of the interpreters), and the validity of interpretation is open to scrutiny.

Finally, a limitation which can never be addressed and resolved to its entirety is that of positionality. Being a (white), cis-gender male, whose physical features and skills, such as being short-haired and experienced-in-combat-sports, significantly facilitated the data collection

process. Regardless of the spectrum of feelings ranging from disagreement to contempt towards representatives of the far right, the awareness of these features, even if being nowhere near offering a complete picture of myself as an individual and a researcher, allowed me to obtain insight into some of the very internal and inescapably personal matters within these organizations. In addition to this, being familiar with the post-socialist, Eastern European context, with all the porousness of its boundaries and spatial and cultural (e.g., language) remoteness, provided an additional layer of security in what would otherwise probably be troublesome encounters. However, my institutional affiliation and academic background may have prevented me from obtaining further insights into the *modus operandi* of these organizations. Much as one tries to remain a disinterested observer, the accounts outlined in chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 are ultimately impacted by the (limited) dose of respect I had towards my respondents for their sincerity, gregariousness, and congeniality. Much like any ethnographic account on the far right, this thesis runs the risk of being read as apologetic towards some of the bigoted and openly racist accounts of those whom I encountered. Such accusations would probably dismantle Freeden's (1996: 553) criticism of interpretative research being an inevitable exercise in conservatism.

Obviously, predicting future scenarios is an uncanny endeavor in social sciences, all the more because of the particular methods used in this study. Nevertheless, some of the trends noted in this thesis may easily constitute avenues for future research. At the moment of the production of this conclusion, human beings are severely impacted by the rampaging pandemic caused by the COVID-19 disease. Whilst millions of people around the world are literally fighting for their lives, lacking oxygen or even basic medical care, the positive effects of lockdowns on the natural

environment have spurred a range of comments about nature “healing itself” from human influence. Some of the most viral iterations of the same argument included the messages such as “Nature is healing – we are the virus” (see Chapter 7), assuming the harmful effect of humanity on the planet evidenced by the lockdowns. Such messages suggest how alluring yet perilous criticisms of human influence may be. Just like with naturalism, putting an equation mark between human and the “non-human” world (in spite of porous boundaries) can be very problematic – viruses are to be eradicated. Even if arising as an expression of despair, such dog-whistle narratives may seem potent in environmental communication but are bound to ring some dubious bells and attract questionable political actors. Thinking radically about the planet will inevitably entail sharp rifts in both communication and activism, and it is exactly why parsing out ideological morphologies – to the extent to which this is possible – will help identify and categorize those ideations that call for an eradication of (some) human beings as a precondition for restoring the imagined ecological equilibrium. Sometimes, these ideations are tempered under seemingly neutral political concepts, such as naturalism or organicism, which is why the act of decontestation is paramount to any political analysis that wishes to go beyond calling out.

In line with this tension emerges the role of violence in the future of far-right ecologism. As contended throughout this thesis, and contrary to popular and seductive impressions of “ecofascism” devoid of substantial empirical validation, there have been no recorded cases of far-right physical violence in Hungary and Poland related to environmental protection. Thus, the “eco-terrorist” argument referring to the existence of violent far-right ecologist organizations on the basis of far-right propensity towards violence can be easily refuted. This, however, does not mean

that the physically violent facet of far-right ecologism cannot emerge. If that is to happen, it will most likely appear along the two main lines of contention. The first is through bickering with investors or state agents on particular environmental issues, such as deforestation or green gentrification. As noted throughout this conclusion and the thesis, the creation of environmental justice frontlines can also indicate interaction with other environmental organizations and actors. The second is through threatening with or inflicting violence on the “ecological grounds” on those who are already outside of the boundaries of the nationalist green utopia: the Roma, Jews, or migrants. This form of violence rests on (ab)using environmental or animal welfare sentiments as faux justifications for physically reprimanding the “anti-social” groups.

