

UNIVERSITY OF ANTWERP

INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Dissertation

The Far-Right and Climate Change
**On the relationship between far-right ideology and climate
change**

Igor ZIVKOVIC

Master of Globalisation and Development

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Van Hecken
Academic Year 2018-2019

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Preface

As the far-right is gaining grounds across the world, the climate breakdown is accelerating. At the time of writing, both the Amazon forest and the Arctic are burning. In Belgium, many students have realised the gravity of the situation and come out on the streets en masse to protest. However, many people are not convinced of the importance of climate change, and climate sceptic discourse keeps permeating society.

This thesis is an attempt to improve our understanding of how the far-right actors think about climate change and how this might change over time as climate change becomes increasingly present. It should help those committed to fighting climate change and the far-right and help realise how the two interconnect. As this is a global fight, my thesis also looks at how the Global South is framed within the far-right ideology and discourse. It should increase our awareness for this important, yet often overlooked, aspect of climate change.

This subject is relatively new in the literature, yet it would not have been possible without the help of a few people. I would like to thank Taylor Blair, Kristian Voss, Zbyněk Tarant and Martin Hultman, who shared their articles and offered me valuable advice. I would also in particular like to thank Bernhardt Forsthner, who shared his articles, and whose work was crucial in writing this paper.

Finally, I would like to thank a few people in my personal life. I would like to thank my mentor Gert Van Hecken, whose sharp criticism improved the quality of this work. I would like to thank my brother Filip Zivkovic, my best friend Aart Kerremans and my girlfriend Nashtasia Tysmans for listening to me many times, helping me to find clarity and supporting me to finish this work. The final and deepest thanks go to my mother, Gordana Hazler, whose tremendous strength offered me the possibility to write a dissertation in the first place.

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Executive Summary

In this dissertation, we set out to look at the ideologies that the far-right draws on in relation to climate change. To this end, we define two ideologies: radical-right populism and Eco-Fascism. While both have nativist nationalism as a core concept, their view on nature differs: when the far-right believes in far going climate policies, they draw on Eco-Fascist ideology, while when they do not believe in far going climate policies, they draw on radical-right populist ideology. We look in detail at the ideological connections between these two ideologies and climate change, and their implications.

Furthermore, we look at the intersection of these far-right ideologies, climate change and development: how are development and the Global South viewed within the climate change ideology and discourse of the far-right?

We first explore the linkages between Eco-Fascism and climate change, where we find that immigration and overpopulation are seen as the major causes of climate change. We also find that this directly reflects implicit and explicit racism, as immigration and overpopulation from the Global South are seen as the main problems, while the Global North failings are ignored.

Secondly, we explore radical-right populism and climate change scepticism. We find that its nationalism and populism imply climate change scepticism, most notably climate change as a product of left-wing agenda's, including of media and scientists, and the economic harm of climate regulations. We explore several ways in which the Global South fits into that scepticism.

Finally, we test our theory by doing a discourse analysis of the far-right in Flanders, Belgium. We find that our theoretical framework was mostly accurate, as Eco-Fascism and radical-right populism informed belief and disbelief in far going climate policies respectively, while the argumentation conformed to the ideological connections we drew earlier.

1. Introduction

On the 26th of May, the European Union held elections once again. As the results were pouring in, one could almost hear a collective sigh of relief across the continent. The feared upsurge of far-right and radical populist right parties did not occur, although they still made relatively strong gains and consolidated their power (Boffey & Oltermann, 2019).

In France Marine Le Pen's 'Rassemblement National' won over Macron's 'En Marche', while in Italy, Salvini's 'Lega' made serious gains. In Austria, the far-right 'FPÖ' did relatively well, despite the government falling right before the elections, in the UK Farage's 'Brexit Party' won the elections while in Belgium the far-right party 'Vlaams Belang' was the winner (Lecomte, 2019).

Outside Europe, far-right politicians and parties are gaining ground in the recent years. Some famous examples include of course the electoral victories of Donald Trump in the United States, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines and most recently, Narendra Modi in India.

Parallel to these political developments over the last few years, is the rising importance of environmental issues, most prominently climate change and biodiversity loss (Watts, 2018). This leads to the logical question of how these far-right actors relate to the environment, and more specifically, climate change. Although ecological awareness and conservation is nowadays often associated with left-wing politics, we should not forget that *'environmental themes can be mobilized from the left or from the right, indeed they require an explicit social context if they are to have any political valence whatsoever'* (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 1996). Thus, recognising different social and political constructions of nature is crucial for any progressive societal change. This work is an explicit attempt to aid this undertaking.

Therefore, the main research question of this master's dissertation is: How are far-right actors mobilising on climate change issues?' This question can be unpacked in two sub-questions: 'Which ideologies relating to climate change does the contemporary far and populist right have and does their discourse reflect that ideology, and if so, how?'

The dissertation has societal and academic value. Societally, the rise of the far-right is worrisome not only in its own right, but also in its implications for the environment. There is only a limited timeframe left to limit global warming (Watts, 2018). Therefore, analysing the positions of the far-right on climate change is very important for climate action.

Academically, the intersection of the far-right and environmental issues is an understudied topic. This paper will therefore contribute to bridging this gap in the literature. It will also look at the intersection of the far-right, climate change and development and try to determine how the right-wing actors are talking about the Global South and development. Are (from the Global North perspective) developing countries seen as partners? Perpetrators? Victims?

This intersection is important because of the global aspect of climate change. Development in the Global South is currently expected to lead to increasing emissions, which is in tension with climate change mitigation. Therefore, the future of the Global South is extremely relevant not only to the Global South but to the Global North as well: climate change is a global issue. This means that the relationship between the Global North and the Global South is crucial, as the Global North will strongly influence the development debate, especially within the context of climate change. Therefore, it is not sufficient to look at the Global South and the Global North as separate entities. How the North interacts with the South is important for combatting climate change, and it is important for the Global South itself.

The first part of the thesis will review existing ideologies on the far-right political spectrum relating to climate change. It will look at how climate change is located within the different ideologies, and what kind of political arguments stem from this.

In the second part, I will perform an empirical analysis of the discourse of far-right actors in Belgium relating to climate change to see whether the far-right indeed draws on these ideologies, on which elements and arguments they focus, which kind of rhetoric they use to convey these arguments, and which views on the Global South are reflected in their discourse. More concretely, I will do this by performing a qualitative analysis on far-right political parties and websites in Belgium, in the time period September 2018 to July 2019. The materials include a collection of Tweets of the parties' most important politicians and articles from far-right websites.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. On Ideology, the Far-Right and Climate Change: A Conceptual Framework

We start our analysis by introducing some key concepts and ideas which will ground our further research. First, we will discuss what the term ‘ideology’ means, then we will define what a far-right ideology is, and in the final part of this chapter, we draw the connections between these ideologies and climate change.

2.1.1. Ideology

Berglez and Olausson (2013) note that there are two approaches to ideology. In the Marxist approach, ideology is a way in which the ruling class manipulates the masses and imposes certain viewpoints and agendas. The other approach, which we call the ‘framework’ approach, is more socio-psychological and socio-cultural, and views ideology as the framework people employ to understand reality (Berglez & Olausson, 2013). Without disregarding the worth of the Marxist approach, in this dissertation we focus mostly on the framework approach, as it enables us to look more deeply into the contents of certain ideologies.

Ball, Dagger and O'Neill (2017), then, write that ‘an ideology is a fairly coherent and comprehensive set of ideas that explains and evaluates social conditions, helps people understand their place in society, and provides a program for social and political action’. As they explain, an ideology performs four functions for people: it is explanatory (explains why the world is as it is), evaluative (helps evaluate current conditions), orientative (provides a sense of identity) and programmatic (says what to do).

This definition of ideology alone, however, is not sufficient to analyse ideology. For this, we turn to the work of Michael Freeden. Freeden wrote an important contribution in 1996 with his book ‘Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach’, which belongs to the framework approach as well. Freeden’s nuanced approach to ideology appreciated the dynamic nature of ideologies in both time and place. However, crucially, he also argued for the importance of the morphology of ideology, that is, its form and structure. Freeden proposes that ideologies have core concepts, adjacent concepts and peripheral concepts (Eccleshall et al., 2003). An example can clarify these distinctions. Freeden gives the example of liberalism, where its core concept is freedom, human rights and democracy are adjacent concepts, and nationalism is found on the periphery (Eccleshall et al., 2003).

In line with Voss (2014), we argue we can go beyond the mere conceptual approach. As Voss writes, ideologies have core worldviews, positions and goals and (policy) actions. Voss (2014) gives the example of anti-anthropocentrism, where the core worldview is that people are not above nature, animal protection is a more general goal and a ban on factory farming could be an action.

Although Freeden takes on a purely conceptual approach, and Voss a more political approach, both can be useful in analysing ideologies. There is clearly some relationship between the morphology of Voss and Freeden. The key point is that ideologies consist of core concepts and worldviews, in addition to less important and less determined concepts, ideas and actions.

For example, as we will see later, the ideology of Fascism has six core concepts: Anti-Rationalism, Holism, Ultra-Nationalism and Imperialism, Struggle, Leadership and Elitism, and Third Way. These core concepts make up the ideology of Fascism: if an ideology contains all of these elements, at least to a certain extent, then that ideology is considered Fascist. That also means that if an ideology has overlapping core features, but not all of them, then it should not be considered part of that ideology. We will come back to this point later.

2.1.2. Far-Right Ideology

Now that we have defined the concept of ideology, we can start with defining ideologies on the far-right of the political spectrum. Forchtner, Kroneder and Wetzl (2018) picture the far-right as a continuum: on the less extreme side of the spectrum, there is the ‘radical-right populist’ ideology as defined by Mudde (2007), which has as its core concepts nativist nationalism, populism and authoritarianism. Yet, this should be altered slightly, because the image of the far-right as a continuum, starting from nativist nationalism, populism and authoritarianism, implies that ideologies on the far end of the spectrum should include these three core concepts. However, Fascism is often seen as elitist, which is incompatible with the ideology of populism (Mudde, 2007).

Therefore, we use Mudde’s (2007) minimal definition, meaning that an ideology is far-right if it includes nativist nationalism as a core concept. If one includes authoritarianism, then we arrive at ‘radical right’ ideology, of which radical-right populism is a subgroup, and if we add anti-democracy, then we get ‘extreme-right’ ideology (Mudde, 2007).

2.1.3. Far-Right and Climate Change

We have now defined what far-right ideology is. However, as is perhaps clear by now, within the broad spectrum of far-right ideology, there are a lot of ‘sub-ideologies’, who have additional core, adjacent and/or peripheral concepts. Many of them are not likely to have any specific ideas on climate change.

The first way in which we then select a relevant ideology, is to look at the political landscape of today. Many current political parties on the far-right can be classified as radical-right populist parties, and a very large majority of them are climate sceptics (Lockwood, 2018). Lockwood (2018) argues that the reason that radical-right populists are climate sceptics is their ideology . Therefore, the most prominent far-right ideology today that relates to climate scepticism is radical-right populism.

However, as marginal as it may seem, there is a strand within far-right thinking that actually advocate for far going policies to combat climate change (we do not evaluate their effectiveness). Several news outlets have recently reported a growing presence of Eco-Fascism (Cagle, 2019; Manavis, 2018; Wilson, 2019), which seems to be the main environmental ideology of the far-right. We will discuss this ideology more in detail later, but Eco-Fascism is a form of Fascism that considers itself environmentalist and is prepared to enforce draconic and racist measures to safeguard the environment.