Zooming out from particular social/ethnic groups to the misanthropic hatred towards human beings, the latter sentiment is not commonly shared by the contemporary far right. Being on the fringe however, such groupuscules are continuously evolving: their communication is becoming ever-more immersed into the wider online realms. It takes some time to identify far-right ecologist content in Zöld Ellenállás, Ecolektyw, Puszczcyk or the like Facebook pages promoting ties between ethnonationalism and environment. Unlike at the very beginning of this research (when some of these social media pages did not even exist), it will be impossible to find the Black Sun, Celtic Cross or the like symbols on any posts of these organizations. This attempt of camouflage is not only visible in the online domain: grassroots activism in parts of Poland, and less so in Hungary, points to collaboration of far-right (ecologist) organizations with local environmentalists (Lubarda 2021). This contingent social “liquidity” (Bauman 1999) through which the far right successfully navigates, allowed it to become mainstreamed across Europe

(including Hungary and Poland). Whether this is likely to happen in the environmental domain, is impossible to ascertain. Yet, if such an outcome does happen, it is likely to come not from the extreme, eco-fascist strand. The ecofascist ideological contribution to Far-Right Ecologism remains important given the emerging trends and debates (including COVID-19 pandemic), but what future research needs to focus on the most is the engagement of mainstreamed far-right organizations, including populist radical right political parties.

Political parties belonging to the far-right spectrum have made substantive inroads into environmental politics over the last couple of years (see Voss 2014; Forchtner 2019, among others). Post-socialist, Eastern Europe is not an exception, as Jobbik, Mi Hazánk, and Ruch Narodowy have all moved beyond providing only an “honorable mention” of environment in their political programs and manifestos. Given the salience of the subject, labeling environment as a valence issue in party politics is no longer enough (on the insufficiency of valence theory, see Dolezal et. al 2014). With a wide array of policy proposals and other suggestions for a spectrum of interconnected issues, political parties are likely to engage with this issue even further, particularly given the contextual settings of rampant air pollution and carbon-based economies. The issues that are yet to be sufficiently scrutinized regarding far-right's engagement with the environment are manifold: from party positions in particular policy domains (for agriculture, see the special issue by Mamonova and Franquesa 2020, for Hungary Lubarda 2020b, for Poland Bilewicz 2020), to populist radical-right articulations of the environment, especially populist parties in power. Some of these issues have been addressed in Chapter 7, offering a snapshot of the policy positions being on the move. An adequate example is the increasing climate change

acceptance of the far right (Forchtner and Lubarda forthcoming), moving away from the established presumptions existing in the literature on ideologically-informed climate change skepticism of the far right (see Lockwood 2018; Huber 2020; Jylha et. al 2019).

Another avenue for exploration is related to the ontological lenses. This thesis explored the ideological links between human beings (or at least, their relatively small chunk) and the environment: is there a possible way to explore these relationships by integrating the perspective of the other element in this equation? As noted in the overview of chapters, political ecology's focus on the non-human and on "those social relations that do not come into being because of humans" (Tsing 2013: 28) could be a useful addendum to how the interaction between those who identify themselves as nationalists and the environment points to different assemblages or worldings (Ingold 2000; Descola 2013). For instance, exploring how particular environmental issues and non-human actors (e.g., the "case" of *Puszcza Białowieża*) become entangled in the social relates to the breadth of ideological interactions that are helplessly narrow in their exclusive focus on human beings.

Undoubtedly, exploring the ideological grounds by allowing the non-human into the snapshot of the continuum the research is trying to portray, will entail major difficulties as a consequence of this paradigm shift. Still, by embracing contingency as a mandatory feature of ideologies, we may come to appreciate the research sites as meeting points of many histories, both human and non-human (Tsing 2013). At the same time, these pluriverses being on the move can tell us a lot about how the nature of and in nationalism (Olsen 1999) has been continuously changing, and where these processes are headed. To answer how we have come from an

appreciation of forests as symbolic repositories of gratitude and delight to a daunting mockery and derision of those who are seen as naturally foreign to such landscapes, a more-than-human perspective offers a fine-grained layer of analysis.

In spite of the outlined shortcomings and areas to build on from this research, the aims and objectives met in this thesis present a contribution to the scholarship of environmental sociology and theory. The Spencerian understandings of organic society and the importance of historical continuity through ethnic credentials paved the road for Far-Right Ecologism of today. By insisting on the immutable biological principles upon which societies (as groups of individual species) work, proponents of FRE adhere to the essentialized character of both the nature and the nation. In so doing, the myth of completeness and a “single” environment with clearly delineated boundaries peaks into an eschatological form of an exclusionary radical polity that is not entirely unimaginable. What is even more troubling is that some of these framings will become likely appropriated by the more electorally potent right-wing populist or national conservative parties, effectively mainstreaming most of its core ideological content. For this and all the reasons marshaled in this thesis, Far-Right Ecologism remains not just a threat to environmental governance through democratic means, but also a phenomenon we can learn from.

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Appendix 1 - Informed Consent Form

I agree to participate in a doctoral research project conducted by Balsa Lubarda, under the supervision of Professor Alexios Antypas from the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy, Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. My participation as an interviewee in this project is completely voluntary, and I was given sufficient information about the doctoral project. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate. I agree the interview to be recorded. I can withdraw at any time, refuse to answer any question, or request parts of the conversation to be removed off the record.

I was given access to the transcript of the conversation, and I grant my consent for the researcher to use verbatim (word-by-word) quotes from the interview material in the research outputs, such as the research publications (doctoral thesis, peer-reviewed academic articles, book chapters and books) or blog posts for academic purposes.

The researcher will handle my personal data in a confidential manner. My identity will remain anonymous unless specifically requested otherwise. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity.

Participant



Researcher

Date

Appendix 2 – Interview Questions

Nature

- 1) It seems as if the protection of national identity is one of the priorities for your organization. Would you connect the protection of national identity with the protection of nature-environment? If yes, how, if no, why not?
- 2) What do you think about this general wave of environmentalism nowadays in the world? This has become a salient topic, with international organizations such as Greenpeace, WWF, etc. being very active in nature protection - what do you think about these organizations and their work in your country?
- 3) What do you think about the idea of green parties (in your country or in general)?
- 4) Environmental thinking and politics are nowadays generally led by left-wing politics and thinkers [ask for an assessment of this statement]. Why do you think this is the case? What do you think about the role of nationalism in environmental thinking?
- 5) Do you think that the current migration trends in your country can have an effect on the nature?
- 6) What do you think about anthropogenic climate change/global warming?
- 7) What do you find authentic and original in terms of the history of your country's land and nature, what makes it specific?
- 8) Related to the last question, can Hungarian/Polish culture and society take something useful from this general idea of 'protecting the environment'?
- 9) What do you think about the current state of farming? What about the idea of organic farming? Is this something you would support - why (not)?
- 10) What kind of a society and political system your country would need to have in order to protect its natural treasures?
- 11) How do you think Christian identity can help these efforts (if you find them worthy)?
- 12) Hunting is often criticized by environmentalists nowadays for the unfair treatment of animals. What do you think of this and the other animal welfare issues?

Movement

- 13) Do you think that the nature protection can be a part of activities engaging the youth? Has it been in the past? If so, how?
- 14) Have you ever organized any activities that can be considered as nature-friendly? If not, are you planning to - is this something you would like your movement to engage with in the future?
- 15) Would you be willing to cooperate with parties or movements you do not generally agree with, if you had a common, specific goal (example: protecting Hungarian/Polish waters or forests)?

Contacts

- 16) Would you be willing to cooperate with your contacts (in and outside of your country) on certain activities that have to deal with promotion of organic farming or nature protection in the future?
- 17) Do you have any contacts with political parties in Hungary (or elsewhere)? Would you be willing to cooperate with any of the parties in the future on these (nature protection) issues?