Therefore, the two ideologies that will be reviewed here are radical-right populism and Eco-Fascism. To be sure, as Forchtner and Özvatan (in press) remark, there is no clear-cut distinction in the environmental stances of various far-right actors. This means that we cannot say that per definition, the further on the right an actor is, the more concerned with climate change (or the environment) he will be. Rather, I make the argument that insofar as an actor on the far-right is advocating far-going measures to combat climate change, he is likely to draw on Eco-Fascist ideology, while an actor that is sceptical of climate change, is likely to draw on radical right populist ideology.

The question then arises how it is possible that some political parties that are considered radical-right populist, can advocate far going climate policies¹? The answer is that they will draw on Eco-Fascist ideas. This can be explained by the crucial notion that for the far-right, nature is an adjacent concept, next to the core concept of nativist nationalism. Climate change forms an inherent difficulty for the nativist nationalism (and populism) of the far-right, as we will see later in more detail, which increases the likelihood of far-right people to be climate sceptics. However, if that position becomes untenable, whether it be because of electoral reasons, because climate change is becoming too large of a problem to ignore or some other reason, then people of the far-right can switch to a conception of nature within Eco-Fascist ideology, because it still supports the core feature of nativist nationalism.

One more final point should be made here. The dynamic nature of ideology, and the indeterminacy of policy response (as they are not part of the core worldview), makes that an overlap between ideologies is possible. For example, someone on the far-right can argue against immigration (as it fits the core of nativist nationalism), and he can do so on ecological grounds. Someone from the Greens could also argue for immigration restrictions out of ecological reasons. The difference here is that for the person on the far-right, the core idea adhered to is nativist nationalism, while for the person on the left the core is environmentalism. Although the result is the same in practice, they are ideologically distinct, and in this thesis, we are only concerned with the far-right.

¹ And conversely, Fascists can be climate sceptics as they draw on radical-right populist ideas on nature.

2.2. Fascism, Environment and Development

In this part we will first briefly discuss the general ideology of Fascism. After that, we will look into Eco-Fascism, and how the environment and concern with climate change fit within the Eco-Fascist framework. In the final section of this part, we discuss which views on development or the Global South are reflected within the ideology.

2.2.1. Fascism

Fascism is an ambiguous concept. It has been defined in terms of being a specific regime, a movement and an ideology (Eatwell, 1996; Eccleshall et al., 2003; Heywood, 2017). Furthermore, Berezin (2019) notes that the question of whether Fascism can be seen out of its historical context in interwar Europe or not, has been subject of many debates. In the end, Berezin (2019) writes: *'Fascism is a historically specific term that developed into an analytic concept over time'*. (p. 5)

However, as Prowe (1994) correctly notes, *'no political movement develops in a vacuum'* (p. 296). Movements such as the European New Right, that originated in France in the late 1960's, tried to rework Fascism (Lyons, 2017). The ideas of the New Right were specific responses to historical and socio-economic conditions, while fascists today will also have different emphasis on different aspects of the fascist ideology, in response to today's context².

Therefore, while recognising the ideological dynamism, as well as the importance of specific regimes, practices et cetera, for the purposes of this dissertation, it is both accurate and optimal to describe Fascism as a broad ideology, but with certain core features. Following Eatwell (1996) and in line with Mudde's (2007) approach to populism, we will search for a minimal definition; a lowest common denominator within fascist ideology. The approach identifies core elements that an ideology needs to encompass to be considered fascist; conversely, an ideology that does not have these core concepts is not Fascist.

² That is exactly why it is important to look into Eco-Fascism. As previously mentioned, the environmental crisis could cause an increased emphasis on environmentalism.

Based on Eatwell (1996), Eccleshall et al. (2003) and Heywood (2017) we can find six core elements of Fascism.

- Anti-Rationalism: Historically, in the late nineteenth century, ideas stressing anti-rationality and anti-Enlightenment came to the forefront (Eccleshall et al., 2003). They emphasised the limits of reason and paid more attention to other drives and impulses (Heywood, 2017). As Heywood (2017) writes, '*although anti-rationalism does not necessarily have a right-wing or protofascist character, Fascism gave political expression to the most radical and extreme forms of counter-Enlightenment thinking.*' (p. 271)

Anti-rationalism causes Fascism to be anti-intellectualist, advocating action over thinking, as this is more connected to the vital human drives, while reasoning was seen as dry and lifeless (Heywood, 2017). Furthermore, Fascism became in many ways a destructive ideology, very explicitly opposing itself to many other existing ideas, yet creative in the sense that it seeks exactly the opposite of the current world order (Heywood, 2017).

- Holism: Another consequence of abandoning universal reason is that its conception of society was rooted in culture, and an organic community based on a common past, which creates loyalty and emotional bonds (Heywood, 2017). As Eccleshall et al. (2003) notes, fascists have a '*metaphysical ideal of peoplehood*' (Eccleshall et al., 2003, p. 125), an ideal of a constant peoplehood with unchangeable values. The importance given to the community one belongs to, means that cultural prejudices against other groups, usually minorities like the Jewish people, are commonplace. Sometimes these prejudices are transformed to racial prejudices, and an assumption of racial hierarchies will follow (Eccleshall et al., 2003). Finally, the importance of the community also means that individual rights are subordinate to the well-being of the collective. This also stems from a believe that people within liberal democracy are alienated from their (national) community (Eatwell, 1996).

- Ultra-nationalism and Imperialism: Fascism has a chauvinist and expansionist nationalism, which sees other nations as international rivals (Heywood, 2017). As the community and state are rooted in conceptions of either cultural or racial hierarchy and superiority, imperialism followed, as other nations are seen as inferior (Eccleshall et al., 2003).

It also looks for a strong and aggressive national identity. As Heywood (2017) explains, *'All Fascist movements therefore highlight the moral bankruptcy and cultural decadence of modern society, but proclaim the possibility of rejuvenation, offering the image of the nation 'rising phoenixlike from the ashes' (p. 278).* Fascist nations also strived to be self-sufficient. Economic strength for them is having control over resources and energy without being dependent for those resources on any other country. Waging war over those resources becomes a logical consequence. Thus, economic strength, ultra-nationalism and imperialism are all linked.

- Struggle: Social Darwinism had a big influence on Fascism, as they saw competition conflict and struggle as a 'natural' (in a normative sense) part of life, which allows the strong to prosper, while the weak suffer what they must. This leads to the idealising of martial values, and a constant struggle for the expansion of Fascism (Heywood, 2017).
- Leadership and Elitism: Fascist ideology rejects equality on the basis of different biological capabilities and feels that the masses should be led by a supreme leader, and a group of fighters that embody the martial values. The supreme leader is amongst others distinguished by his charisma and wisdom. His wisdom means the state and its strong institutions are weakened and formed to the leaders wishes (Heywood, 2017). The combination of nationalism and imperialism also means that a strong leader inhibiting the racial or cultural values should lead the nation forward (Eccleshall et al., 2003).

- Third Way: Sometimes Socialism is portrayed as a core feature of Fascism. For example, some fascists were against large capitalist enterprises that made small businesses go bankrupt. Furthermore, Fascism wanted economic activity to be in the service of the collective, which it shares with Socialism. Finally, fascist ideology has a disdain for capitalist materialism and consumerism (Heywood, 2017).

However, there are also limitations to the comparison with Socialism: the leftist currents within Fascism were quickly disposed of in Nazi Germany in favour of alliances with big companies, economic policies were in essence more pragmatist than socialist, and anti-communism has always been more pronounced in Fascism than anti-capitalism (Heywood, 2017).

Therefore, we can conclude that against the international solidarity and egalitarianism of Socialism, and against individualist free-trade liberalism, Fascism seeks a third way. It would follow pragmatic economic policies and partnerships, promoting a sense of national identity and economic self-sufficiency (Eatwell, 1996; Eccleshall et al., 2003).

2.2.2. Eco-Fascism: On Fascism and Nature

We wrote in our conceptual chapter how views on nature can be constructed in certain ways in political ideologies. In far-right ideologies, nature will be made to fit the core concept of nativist nationalism. There can therefore be an interplay between nationalism and ecologism. Hamilton (2002) notes how nationalism adopts and appropriates environmental themes. Mix (2009) similarly noted how the far-right in the USA would draw on different environmental discourses to appeal to people across the political spectrum. As the climate breakdown increases, people might become more drawn to the extreme ideas of Eco-Fascism, or ideas that would be in line with far-right policies.

In this section, we trace the historical roots of Eco-Fascism and how current actors on the far right, like the alt-right movement, are adopting some of its themes. We will end by discerning some key points.

2.2.2.1. History

Eco-Fascism is most often traced back to Nazi Germany. As Mix (2009) notes: ‘*Latent environmental discursive frames present in Nazi-era ideology structure contemporary white separatist movement perspectives on the environment*’ (p. 142). Biehl and Staudenmaier (1996) write that Germany is not only the place where ecology and Green political thought originate from, but it also the peculiar starting point of an interconnection between naturalism and nationalism. This was influenced by the Romantic movement and its opposition to the Enlightenment and Judeo-Christian values (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 1996; Forchtner et al., 2018) in Germany and England (Voss, 2014).

As Biehl and Staudenmaier (1996) brilliantly explain, such ideas ‘*matured in the second half of the nineteenth century in the context of the völkisch movement, a powerful cultural disposition and social tendency which united ethnocentric populism with nature mysticism. At the heart of the völkisch temptation was a pathological response to modernity. In the face of the very real dislocations brought on by the triumph of industrial capitalism and national unification, völkisch thinkers preached a return to the land, to the simplicity and wholeness of a life attuned to nature’s purity. The mystical effusiveness of this perverted utopianism was matched by its political vulgarity*’

Thinkers like Ernst Arndt and Ernst Haeckel advanced specific ideas on nature and conservation, yet always would connect them to ultra-nationalism (Forchtner & Özvatan, in press). Haeckel for example, founder of the science of ecology, would espouse Social Darwinism and claim that Nordic people are superior, opposed mixed marriages and would be in favour of racial eugenics (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 1996).

Idolising mystical and vague visions of nature would often lead to biological ideas and traits to be connected to the social world and social structures (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 1996). As Smyth (2019) and Forchtner and Özvatan (in press) remark, the German forest and German soil would become powerful imagery. The German landscape and homeland (*Heimat*) would become a myth of origin for German nationalists, connecting people and place as a connected, indivisible whole, while cities were despised.

A few decades later, the Nazis would be strongly influenced by these ideas, and connect them explicitly to organicism and holism, racism and anti-rationalism. Supposedly, any discontinuity with the natural order would lead to humankind's downfall (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 1996). It is also not a coincidence that the infamous concentration camp Buchenwald translates to Beach Wood (Smyth, 2019).

This ideology of 'Blood and Soil' became an official doctrine of the Nazi party. However, not only in Germany has Eco-Fascism been important. Smyth (2019) traces Eco-Fascist roots back to writers like Henry Williamson, Jorian Jenks and Viscount Lymington, who lived in the early 20th century in Britain. While in Germany the forest was important imagery, in Britain the green countryside performed that function. Nevertheless, socio-political alienation and a connection between a pure nature and a pure race was a recurring theme.

After the second world war, the Eco-Fascist ideology influenced different writers, thinkers and even political parties. One important group was the 'New Right' emanating from France. They adopted many of the ideas and themes of the previous Eco-Fascism, yet also adapted the ideology in specific ways.