Appendix 3 – Overview of Interviews

Name/Pseudonym	Country	Organization	Date of the Interview	Length
József	Hungary	HVIM	04/24/2019	Written
Elek	Hungary	HVIM	11/05/2019	63'31''
Gábor Barcsa-Turner	Hungary	HVIM	01/09/2019	Written
Botond Kónyi-Kiss	Hungary	HVIM	01/09/2019	Written
Lajos Kepli	Hungary	Jobbik	10/17/2017	20'09''
Nóra	Hungary	Jobbik	10/17/2017	23'06''
Marcel Tokody	Hungary	Jobbik	02/01/2018	43'35''
Márton Gyöngyösi	Hungary	Jobbik	02/06/2018	54'32''
Zoltán Magyar	Hungary	Jobbik	10/24/2017	19'05''
Zoe	Hungary	Jobbik	03/13/2018	45'
Szabolcs Szalay	Hungary	Jobbik	02/15/2018	33'32''
Barnabas	Hungary	Jobbik	11/28/2018	Written
László Toroczkai	Hungary	Mi Hazánk	12/17/2018	38'47''
Lili	Hungary	Mi Hazánk	06/06/2019	47'31''
Alajos	Hungary	Mi Hazánk	11/26/2018	Written
János Árgyelán	Hungary	Mi Hazánk	10/30/2018	64'15''
László	Hungary	Légió Hungária	11/23/2018	Written
Stella	Poland	ONR	07/01/2019	Written
Bogusław Koniuch	Poland	NOP	06/30/2019	Written
Jakub Stankiewicz	Poland	ONR	11/11/2018	Written
Rex	Poland	Ecolektyw	06/15/2019	114'35''
Agata	Poland	Ecolektyw	06/13/2019	95'05''
Marta	Poland	Młodzież Wszechpolska	06/13/2019	62'40''
Piotr Balinski	Poland	Młodzież Wszechpolska	06/13/2019	62'40''
Kamil	Poland	Trzecia Droga	06/13/2019	82'48''
Szymon	Poland	Trzecia Droga	06/13/2019	82'48''
Piotr	Poland	Trzecia Droga	06/13/2019	82'48''
Alicja	Poland	Młodzież Wszechpolska	11/12/2018	Written
Celestyn	Poland	ONR	11/24/2018	28'53''
Ziemowit	Poland	Młodzież Wszechpolska	11/15/2018	60'66''
Aleksander	Poland	Młodzież Wszechpolska	11/15/2018	60'66''

Arkadiusz	Poland	Młodzież Wszechpolska	11/15/2018	Written
Gniewomir	Poland	Niklot	06/08/2019	14'27''
Paweł	Poland	Młodzież Wszechpolska	06/07/2019	31'40''
Robert Winnicki	Poland	Ruch Narodowy	11/15/2018	45'15''
Krzysztof Bosak	Poland	Ruch Narodowy	11/14/2018	37'41''
Maciej	Poland	Młodzież Wszechpolska	06/07/2019	24'38''
Antoni	Poland	ONR	06/13/2019	95'05''
János Lantos	Hungary	Erő és Elszántság/Mi Hazánk	03/08/2018	54'44''
Mike	Poland	Młodzież Wszechpolska	06/13/2019	47'51''
Jarosław	Poland	ONR	10/13/2018	84'10''
Sándor Fülöp	Hungary	EMLA/triangulation	06/13/2018	23'56''
Tamás Cselószki	Hungary	LMP/triangulation	04/20/2018	41'53''
László Perneczky	Hungary	LMP/triangulation	10/03/2018	29'25''
Gergely Császár	Hungary	LMP/triangulation	06/06/2018	67'57''
Tracy Wheatley	Hungary	Vedegylet/triangulation	03/29/2018	40'56''
András Lányi	Hungary	Academic/triangulation	05/14/2018	Written
Sam Bennett	Poland	Academic/triangulation	11/14/2018	Written
Cezary Kwiatkowski	Poland	Academic/triangulation	11/14/2018	Written
Kata	Poland	Zieloni/triangulation	11/15/2018	36'51''
Basia	Poland	Zieloni/triangulation	11/15/2018	36'51''

Appendix 4 – Codes, Topics, and Topoi

Code	#
Aesthetics	2
Alienation	2
Animal Protection	7
Anthropocentrism	7
Asia/Africa Problem	2
Away from Nationalism	1
Blood and Soil	2
Church as a Problem	2
Climate Change as unimportant	2
Climate Change is fake	9
Climate Change is real	1 7
Climate change: unclear	1 0
Collective logic	2
Conservatives as a problem	2
Cooperating with small actors	1
Deep Ecology	1
Disagreeing with nationalists	2
Nature vs. Culture	3
Eco-naturalism (nature's law)	1 2
Ecocentrism	3
Education	2 0
Environment as enemy	1
Global response	3
Environmentalism as self-defense	2
Environmentalists are women	2
Eternity	1
Europe can't solve climate	3
Fallacy of ecologism	1