Spektorowski (2003) notes that the New Right tried (and partly succeeded) to synthesise and bridge the Left-Right divide by masking their anti-egalitarian views in left-wing rhetoric. He writes in his excellent analysis of the New Right how they saw universal values as an oppressive and a colonialisng force, which hinders the development of true cultural differences. Instead of explicitly imposing cultural or racial hierarchies, New Right intellectuals would argue for cultural differentiation through 'ethnopluralism', where people from different cultures would all have to right to their own territory. This idea gives the New Right an anti-racist and anti-imperialist look.

As Biehl and Staudenmaier (1996) write, the New Right connected its anti-universalism with pro-ecological stances, claiming universalism and modernity (with its use of technology) are at the root of ecological degradation. Instead they argue that ethnopluralism enables every people to be connected with their homeland, with their soil, as people's traditions and culture are intrinsically connected to the biological world they live in.

The New Right is not the only group talking about Eco-Fascism though. There are other people feature prominently in Eco-Fascist thought. One of the main figures is Savitri Devi, a mystical Nazi and deep ecologist (Manavis, 2018). Other figures are Ted Kaczynski, also known as the Unabomber, because he committed a series of bombings after his house in the woods was bought by property developers, and Pentti Linkola, who wrote a series of essays espousing views that can only accurately be described as Eco-Fascist (Bennett, 2019).

Eco-Fascism recently received more media attention as the shooter in Christchurch, New Zealand, described himself as an Eco-Fascist (Bennett, 2019; Smyth, 2019). Eco-Fascism today is pronounced the most in sections of the online Alt-Right movement, largely based in the US (Taylor, in press). However, there are other movements and even political parties that also draw on some of the ideas of Eco-Fascism (Connolly, 2014; Forchtner & Özvatan, in press; Tarant, in press). Most notably, Marine le Pen advanced its patriotic ecology and launched a manifesto before the European elections, calling for Europe to become an 'ecological civilisation', which in effect means that nationalism and anti-immigration are seen as the only 'real' ecological views (Mazoue, 2019; Neslen, 2014).

2.2.2.2. Nexus Eco-Fascism, Climate Change and Development

This section will review what the main elements of Eco-Fascist ideology are today, and how they relate to climate change and development.

Firstly, Eco-Fascism draws heavily on the ideology of Blood and Soil (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 1996). To recap, the main idea is that people are an inherent part of the natural environment around them, usually conceived as the homeland or landscape, and that this environment fundamentally constitutes both the individual and the community. Indeed, without the environment, there would be no community.

It is tied with a natural-historical conception of the community, which means that the nature and community together form a historical, absolute and unchanging entity, where ‘forefathers’ are worshipped (Eccleshall et al., 2003; Manavis, 2018). This is connected with the idea that it is crucial for people’s well-being and health to be in their natural habitat (Zimmerman, 1995).

A second key element, as we have already discussed, is ethnopluralism, which is rooted in the New Right theories on cultural differentialism. As people and their culture are fundamentally connected with their natural surroundings, mixing people and culture is an important reason for environmental decay, and should therefore not be tolerated.

Thirdly, and crucially, there is both a lot of implicit and explicit racism. Whatever the environmental problem, some non-white group is complicit. The two previous elements are rooted in the ultra-nationalism of fascism and gives rise to its racist structure. These three elements translate into views on climate change and ideas about the Global South.

Eco-Fascists perceive a number of root causes for all environmental concerns, including climate change. These are immigration and overpopulation, which are often also linked to overconsumption. Immigration and overpopulation cause climate change in a number of ways, according to Eco-Fascists.

Firstly, because people are inherently tied to their homeland, only they can care for their homeland. Therefore, immigration by definition causes environmental problems. To illustrate this with an example: Aranoff (2019) notes that according to Marine Le Pen, climate concern is inherently nationalist, saying: *‘Those who are “nomadic” do not care about the environment; they have no homeland.’*

What is often implicit in such statements is that white people are inherent guardians of nature, while other races are not (Mix, 2009). Only white people can be ecological subjects, while other people, usually from the Global South, actively pollute the environment. As Manavis (2018) cites one Eco-Fascist: *'The import of these non-Europeans have brought in people who do not share the same respect for nature and especially not animals. Nor do they have the connection to the soil that the natives have.'* Other objections to immigration are that it supposedly increases population (Manavis, 2018) and that immigrants emit less CO₂ when they are in the Global South; thus, they must stay there (Neumayer, 2006; Taylor, in press).

Secondly, overpopulation in the Global South causes overconsumption and pollution, therefore, we need to radically lower the birth rates in the Global South. However, the discourse on overpopulation often is rooted in racism and derogatory views on the Global South.

As Dyett and Thomas (2019) write, it puts the blame entirely onto countries from the Global South, and more concretely, coloured women who irresponsibly have children. The problematic aspect, as they explain, is not the subject of overpopulation per se, but an excessive focus on population size and growth in the Global South and an omission of the real root causes, namely the constant accumulation and overconsumption under capitalism (Dyett and Thomas, 2019). The problematic aspect is glaringly obvious if we look at what someone wrote on the AltRight.com website under the pseudonym Evolalinkola in 2017:

[...] 'let's reduce the third world's addiction to first world aid thereby reducing their population, thus reducing resource consumption and pollution [...] The populations that cause the most harm and don't care about it are third world countries. Let's roll back our aid to them and stop their growth in order to improve the health of the planet.' [...] Ultimately, the underdeveloped world and its people are the way they are because of their inability to use the land efficiently. By refusing to take these people in we encourage them to cherish their land, water, and the air they breathe. Shouldn't this be the goal for the green movement?' (Evolalinkola, 2017)

In this quote we can see clearly how populations in the third world are seen as the problem because of their behaviour. Furthermore, he claims non-whites do not care about the environment, and that they are as of now unable to use their lands correctly. The solutions are a misguided stop to immigration and stopping aid to the Global South in order for their populations to stop growing.

These ideas are strongly inspired by Linkola, who we mentioned before, and Garrett Hardin. Hardin gained prominence in ecology, politics and economics because of his famous ‘Tragedy of The Commons’ thesis. Less known are his nativist nationalism (he has even been branded white nationalist by the Southern Poverty Law Center) and Eco-Fascist views.

Both of them advance the idea of ‘lifeboat ethics’. Linkola (2011) characterises the ethics of ecological disaster as follows: *‘What to do when a ship carrying a hundred passengers has suddenly capsized, and only one lifeboat is available for ten people in the water? When the lifeboat is full, those who hate life will try to pull more people onto it, thus drowning everyone. Those who love and respect life will instead grab an axe and sever the hands clinging to the gunwales’*.

As Hardin (1974) explains in more detail, the lifeboat represents the (people in) rich, developed countries, the people drowning in the sea are the (people in) poor, developing countries. It is impossible to save people from the Global South without causing environmental destruction. Indeed, *‘the harsh ethics of the lifeboat become harsher when we consider the reproductive differences between rich and poor’* (Hardin, 1974). Developing countries have a higher rate of population growth and thus, their impact on the environment is the problem.

Hardin (1974) also argues against development (food) aid. Developing countries should learn to control their population growth, while aid will incentivise them to keep reproducing and keep asking for more aid. These countries do not have enough food, says Hardin (1974), because their governments lack *‘wisdom, competence, or both’*. In Neo-Malthusian fashion, he also argues that in the worst case, natural checks such as famines would keep population growth in place.

In the same vein, he argues against immigration: *‘World food banks move food to the people, hastening the exhaustion of the environment of the poor countries. Unrestricted immigration, on the other hand, moves people to the food, thus speeding up the destruction of the environment of the rich countries. We can easily understand why poor people should want to make this latter transfer, but why should rich hosts encourage it?’* (Hardin, 1974)

Hardin thinks that immigration causes environmental destruction in the developed countries. He also claims that population growth is the reason developing countries experience environmental problems, which again omits the responsibility of the Global North, for example in outsourcing polluting production processes to the Global South, and places extraordinary blame on women of colour.

To conclude on the intersection of Eco-Fascism, climate change and the Global South, we can say that Eco-Fascism places the blame of climate change onto the Global South extremely excessively, as the Global South is actually historically the least responsible for climate change (Dryzek, Norgaard & Schlosberg, 2011). This reflects true racists ideology where the Global South are seen as uncivilised, and who need to stop receiving aid and ‘learn for themselves’, thereby completely omitting the historical reasons for the Global South’s underdevelopment. Eco-Fascism also posits that white people are the only race that truly care for their environment, and that coloured women are responsible for environmental problems.

2.3. Radical-Right Populism, Climate Change and Development

In this section I will firstly review the various definitions of populism, and right-wing populism. Afterward, I will discuss climate scepticism, and finally, I will review the intersection of right-wing populism, climate scepticism and development.

2.3.1. Defining Populism

Populism is often heard in political debates today, yet often a clear definition is lacking. According to Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017), populism is a *‘thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite,” and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people’* (p. 6) They add that populism is anti-elitist and anti-pluralist.

There are a few main elements in this definition. Firstly, it is a thin-centered ideology. That means that populism does not have sufficient content to be on its own, it has to be attached to another ideology. Secondly, it constructs the people as a unified social group, either as the sovereign people, the common people or the nation. Thirdly, it sees the elite as the enemy, based on their power, their wealth or their ethnicity or ethnic loyalty. Finally, populism establishes its legitimacy from the general will of the people. Although this can be a democratising force, it can also easily lead to authoritarianism (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017)

The definition of Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017) follows the ideational approach. Hadiz and Chrysosgelos (2017) define the ideational approach as focusing on the ideology and rhetoric of populists. As Mudde explains in Kaltwasser et al. (2017), several scholars are opposed to either the use of ideology as an analytical category or the use of ideology in the case of populism. However, Mudde argues convincingly that the ideational approach is accurate and has several advantages, in that it is distinguishable (it is clear what populism is and is not), categorizable (populists can be classified), travelable (or generalizable: can be used for comparative analyses) and versatile (different analyses can be applied to it).

Other approaches are still being put forward. Some of the literature on populism tries to explain the phenomenon with demand-side approaches, supply-side approaches or the institutional context (Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Wodak, 2015). Demand-side approaches try to explain populism from the perspective of the voters. Inglehart's and Norris's paper in 2016 is a good example, where they try to determine whether the electorate votes for populists because of economic insecurity, or as a reaction against certain progressive cultural values. Other explanations could be a relative loss of status and psychological characteristics, for example authoritarian predispositions (Wodak, 2015).

Supply-side approaches look at the strategic decisions of parties to win over the electorate (Wodak, 2015). One good work in this tradition is Rydgren's (2007) 'Sociology of the Radical Right'. Finally, institutional approaches look at the political and constitutional context and its relationship populism, like Mouzelis (1985), who argues that populists are defined by the way in which they by-pass formal political institutions.

Another approach is the one by Laclau and Mouffe, who focus on the democratic politics, and argue that populism can empower the marginalised and oppressed, through common dissatisfaction against the elites (Hadiz & Chryssogelos, 2017). While many view populism in a negative light, Laclau and Mouffe see populism as a way to build solidarity between people, and create a counter-hegemonic project against the elite, or 'the powerful'. Despite this more positive view on populism, the theory also recognizes that populism may have different political contents and can be oriented towards different political goals (Andreucci, 2019) In this sense, it corresponds to Mudde's idea of populism as a thin-centered ideology.