Fidesz as nonenvironmental	3
Free-market mindset_problem	5
GMO is fine	4
Grassroots as small step	1
Green as trendy	1 1
Greenpeace as anti-religious	4
Greens as agents of the outsiders	1 3
Greens as anti-nationalists	1
Greens as capitalist	2
Greens as extremists	1 2
Greens as money-making	1 5
Greta	2
Growth priority	1
Harmful communism	8
Hitler	5
Immigration is not an env. problem	1
Integrated environmentalism	1 1
Left as emotional	2
Leftists care more	1
Lobby	3
Nation a family of amilies	3
Nation shaped by nature	1 5
Nationalism up-to-date	1
Nationalist greens	1
Against technology	1
Nature as geopolitics	1
Nature is not a right-wing value	1
Organic as impractical	2

Ovepropulation problem	1
People as a problem	2
PiS is leftist	1
Policy	1
Politicians are a problem	1
Populism is a problem	1
Postmaterialism	2
Power in the people	9
Pro-nuclear	3
Reclaiming space	1
Regulation as an issue	3
Respect for Greenpeace	2
Restoring equilibrium	1
Right-wing as experts	1
Right-wing as inactive	9
Right-wing as skeptical	2
Roma problem	1
Self-criticism	1 8
Sociobiology refused	2
Sociobiology/Naturalism	1 1
Spirituality	2 0
Strictness vs. relativization	2
Sustainability as cosmopolitan	1
Symbolism	4
Vegans	1
We are the center	1

Topos	Times coded
Anti-globalist environmentalism	2
Antichauvinist nationalism	2
Authority	7
Capitalist enemy	6
Christian environmentalism	6
Clash of Civilizations	1
Commonality/Connected problems	4
Consumerism as enemy	10
Countryside experience/rootedness	5
Dangerous diversity	1
Depth/Shallowness	11
Determinism/Invasion	15
Eastern European Peculiarity	12
Environment as opportunity	2
Environmental change as a symptom	3
Environmentalism vs. tradition	1
Exploiting conglomerates	1
Fallacious modernity	8
Future change	28
Global warming as eradication of whites	5
Greedy elites	5
Green royalism	1
History as a teacher	26
Illiberal democracy	1
Imminent crisis	4

Incapable elites	1
Irrational radicalism	1
Liberal enemy	12
Local/small as better	25
Love of nature/homeland (good nationalist)	22
Market-regulation/natural selection	1
National minimum	2
Naturalness	23
Nature as a God's gift	8
Positive nostalgia	13
Oikophilia	9
Order	11
Organic as future	2
Organicism	14
Palingenesis	9
Polluting outsiders	4
Pre-Christian	5
Rational	5
Rational nostalgia	1
Responsibility	41
Scientific findings	1
Self-sustainability	15
Separation	8
The horseshoe effect	4
Tradition	17
Vulnerability	6
Diversity	3
Political correctness	3
Greens as environmental +	28
Natural values as heritage	21
Right-wing as antienvironmentalist	2

Topics	Time s coded
Topic of Decay	8
Topic: Gypsy crime	2
Topic: stealing topics	14
Topic: Access to social media	4
Topic: antidemocracy	9
Topic: Authenticity of the Carpathian Basin	8
Topic: binaries	19
Topic: church, religion and environment	5
Topic: climate change – migration	1
Topic: cooperating with Greens	37
Topic: Cooperating with Hungarian nationalists	20
Topic: Cooperating with Polish nationalists	22
Topic: decision-making	12
Topic: diversity as a problem for genetics	2
Topic: Environmentalism as both left and right	12
Topic: Environmentalism as left	8
Topic: Environmentalism as unimportant	19

Topic: Environmentalist overkill	6
Topic: EU/Corporations role	18
Topic: Experts as relevant	9
Topic: forms of activism	1
Topic: Gender	1
Topic: Global cooperation	2
Topic: Green Royalism	4
Topic: Health	1
Topic: holism	13
Topic: hunting	17
Topic: migrants could be a problem	2
Topic: migrants are not a problem	2
Topic: migrants are a problem	18
Topic: Nature protection as a right-wing value	29
Topic: Organic farming	27
Topic: personal motivation	17
Topic: political messianism	1
Topic: politicization as an issue	2
Topic: pro-democracy	2
Topic: Puszcza Białowieża	5
Topic: reasonable (nationalism, env. protection)	11
Topic: Regional Cooperation	7
Topic: Restriction	1
Topic: right as incompetent	1

Topic: right-wing as active	39
Topic: splitting from Jobbik	3
Topic: strongman	1
Topic: Superfood	3
Topic: the right lost the environment	2
Topic: UN as a problem	3
Topic: environmentalists without knowing	1