Mudde's approach is not only positively received by a lot of scholars in the field, it is also well fit for the purposes of this analysis. It allows us to look at the ideology of (right-wing) populism and the role of nature and climate change within it. Therefore, we opt for Mudde's definition and approach to populism.

2.3.2. Defining Radical-Right Populism

Now that we have a better sense of what populism is, we can start to define radical-right populism. Wodak (2015) notes three recurring concepts within the literature on radical-right populism. Firstly, populists always mention ‘the people’ as a political subject. However, radical-right populists conceive of the people in ethnic terms, connecting them to a homeland. They also imply a certain moral (and sometimes racial) purity of the people. Secondly, radical-right populists explicitly oppose others, whether it be minorities, immigrants or elites that betray ‘the people’. Thirdly, radical-right populists create an ingroup-outgroup dynamic through which they imply distance from ‘the other(s)’ but proximity with ‘us’, such as the created distance between ‘us, the people’ and ‘they, the immigrants’.

Wodak’s findings are in line with Mudde’s (2007) work on radical right populism. As we saw in the introduction, Mudde (2007) uses a minimal and a maximal definition to define radical-right populist parties. His minimal definition of populist radical-right parties is that they have a form of ‘nativist nationalism’, while his maximal definition claims that the core features of radical right-wing parties are populism, nativist nationalism and authoritarianism. Mudde (2007) defines nationalism as a political doctrine that seeks to have a state with only one nation, one ‘people’ or culture. Nativism, then, is defined as a subset of nationalism and an *‘ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (“the nation”) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state’* (p. 19). This is similar to the ethnopluralist vision of the New Right we saw previously. Finally, authoritarianism is can be seen as a wanting a strictly ordered society, where authority has to be followed and respected.

Mudde’s (2007) work has the advantage over other works because his approach acknowledges the ideological tenets of the radical right beyond mere populism. In other words, parties on the right share more ideological features than just their populism (Zaslave, 2009). In this paper, we will utilise Mudde’s (2007) approach.

2.3.3. Climate Scepticism

Climate scepticism has been documented extensively. Most of the research is situated in the USA, and to a lesser extent in Europe. It has been a subject of intense research because of the challenging relationship between science communication and the public. Climate scepticism asks uncomfortable and complex questions about the relationship between reality and science, and how humans process information and form opinions; questions that ultimately touch upon the foundations of democracy itself. Most of the literature has therefore focused on either how to communicate science effectively (see for example: Moser, 2009), how the public debate is being held (see for example: Cann & Raymond, 2018), and what influences the public's perception of science and climate change (see for example: Guy, Kashima, Walker & O'Neill, 2014; Häkkinen & Akrami, 2014). Others, such as Demeritt and Latour, focus more on the social construction of science (of climate change) and the science-politics relationship (Demeritt, 2001).

Climate scepticism (otherwise also known as climate denialism) is the challenging of the scientific and political consensus on climate change (Painter & Ashe, 2012). There are therefore different parts of the consensus on climate one can be sceptical of. For example, Jacques, Dunlap and Freeman (2008) note four main themes within the environmental sceptic movement: they deny the evidence of climate change and its seriousness, they therefore question environmental policies, they are thus against regulations, and they see environmental regulations as threatening Western progress. Rahmtorf made an important contribution in 2005 with a more schematic approach, by discerning trend, attribution and impact scepticism (Van Rensburg, 2015). Trend scepticism means that one does not believe in the trend of a warming planet, attribution scepticism that one does not believe in human's effect on the warming trend (although the warming trend is accepted), and impact scepticism means that the impact of global warming is not seen to be (very) harmful (although man-made climate change is accepted).

As Van Rensburg (2015) notes, this typology is very useful but not complete. Van Rensburg proposes a more extended typology, that allows for nuanced discussions, as illustrated in Figure 1.

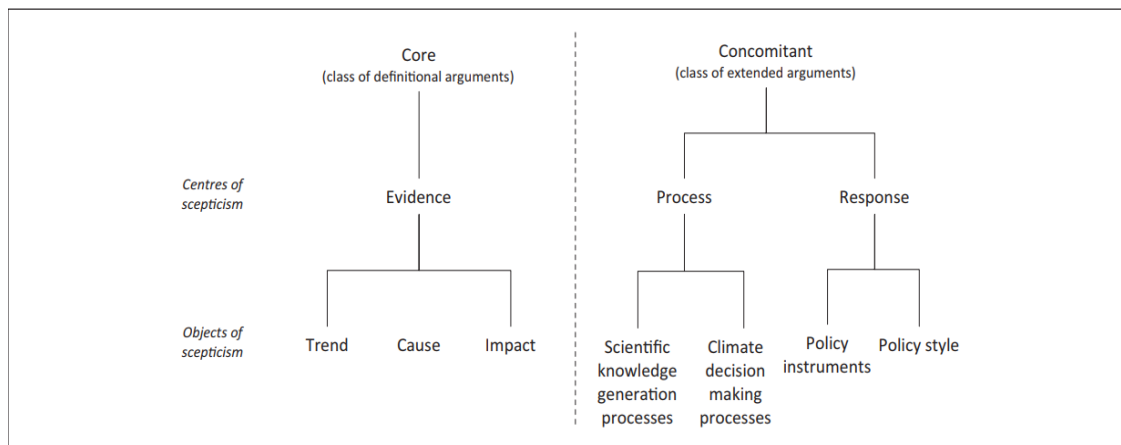


Figure 1: Climate Scepticism Typology. Reprinted from: 'Climate Change Scepticism: A Conceptual Re-Evaluation' (p. 6), by W. Van Rensburg, 2015, *SAGE Open*, 5(2), p. 6. Copyright 2015 by Van Rensburg.

Van Rensburg (2015) argues that there are core critiques, and concomitant critiques. The core critique (also labelled as a definitional argument) is considered such because it is the directly opposed to the technical, scientific evidence; the climate sceptic argument *par excellence*. As such, the centre of this core scepticism is the evidence: evidence sceptics reject the consensus on climate change based on a perceived lack of evidence. This can be further divided into different objects of scepticism: trend, cause (or attribution in Rahmtorf's terminology) and impact scepticism.

On the other hand, there are the concomitant critiques, also labelled as the extended arguments. They are named as such because they are often intimately related to the core critique yet are also not determined by them. It is for example possible that one does not refute the evidence on climate change (the core critique) but thinks that climate action is too costly, or conversely, to dispute the evidence on climate change, but agree with climate action out of other reasons, such as reduced air pollution.

Within the concomitant critiques, we find two centres of scepticism. The first one is 'process scepticism'. As Van Rensburg (2015) writes, process sceptics '*make various critiques of the scientific, bureaucratic, and political processes behind mainstream climate science*'. They are sceptic of scientific knowledge generation processes, claiming for example that there are institutional biases, that the use of computer models is problematic or that the epistemic community of climate change scientists does not allow for dissent. They can also be sceptic of the political processes of climate science, claiming for example that it is a hoax or that media exaggerate the problem (Van Rensburg, 2015).

The second centre of scepticism within the concomitant critique is 'response scepticism'. The response sceptic does not deny climate change evidence, nor the processes that lead to their conclusions. Instead, they either deny or minimise the effort that societies should put into climate change action. Response scepticism therefore relates to government and governance issues, or more specifically, policy instruments and style.

2.3.4. Radical-Right Populism, Climate Scepticism and Development

In the previous section we explored the specific characteristics of right-wing populism and of climate scepticism. The goal of this section is to look more in depth at how radical-right populist actors are sceptics of climate change, and how it relates to their ideology. Ideology has been found to play an important role in opinions on climate change (Guy, Kashima, Walker & O'Neill, 2014; Häkkinen & Akrami, 2014). However, these approaches often measure ideology in traditional left-right divisions, and do not explain in detail why certain political ideologies lead to certain beliefs on climate scepticism.

To my best knowledge, there have been only a few scholars looking into the radical-right climate change discourse, and only Lockwood (2018) has explicitly sought to connect the far-right populist ideology with climate scepticism. Lockwood, however, only discussed the general tenets of right-wing populism and climate scepticism, without denoting specific forms of climate scepticism. In this section, I hope to explore the relationship between right-wing populism and climate scepticism into more depth. I also wish to explore how the right-wing discourse on climate change reflects ideas on development and the Global South, which is a new research subject.

2.3.4.1. Radical-Right Populism and Climate Change Scepticism

Radical-right populists tend to be sceptical of climate change (Lockwood, 2018). This seems to be firmly grounded in ideology. I will first discuss some reasons why radical-right populism lends itself well to climate scepticism in general (scepticism based around any of the three centres we saw previously). Afterwards, I will discuss more concretely how far-right populist ideology enhances certain forms of climate scepticism.

2.3.4.1.1. General Reasons for Scepticism

Firstly, a large part of populists' attraction is because of their political and cultural values (Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Lockwood, 2018). Lockwood (2018) describes how first liberal social values like minority rights, sexual freedom, et cetera, clashed with conservative, authoritarian values, and then cosmopolitan and universalist values clashed with nationalist ones. Radical-right populist ideology enhances this cultural clash since the very nature of climate change lends itself very well to exploitation by far-right populism. Climate change becomes a challenge to people's socio-political identities (Bliuc et al., 2015).

As Bliuc et al. (2015) write, '*people come to see climate change beliefs and scepticism not just as an opinion on an issue, but as an aspect of self that defines who they are, what they stand for, and who they stand with (and against). In doing so, opinion-based identities provide a basis for collective action as a coordinated, collective attempt to bring about, or thwart social change*'. (p. 1) The people who are the strongest climate sceptics are people whose identities are most challenged (Hamilton, 2010; Kahan, 2012). For example, in the context of the USA, Daggett (2018) employs the term 'petro-masculinity', noting how fossil fuels are inextricably linked with masculine identities, and that an attack on the fossil fuel industry can lead to an increased desire for authoritarianism.

According to the maximum definition of Mudde (2007), radical-right populists have nativist nationalism, authoritarianism, and populism in common. That nativist nationalism (that forms a part of people's identity) clashes with climate change because climate change is the international issue *par excellence*, because, as Schaller and Carius (2019) write, '*emissions do not respect borders*' (p. 21). It therefore requires an international solution (Dryzek, Norgaard & Schlosberg, 2011), which is notoriously difficult to accept for far-right populist actors.

Indeed, Forchtner & Kølvråa (2015) note that the populist radical right uses certain imaginaries to communicate their ideological view on nature: the material (resources from the land), the symbolical (the nature inherently tied to and representative of the community) and the aesthetical (unspoiled beauty, based on Romanticism). While traditional objects of environmentalism such as countryside, rivers and forests are all very easy to represent in these imaginaries, the climate is not. Aesthetically, the climate is very distant and is not very visible (Forchtner & Kølvråa, 2015; Moser, 2009). Symbolically, climate change comes to represent a risk to national sovereignty and a transfer of power to international elites and foreign powers (Forchtner & Kølvråa, 2015). Only with the material imaginary is there some congruence with climate change action, as the far-right populists are in favour of diminishing their reliance on other countries for energy and other resources (Forchtner & Kølvråa, 2015). Schaller and Carius (2019) also note how radical-right parties draw on some of the same *Völkisch*, Romantic ideas we saw earlier in this paper, yet when it comes to climate change, there is a disconnect.

Therefore, the nativist nationalism and authoritarianism of far-right populists clashes with internationalism and cosmopolitanism, and climate change becomes one of the objects of this clash.

Secondly, as we saw previously, radical-right populism creates an ingroup-outgroup dynamic, often positioning the people against a vicious elite and minority. The vicious elite here are the ‘liberals’ and ‘globalists’, who have a wide array of evil motivations. While it is often immigrants that are seen as the minorities, in this case, that role can be filled in by scientists and environmentalists (Lockwood, 2018). The complex nature of modern societies makes this claim particularly effective. Such complexity and opacity can create feelings of powerlessness, and as Lockwood (2018) writes, it *‘can create fertile ground for populism, which promises a simpler vision of direct democracy with government by the people, instead of by politicians, bureaucrats or experts’* (p. 724).

The technocratic aspects of science in general, and of climate science in particular, with its complexity, technocratic bodies and intransparent international organisation, create a (real or perceived) distance between a people and an elite, a dynamic that far-right populists will have a difficulty with.

Thirdly, and closely related the former point, is the feeling of security. Climate change, its causes and consequences are distant and invisible, while its timeframe exceeds the timeframes that people and policymakers are used to, and its complexity makes it an uncertain phenomenon as well (Dryzek, Norgaard & Schlosberg, 2011; Moser, 2009). In addition, the seriousness of climate change has led many people to dub climate change an ‘existential risk’ (Dryzek, Norgaard & Schlosberg, 2011; Guterres, 2018).

Given this situation, Forchtner, Kroneder and Wetzel (2018) locate climate change within Beck’s theory of our societies as ‘risk societies’, societies with increasing uncertainty and risks that do not stop at borders. This causes anxiety and puts identities under threat. In this context, radical-right populism can be seen as a reactionary movement, trying to establish ontological security. Denying climate change, or its seriousness, therefore aims to provide solidity and stability in an uncertain world.

2.3.4.1.2. Specific Framing of Climate Scepticism

Now that we discussed these three general reasons, we can look at how radical-right populists frame climate change (scepticism) to fit to their ideology, following Van Rensburg’s (2015) typology.

Evidence scepticism, as we have seen earlier, is denying that there is evidence that proves the existing consensus on climate change. Although this form of scepticism is not uncommon, it does not seem to have a strong relation to a specific part of far-right ideology, rather it likely reflects the general scepticism we discussed previously. Perhaps the ontological security mechanism plays a strong role here, as disputing the core evidence takes away most of the doubt and uncertainty. Prominent examples of evidence scepticism are the denial of the warming trend, the denial of humanities contribution to that warming, or denial of the negative impacts of climate change, which corresponds to the trend, cause and attribution typology (Cann & Raymond, 2018; Van Rensburg, 2015).

Process scepticism on the other hand, has a strong link with far-right populists. Process scepticism encompasses the ‘scientific knowledge generation process’ and the ‘climate decision making process’. With respect to the scientific knowledge generation process, we already noted that radical-right populists need a minority that they can scapegoat. The scientists will fulfil this role, with many sceptic reports portraying scientists as untrustworthy. Forchtner and Özvatan (in press) find that in Germany, the far-right portrays scientists as ‘irrational’ and ‘religious’, and that scientists do not follow the proper scientific procedures.

The climate decision making process lends itself well to the populist far-right, as they portray those that make decisions on climate as the liberal elite, separated from the interests of the people. Forchtner, Kroneder and Wetzel (2018) find for example that the far-right challenges the climate decision making process, because it is seen to be a subject of left-wing actors and interests. One practical example is d’Ornano, a member of the environmental committee of the Rassemblement National, calling international climate talks ‘a communist project’ (Neslen, 2014).

Response scepticism, finally, also corresponds find sections of radical-right populist ideology. Firstly, Zaslove (2009) notes that although cultural values are perhaps the most important aspect of radical-right populist ideology, the belief in a market economy with a form of populist justice is important as well. Populist justice means that those who were damaged by the market economy should be compensated, but only if they are part of the in-group (Zaslove, 2009).

Thus, populists often portray policies against climate change as a threat to the economy, and more specifically, to the ‘ordinary people’, thereby legitimising inaction. Van Rensburg (2015) classifies this as ‘policy style scepticism’. Schaller and Carius (2019) indeed found that this is one of the primary motivations of the radical-right populists across Europe against climate action, which confirms the findings of Forchtner and Özvatan (in press) in Germany and Cann and Raymond’s (2018) analysis.

The economic damage thesis is closely related with the increasingly popular vision of eco-modernism. Eco-modernism is the belief that technology and markets can save the planet from ecological disaster. It emphasises the possibility of a good Anthropocene, through human ingenuity, scientific and technological progress and reason. Eco-modernists (also known as eco-pragmatists) emphasise the potential of nuclear energy and carbon capture and storage (Asafu-Adjaye *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, although they acknowledge the importance of climate change, they do not advocate radical or far-going policy measures, since they believe national governments should merely stimulate technology. That means that eco-modernism can rightly be seen as a specific form of response scepticism.

According to Anshelm and Hultman (2014), eco-modernist response scepticism (although they do not label it as such) is linked to certain gender norms, which he calls ‘eco-modern masculinity’. This eco-modern masculinity is a mix of traditional industrial masculinity, which emphasises economic growth and technological expansion, and a caring for the environment. Anshelm and Hultman (2014) write that ‘*ecomodern masculinity demonstrated an in-depth recognition of environmental problems, especially climate change, while supporting policies and technologies that conserve the structures of climate-destroying systems*’ (p. 92).

Eco-modernism can fit well within radical-right populism, as eco-modernism places economic growth and prosperity at the centre of environmentalism. It therefore accommodates fears about the economy, while greenwashing its image. Additionally, the elements of traditional industrial masculinity that the eco-modern masculinity draws on, emphasises conservative values, such as hierarchy and domination over nature, and the male-breadwinner model, while far-right populists often also portray such socially conservative values (Akkerman, 2015; Anshelm and Hultman, 2014; Hultman, 2018).

In terms of the concepts we introduced in the first chapter of this work, we can say that the radical-right populists can support the set of policy responses proposed by eco-modernists, which are not opposed to their core concepts, or even fit well with them. However, for one to claim that eco-modernism is by definition a far-right ideology, one would have to look more deeply into its core concepts. This claim is not being made here and would require further inquiry in other research.

In conclusion, climate change is a truly complex and diabolical problem (Dryzek, Norgaard & Schlosberg, 2011). However, for radical-right populists, that statement is uniquely true. It is ill-disposed to deal with climate change on ideological grounds for several reasons, such as the perceived clash between elites and people, and the complexity and uncertainty of climate change. More concretely, I explored how the populist far-right ideology could fit with different types of climate scepticism. In the next section, I will discuss how these ideas reflect on the Global South and development.

2.3.4.2. Nexus Radical-Right Populism, Climate Scepticism and Development

Since climate change is a global issue, it can be expected that certain forms of climate scepticism reflect ideas on development and the Global South. However, certain forms of climate scepticism are more likely to reflect such ideas than others. In effect, evidence scepticism and process scepticism are unlikely to portray any ideas on the Global South (with the exception of Donald Trump's famous tweet claiming climate change is a hoax deployed by China (realDonaldTrump, 2012)). It is mostly response scepticism, where such ideas really become obvious.

The nativist nationalism of radical-right populists is the strongest reflection on development and the Global South. Firstly, Meyer-Ohlendorf and Görlach (2016) note that the international climate regime is based on international solidarity. Countries are all responsible for climate change, but to a different degree. In addition, not all countries have equal capabilities to mitigate climate change. Therefore, in practice, the Global North has to act in solidarity with the Global South. However, as we saw, far-right populists are averse to internationalism, its values and its distance and therefore do not wish to be in solidarity with the Global South. (Meyer-Ohlendorf & Görlach, 2016).

Secondly, radical-right populists do not believe in international cooperation and the international climate regime, which they portray as a distant elite imposing policy and breaching national sovereignty. They view international climate agreements, and especially the Paris Climate Agreement, as unfair and in favour of developing countries. They claim the Global South receive a lot of aid, without guaranteeing compliance. The far-right expect that these developing countries will not follow the agreed rules and procedures. Especially China and India are seen as the major potential violators (Schaller and Carius, 2019).

Thirdly, radical-right populists view the ‘right to development’ that is present in the international climate regime as fundamentally unfair for two reasons. First, since the Global South is expected to have rising greenhouse gas emissions because of their development trajectory, far-right populists think it is unfair that the Global North is not allowed to increase their emissions as well. Second, given the expected increase in emissions from the Global South, they see climate regulations as not worthwhile (Schaller and Carius, 2019).

Fourthly, immigration did not play a large role with the far-right populists, but Carius and Schaller (2019) that when it plays a part, it usually is in the context of being against the legality of the notion ‘climate refugees’.

Finally, there is also the question of populist economic justice. As mentioned, radical-right populism wants to provide economic security and benefits to their in-group. For them, climate change agreements are problematic because they supposedly give the Global South unfair economic competitive advantages, as companies from the Global North would be bound by stronger regulations than the Global South (Schaller and Carius, 2019).

Ecomodernism also implies certain ideas on development, as Caradonna *et al.* (2015) write. It assumes a form of modernisation theory, where developing countries have to follow the exact same, industrial trajectory of development. They also adopt an overly optimistic outlook on this trajectory, not recognising the exploitation and colonisation that it accompanied and relied on. Finally, eco-modernism shows a disdain for alternative ecological practices and indigenous ways of living, and agricultural labour (Caradonna, *et al.*, 2015).

3. Qualitative Content Analysis: A Belgian Case Study

In the previous parts of this paper, we have explored far-right ideologies and their relationship to climate change. More specifically, we discussed how climate change fits within Eco-Fascism, and which ideas and policies it represents, and we have discussed climate scepticism within the radical-right populist ideology.

My goal in this chapter is to explore this topic further by performing a qualitative content analysis on far-right actors in Flanders, Belgium. Our analysis is concerned with answering the following matters.

Firstly, we intend to answer general questions about the far-right climate change rhetoric in Belgium with a basic quantitative tool, namely the hierarchy chart. These questions include the proportion of climate change scepticism versus climate belief/action, differences between actors with respect to climate change arguments, and how often development/developing countries are mentioned within Eco-Fascist and populist sceptic statements and by which actors. Furthermore, in the beginning of the paper we hypothesized that when far-right actors propose far going climate policies, they will draw on Eco-Fascist ideology. We will research whether that is true or false.

Secondly, we wish to explore radical-right populist climate scepticism in detail: which types of scepticism they show in their rhetoric, and which types of arguments they use, and how they connect to their ideology. For example, do sceptic arguments use the ‘economic populist justice’ justification?

Thirdly, we look at how Eco-Fascism and radical-right populist climate sceptic rhetoric frames matters of development and the Global South.

The first part will review the context of the case study and the actors selected. The second part discusses the methodology, the third part the results, and in the fourth part we discuss our findings.

3.1. Flanders and its Far-Right Actors

Before we discuss the actors in more detail, we should note which kind of actors we are interested in. As Berglez and Olausson (2013) write, ideological discourse runs through various institutions in society. Politics, or more concretely political parties, are clearly a very important centre of far-right ideologies. The discourse of political parties is at the front of the public debate, whether that debate is initiated by them or not, and is in turn disseminated by other institutions. Therefore, the first obvious choice for a type of actor is the political party.