Appendix 5 - Categories

Category	Codes comprising	Total number of codings
Anthropocentric Responsibility	Anthropocentrism, Education, Growth priority, Integrated Environmentalism, Antichauvinist Nationalism, Oikophilia, Good Nationalist, Nationalist Minimum, Responsibility	115
Autarky	Environmentalism as Self-Defense, Grassroots as small-step, Power in the people, Reclaiming space, Regulations as an issue, anti-globalist environmentalism, countryside experience, local/small as better, self-sustainability	63
Authority	Overpopulation, right-wing as experts, antidemocracy, experts as relevant, political messianism, pro-democracy, authority, Eastern European peculiarity, Green Royalism, illiberal democracy, order	55
Cooperation	Separation, Horseshoe effect	12
Future	Not aware of being environmentalist, natural selection	5
Manicheanism	Asia/Africa problem, environment as enemy, environmentalism as left, environmentalist overkill, free-market mindset a problem, global warming as eradication of whites, Greenpeace as anti-religious, greens as agents of the outsiders, greens as anti-nationalists, greens as environmental +, greens as capitalist, greens as extremist, greens as money-making, Greta, harmful communism, left as emotional, lobby, politicians as a problem, postmaterialism, populism as a problem, “gypsy crime”, “stealing” topics, binaries/contrasts, EU/corporations role, Migrants problem,	288

	UN problem, capitalist enemy, clash of civilizations, commonality/connected problems, consumerism (as enemy), dangerous diversity, depth/shallowness, determinism/invasion, environmental change as a symptom, exploiting conglomerates, modernity as enemy, greedy elites, imminent crisis, incapable elites, irrational radicalism, liberal enemy, polluting outsiders, vulnerability	
Manicheanism_evil	Greenpeace as anti-religious, greens as agents of the outsiders, greens as anti-nationalists, greens as capitalist, greens as extremist, greens as money-making, Greta, postmaterialism, environmentalist overkill, global warming as eradication of whites, greens have a hidden agenda,	110
Manicheanism_nationalists	Cooperating with small actors, environmentalism is both left and right, environmentalism is unimportant, nature is right-wing, reasonable environmentalism, anti-globalist environmentalism, Christian environmentalism, environment as opportunity, environmentalism vs. tradition, exploiting conglomerates, green royalism, good nationalist, right-wing as antienvironmentalism	109
Naturalism	Nature's law, ecocentrism, Hitler, Nation shaped by nature, Natural against technology, restoring equilibrium, sociobiology, diversity as a problem for genetics, holism	63
Nostalgia	Aesthetics, countryside experience/rootedness, environmentalism vs. tradition, Topos of history, positive nostalgia, palingenesis, rational nostalgia, tradition (roots)	74
Organicism/roots	Blood and soil, collective logic, Nation: a family of families, Authenticity of the Carpathian basin, diversity as a problem	57

	for genetics, regional cooperation, organicism, tradition (roots)	
Spirituality	Alienation, Church as a Problem, Eternity, spirituality, symbolism, church, religion and environment, Christian environmentalism, nature as a God's gift, pre-Christian	56
Modernity	Decay, consumerism as enemy	19
Right-wing failure	Climate change is unimportant, climate change is fake, climate change: undecided, right-wing inactive, right-wing skeptical, self-criticism, environmentalism as unimportant	69

Appendix 6 – The Document Analysis

Organization	Country	Total number of texts	Manifestos and ideological declarations	Social media posts	News items (blogs on the official website, newspapers etc.)
Jobbik	Hungary	50	1	44	5
Mi Hazánk	Hungary	23	2	21	0
HVIM	Hungary	2	1	0	1
Légió Hungária	Hungary	1	1	0	0
Betyársereg	Hungary	1	0	0	1
Ruch Narodowy	Poland	7	3	0	4
ONR	Poland	8	1	0	7
ONR Podhale	Poland	2	0	2	0
Młodzież Wszechpolska	Poland	9	0	9	0
Szturmowcy/Autonomous Nationalists	Poland	9	7	0	2
NOP	Poland	2	0	0	2
Ecolektyw	Poland	21	1	19	1
Independent	HU/PL	3	0	1	2
TOTAL		138	17	97	25