However, as Krämer (2017) argues, internet media can also be hosts of far-right ideology (and specifically radical-right populism) and spread these views. He even argues it is a rather essential part of the distribution of radical right populist ideology. Additionally, these media can articulate their ideology more freely than political parties that are bound by certain public norms (Forsthner, Kroneder and Wetzel, 2018). Therefore, by selecting such media, we extend our knowledge of far-right ideology beyond just political parties. Now that we have defined the types of actors, we can continue with defining our actors within the Belgian (Flemish) context.

Belgium is an interesting case study. It consists of two main regions, Wallonia and Flanders. Wallonia is exceptional in Europe because it does not have a far-right party (Vlaeminck & Lefevre, 2019). Flanders, on the other hand, is famous for its ‘Black Sunday’ in 1991, when the extreme right-wing party Vlaams Belang (then called the Vlaams Blok) had won 12 seats in the Belgian parliament (Blommaert, 2019).

At the start of the 21st century, N-VA (the New Flemish Alliance) started growing and specifically targeted the Vlaams Belang electorate, with the 2010 and 2014 signifying great losses for Vlaams Belang, and advances for the N-VA, making it the biggest party of Belgium (Blommaert, 2019).

However, in the most recent elections, Vlaams Belang made a significant comeback, marking the 26th of May as another Black Sunday. Yet the N-VA remains, despite small losses, the biggest party of the country. Thus, now the two biggest parties of Flanders are situated on the far-right end of the political spectrum.

Vlaams Belang has always been known as an extreme-right wing party. The far-right has a long tradition of far-right extremism. Flanders had multiple fascist parties in the years leading up to the second world war. As the fascist cause was seen as a way for the Flemish to finally become independent, the Flemish nationalist cause became strongly intertwined with Fascism. After

WOII, collaborators were prosecuted. However, the Flemish nationalists felt that these prosecutions were unjust. In 1954, a new party was formed, the Volksunie (People's Union). In 1977, the radical wing of the Volksunie, unhappy with the more moderate course of the Volksunie, started the party Vlaams Blok (De Waele, 2013). One of the founders of the Vlaams Blok, Karel Dillen, translated a work of Bardèche, one of the main fascist thinkers and ideological pillars of Vlaams Belang (Peteghem, 2018).

In 2004, Vlaams Blok was found by the Court of Cassation to be in breach of the law against racism (Erk, 2005). Although it set a more moderate course and uses (relatively) more inclusive rhetoric, especially under the new president Tom Van Grieken from 2014, it is still considered a prime of example of a radical-right populist party.

According to Cammaerts (2018), its Flemish nationalism is a form of ethno-nationalism. Culture and ethnicity play a large part in the essentialist Flemish identity. Furthermore, it is a 'blood and soil' ideology, romanticising the past, and the Flemish community. Blommaert (2019) adds that Vlaams Belang also updated its ideology, to fit the global alliance of the New Right parties. It is in a sense internationalist, in that it joins a transnational, extreme right-wing movement who see it as their duty to preserve the white race and protect it against the left elite who want to force multiculturalism on their subjects. This fits clearly with the populist, authoritarian and nativist nationalist description of radical-right populists by Mudde (2007). In fact, one of the figureheads of the Vlaams Belang, Filip de Winter, is on the cover of this book.

The N-VA, on the other hand, is not often recognised as a radical-right populist party. Just like Vlaams Belang, N-VA is rooted in the Flemish nationalist tradition and the Volksunie party. However, while Vlaams Belang separated from the party early on, the N-VA was formed out of the Volksunie in the early 2000's. They formed a cartel with the Catholic party for a few years but went independent in 2008. The elections in 2009 and 2010 put them firmly in the political landscape, as they consolidated their gains and became the largest party in the country ('Geschiedenis', n.d.).

The N-VA is considered as a right-wing, conservative party. For it to be considered a radical-right populist party, its ideology should comprise of populism, nativist nationalism, and authoritarianism.

Pauwels (2011), who looked into different measures of populism, notes that N-VA are third in this category, behind the Vlaams Belang and Lijst De Decker. Furthermore, as Maly (2016) notes, N-VA often explicitly opposes itself to ‘liberal cosmopolitanism’, while De Ceulaer (2018) notes that the N-VA is becoming populist, by for example suggesting that the parliament is not representing the will of the people anymore. Famously, they also launched a campaign against ‘unworldly judges’, when N-VA politician Theo Francken lost an appeal against granting humanitarian asylum to a Syrian family.

In recent years N-VA has shifted to the right, which culminated in the fall of the Belgian government in December 2018, with the N-VA opposing the signing of the Marrakech compact (on immigration policies) they previously accepted. As Cammaerts (2018) writes, the N-VA has been at the forefront of mainstreaming an extreme-right discourse. The N-VA has tried to distinguish itself in the past by advocating ‘civic nationalism’, where outsiders can still be a part of the community, instead of the ethnic nationalism of Vlaams Belang (Maly, 2016).

The question then becomes whether N-VA’s nationalism is still ‘civic’, or whether it is nativist/xenophobic. De Ceulaer (2018) and Blommaert (2018) suggest that it has become nativist, citing the fact that N-VA has copied social media campaigns from the German far-right party Alternative Für Deutschland, or that it has been revealed several members of the neo-fascist youth movement Schild en Vrienden were simultaneously representatives for the N-VA. The N-VA is also authoritarian, with its focus on law and order and against criminality.

With respect to the N-VA, we can conclude that although originally the party was not seen as radical-right populist, there is case to be made that they have shifted towards this direction. Indeed, Mudde himself admits in an interview that the line becomes blurred, as the N-VA increases its nativist nationalism (Stockmans, 2018). In this work, we argue that there are enough reasons to consider the N-VA a radical-right populist party.

The other actors we use for our analysis are right-wing news websites Scepter, Dwarsliggers, ReactNieuws, Nageltjes and the right-wing organisation Voorpost. Scepter is a right-wing, nationalist and conservative news website. By their own account, they aim to be an independent political news medium, reporting on subjects that do not receive sufficient media attention.

Dwarsliggers has a similar ideological orientation as Scepter, providing alternative news stories that are not -in their view- subject to short-termism. ReactNieuws follows the same pattern, aiming to write provoking articles. In practice, that means far-right and politically incorrect news. Nageltjes is a satirical news blog, writing again from a far-right, nationalist and politically incorrect perspective. What these websites all have in common is that they wish to provide a right-wing, Flemish nationalist alternative to the mainstream media. Muslims and Islam and the Left are their favourite targets, although their topics can vary.

Finally, Voorpost is a far-right Flemish-Dutch nationalist movement active in Belgium, the Netherlands and South Africa, founded in 1976 (De Waele, 2013).

We select these media on the basis of their far-right leanings, and the fact that they are still active. The selection of these five websites is based on the work of Fluit (2017), who researched far-right websites on the internet in Belgium. She found that these website operate relatively independently with respect to each other, and to political parties. This is an advantage for this research, as it means that websites will have their own standpoints and perspectives, instead of merely replicating or following a 'main view' of for example Vlaams Belang. This corresponds to the websites' mission statements, as independence from political parties is one of their main goals.

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. Selection of Materials

We confined this analysis to the period between September 2018 and July 2019, since in this period climate change became a big issue in Belgium due to massive climate marches and climate strikes. Moreover, for the far-right in Belgium climate change has not been a salient issue. Therefore, this time period provides the opportunity to analyse the far-right's views on climate change, as they will be urged to offer a coherent and consistent view on the climate. As such, in this period there will be a higher volume of statements we can analyse.

I selected three Twitter accounts per far-right party to analyse the discourse. For Vlaams Belang, I analysed the tweets of the official account of Vlaams Belang, and two leaders of the party: Tom Van Grieken, current president and representing the more moderate wing of the party, and Filip De Winter, long-time figurehead and de facto leader of the radical wing of the party. Van Grieken and De Winter are the most important politicians of Vlaams Belang. While Van Grieken pulls the party into a new direction, de Winter is still very important to large parts of the Vlaams Belang voters, which means he has the support of the party. As such, the combination of these three twitter profiles gives a complete impression of the party's stance on climate change, and how they want to profile themselves.

For N-VA, I analysed the official account of N-VA on Twitter, and two leaders of the party: Bart de Wever, long-time president of the party and a primary factor for their success, and Theo Francken. De Wever is the driving force behind N-VA. He knows the importance of communication and media in imposing one's own political language (Maly, 2016) and often sets the political agenda. Theo Francken was the State Secretary of Asylum and Migration in the Belgian government. In that period, he became one of the most popular politicians of the country. His over-the-top tweets are well-know in Belgium and are often critiqued by other parties. However, as Maly (2016) notes, the party follows one communication line, which means that N-VA always supports Francken.

Analysing these Twitter accounts can give us a good indication of the overall positioning and rhetoric of the political parties involved: since they are the most important and popular accounts, any party ideology and stance will be communicated and reflected there. We selected all tweets that address the topic of climate change.

For the right-wing news media, we searched the websites and selected all articles concerning climate change. We made an exception for Scepter as they are the only website that tries to objectively report on the news (by their own account), instead of giving their own opinion or view on matters. Of course, selection of news is not a neutral undertaking, and from both the selection and word use, we could discern some views of Scepter on climate change. However, most of the articles were too uninformative. Therefore, we selected only opinion pieces and editorials. The other news websites are usually reactions and comments on the news, and thereby reflect more directly the medium's views on climate change. Voorpost, the far-right organisation, does not have online articles available for analysis. Therefore, we analysed their Twitter account, again selecting only tweets concerning climate change.

3.2.2. Conceptual Scheme, Coding and Classification

For the coding, we used the NVivo 12 Pro software. We draw on our theoretical framework to devise a conceptual scheme. This is called inductive category development (Mayring, 2000). It is depicted in Figures 2 and 3.

As we saw in the conceptual chapter, far-right ideologies are defined by their core concept of nativist nationalism. Since we already selected the actors on the basis of their nativism, they by definition belong to the far-right. Therefore, there will not be an overlap with other ideologies that would advocate similar policies. Thus, we only need to judge whether a statement is advocating for far-going policy measures against climate change or not (i.e. whether one is climate sceptic as defined by Van Rensburg (2015) or not).

If one advocates for far-going measures, then we should look if they use arguments in line with Eco-Fascist ideas. If so, they draw on Eco-Fascism, and we code it under Eco-Fascism. If not, then our hypothesis that we stated in our conceptual chapter (far-right actors who advocate far going policy measures will draw on Eco-Fascist ideology) is false, and we code it in the 'Rest' category. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

If one does not advocate for far-going measures (climate sceptic), we categorise the argument according to Van Rensburg's (2015) typology, which one can see in Figure 3.

As we are interested in how both Eco-Fascism and radical-right populism how they reflect ideas on development, we create subcategories named 'Development' for each category, as seen in Figures 2 and 3.

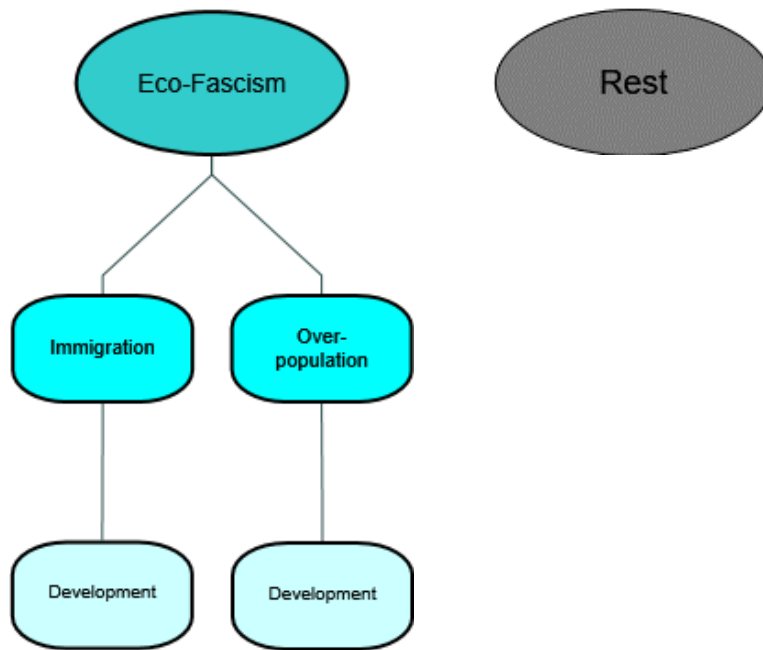


Figure 2: Conceptual and Coding Framework of Eco-Fascism

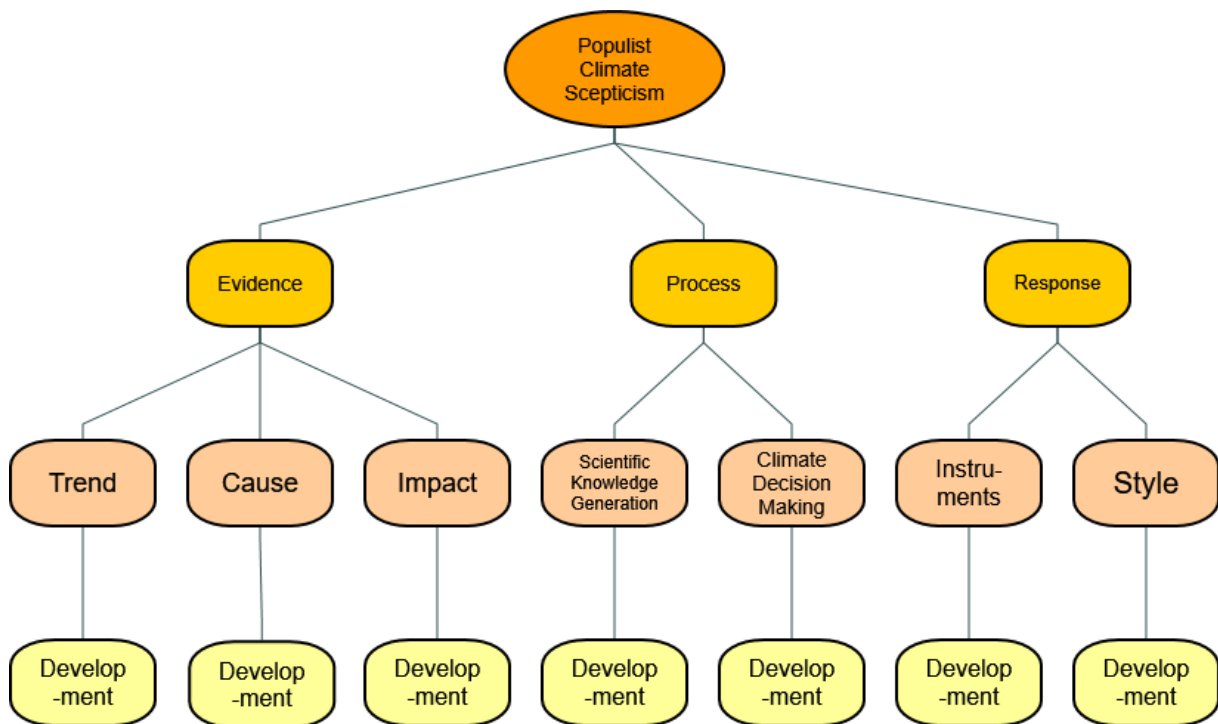


Figure 3: Conceptual and Coding Framework of Populist Climate Scepticism, largely based on Van Rensburg (2015)

3.2.3. Descriptive Statistics

Out of thousands of tweets and hundreds of articles we selected all the tweets and articles related to climate change. In Table one, we can see the amount of references per actor.

<i>Actor</i>	<i>Files</i>	<i>References</i>
<i>Vlaams Belang</i>	4	23
<i>N-VA</i>	3	53
<i>Dwarsliggers</i>	14	134
<i>Nageltjes</i>	9	31
<i>Scepter</i>	2	17
<i>ReactNieuws</i>	6	11
<i>Voorpost</i>	1	3

Table 1: Number of Files and References per Actor. One Twitter Account Counts as One File.

For Vlaams Belang, for example, we analysed four files, which contained 23 references to climate change. In this case, these four files are the three Twitter accounts plus one video file referenced to on Twitter by Filip De Winter, where he discusses climate mitigation measures. It becomes clear that Dwarsliggers had the most to say about climate change. It has to be noted, though, that some references should be coded at multiple nodes. For example, the hypothetical statement ‘Scientists conceal the real evidence, yet the media report their results uncritically’ is one reference but it should be coded both under the objects ‘Scientific Knowledge Generation’ and ‘Climate Decision Making Process’.

3.3. Results

A general overview of far-right climate change communication can best be illustrated in hierarchy charts. The end of this dissertation contains an annex with a small, random selection of statements for all the coded categories. Although there were too many statements to include all of them, it should help get a better grasp of the kinds of statements under review, and our categorisations³.

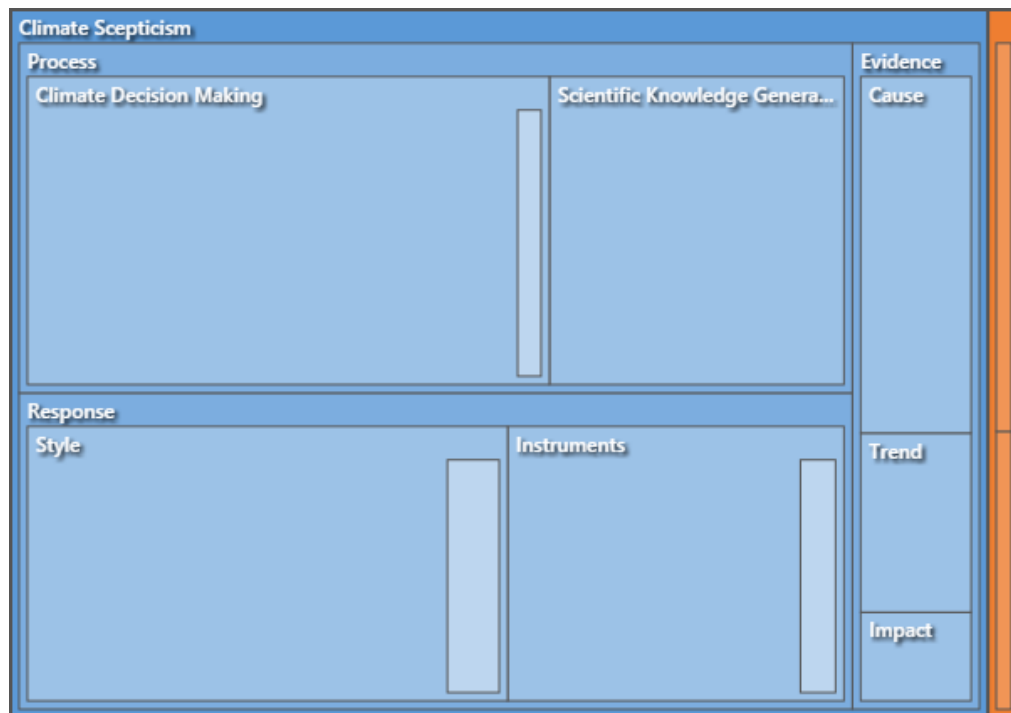


Figure 4: Far-Right Discourse in Belgium

The hierarchy chart is a way to visualise the amount of coded references within a category and compare that amount to other categories. The larger the square of a category, the more statements/references belong to that category. For example, the square of process scepticism is a lot larger than the square of evidence scepticism, which means that more statements are (coded as) process sceptic than evidence sceptic.

³ These statements are all in Dutch, as it is too time intensive to translate them all. However, whenever an explicit reference is made in the text, the statement will be translated and either used in the text or referenced to in the footnote.

The blue area encompasses all statements categorised as radical-right populist climate sceptic, while the orange area encompasses all statements categorised as Eco-Fascist climate belief (according to previous definitions). The lightest shade of blue shows the amount of statements within their respective categories that mention development of the Global South.

An example can illustrate this: *'And geographer Jan Nyssen of the Ugent confirms in the radio talkshow 'The world today' the statement of Van der Aa. The latter person points his finger to what he calls the 'aid-industry' who keep exploiting the issue of global warming. 'It's the aid organisations that keep hammering away about droughts and global warming' (Dwarsliggers, 2019).*

This statement reflects climate decision making scepticism, as they perceive an industry behind climate change that is manipulating the issue for their own purposes. Secondly, there is a reference to development, as aid organisations (for example NGO's or USAID) are explicitly seen as one of the industries driving the importance of climate change. In this case we code the statement as climate decision making scepticism, and additionally we code it under development.

By describing Figure 4, we can already get a picture of far-right climate change communication. Firstly, in our coding scheme we mentioned a 'rest' category, in case the far-right proposed far going climate actions. However, we have not come across such far-right policies, that do not conform to the Eco-Fascist framework and argumentation. This is reflected in Figure 4, as there are only two categories, populist climate scepticism and Eco-Fascist climate belief. If a statement would have belonged to a third 'Rest' category, it would have shown in the figure. We will come back to this finding in our discussion.

Secondly, Figure 4 shows how (populist) climate sceptic statements by far outnumber the (Eco-Fascist) climate belief statements⁴. We can also see that process and response scepticism greatly outnumber evidence scepticism and that process and response scepticism are almost equally often used. Within process scepticism, the climate decision making process plays a larger role, while within response scepticism, the policy style plays a larger role. Within evidence scepticism, cause-scepticism is shown the most often. Figure 5 shows that within Eco-Fascism overpopulation and immigration both play a large role.

⁴ See the Annex for more examples.

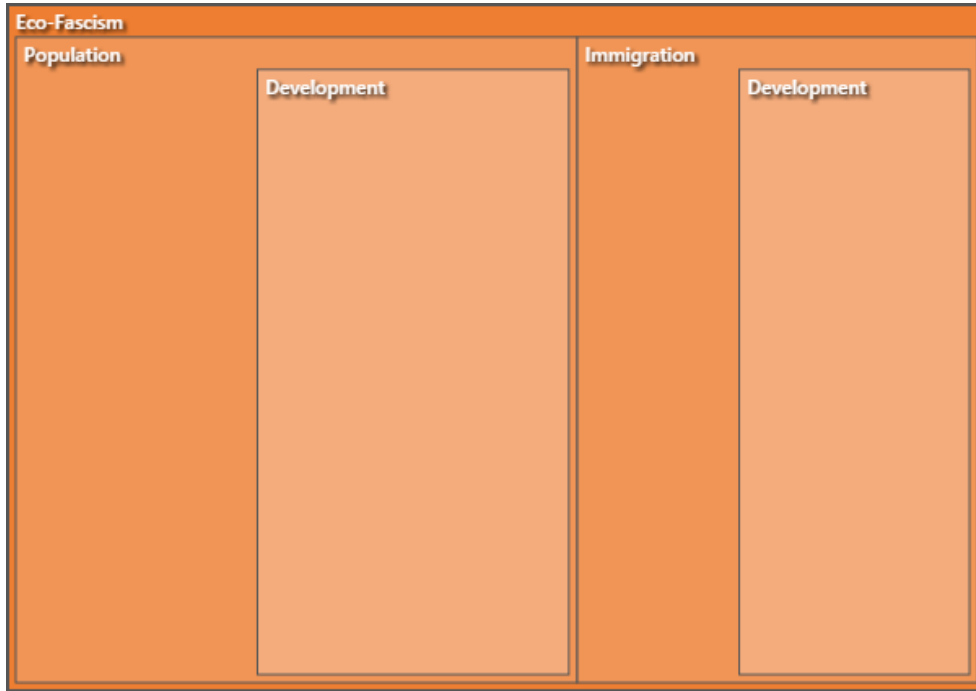


Figure 5: Discourse Within Eco-Fascism

We also find that within climate scepticism, statements rarely reflect ideas on development or the Global South (the lightest blue boxes are quite small in Figure 4), and evidence scepticism never reflects them. Within the Eco-Fascist ideas, statements proportionately more often reflect such ideas (light orange boxes are quite large in Figure 5).

These figures combine the whole discourse of all the actors. It could also be useful to compare the discourse of different actors.

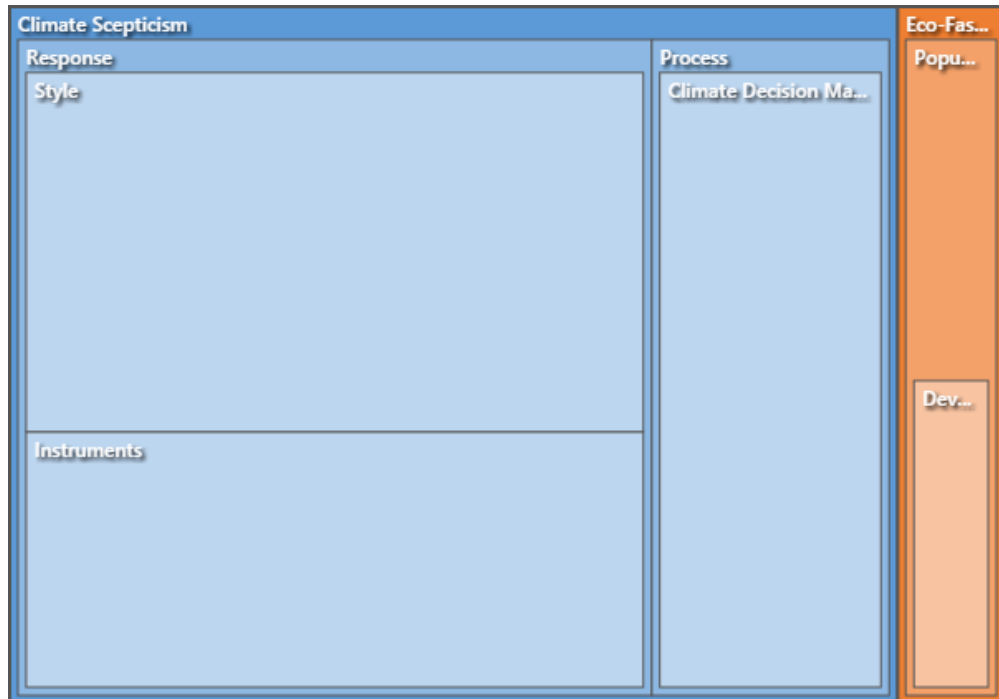


Figure 6: Vlaams Belang Discourse

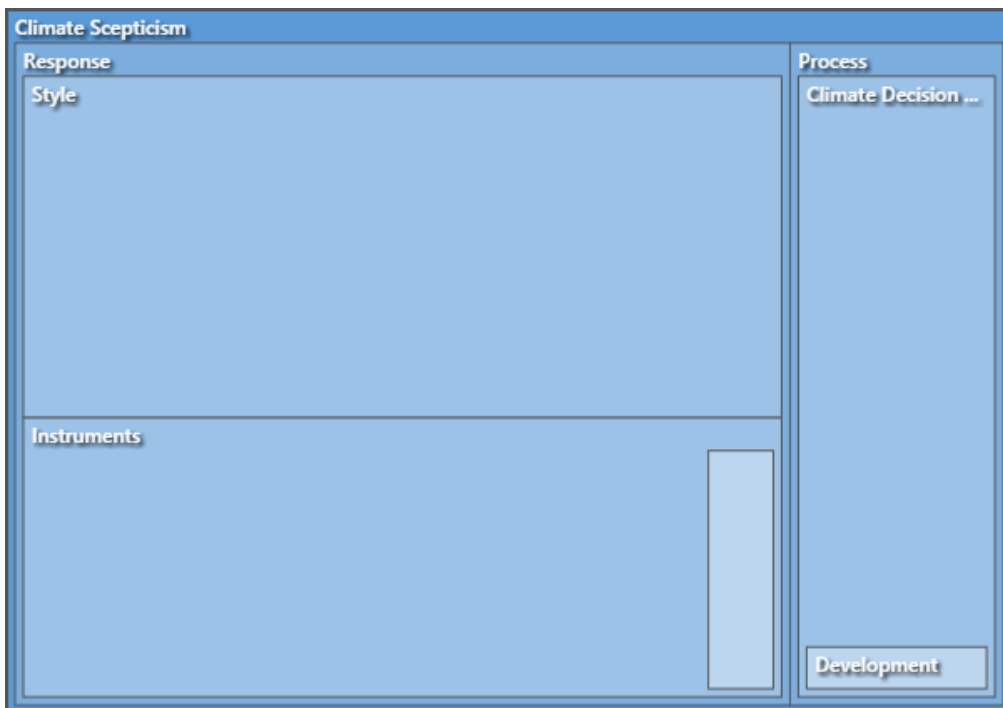


Figure 7: N-VA Discourse

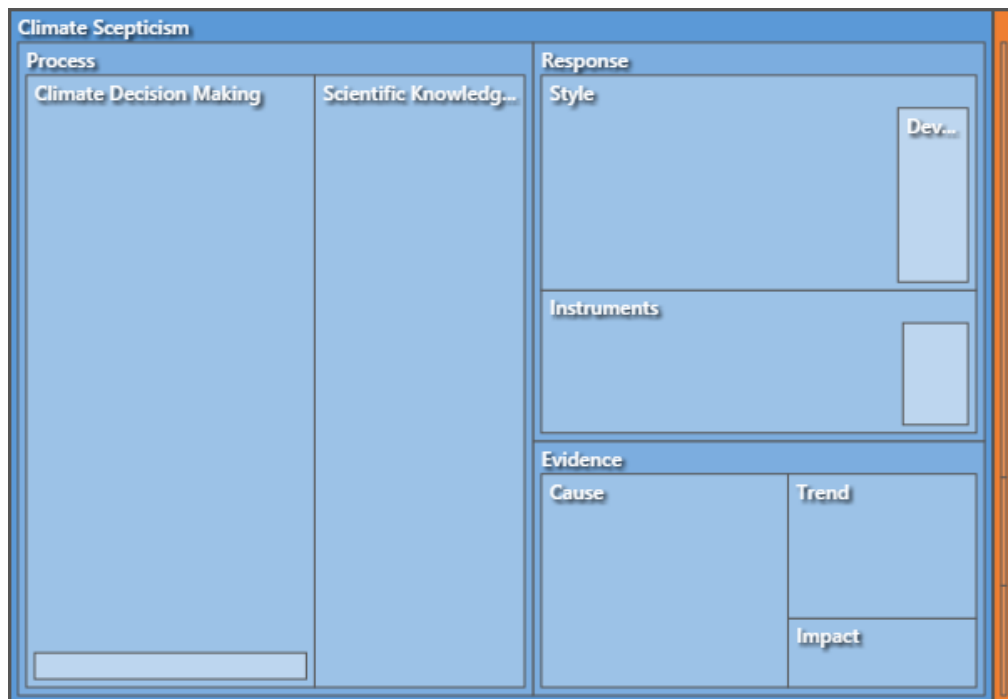


Figure 8: Other Far-Right Actors Discourse

The discourse of Vlaams Belang is represented in Figure 6. We can see that they combine populist climate sceptic and Eco-Fascist climate belief, although the scepticism features more prominently. We also see that their sceptic discourse does not reflect ideas on development, while their Eco-Fascist arguments do. Furthermore, response scepticism is the most prominent, while the Vlaams Belang does not show any evidence scepticism in their discourse.

N-VA, on the other hand, has only climate sceptic discourse, as shown in Figure 7. Within that discourse, response scepticism is most pronounced. Again, no evidence scepticism is shown. In contrast to Vlaams Belang, their sceptic claims do reflect ideas on development (which we will look into later).

The discourse of other far-right actors, which include all the news websites and the Twitter account of the organisation Voorpost, is portrayed in Figure 8. We can see that all the evidence scepticism comes from these organisations, however, process scepticism is the most often used form of scepticism. Ideas on development are mostly reflected within response scepticism.

3.4. Discussion

In this section, we will dive deeper into our results and the far-right discourse. We will first discuss the general findings, and then look at how development is reflected within that discourse.

3.4.1. General Findings

Firstly, our results confirm our initial assumption that when far-right actors advocate far-going climate action and regulations, they draw on Eco-Fascist ideas. Admittedly, what counts as far-going is up for (political) debate. As response scepticism is not related to the core sceptic arguments but to policy responses, different ideologies can see different solutions (Van Rensburg, 2015). We classified eco-modern responses as ‘policy instrument’ scepticism, or ‘policy style’ scepticism, depending on its focus. However, some sceptics see eco-modernism as too intrusive (Anshelm and Hultman, 2014), while most leftists would see it as completely insufficient. In any case, we have not found any support for any climate policies other than the eco-modernist response of reason, nuclear technology and innovation, or the Eco-Fascist responses of restricting immigration and fighting overpopulation.

The fact that N-VA has only Eco-Fascist statement (not visible in figure 7), could be reflective of their more moderate stance vis-à-vis Vlaams Belang.

Secondly, we find that the far-right in Belgium far more shows climate sceptic discourse than climate belief discourse, as shown in Figure 4. This is in line with previous the previous findings of Lockwood (2018), Forchtner, Kroneder and Wetzels (2018), and Forchtner and Özvatan (In press). It seems that the ideological feature of nativist nationalism, combined with populism, increase the likelihood of being a climate sceptic. In terms of our conceptual framework, we can say that the core features of nativist nationalism and populism imply (but not definitively determine) a certain conception of the adjacent concept ‘nature’, in which one is sceptic of climate change.

Thirdly, it is interesting to look more in depth at which arguments and rhetoric are used to legitimise climate scepticism and see whether that corresponds with our theoretical framework. In our framework, we noted some general aspects of why radical-right populism is ill-equipped to deal with climate change: it is a threat to their conservative identity and nationalism, it is complex and distant, as is the realm of science, and it leads to ontological insecurity. The more specific ways in which it could materialise in their discourse are the untrustworthiness of the scientific world (scientific knowledge generation), the pushing of climate change by a left-wing, internationalist elite (climate decision making process), and populist climate justice (that encompasses eco-modernism).

To that end, we first note how important process and response scepticism are, especially for the political parties. This is in line with Cann and Raymond's (2018) findings, who found that attacks on climate scientists and politicians and economic damages are often used by climate sceptics (process and response scepticism), while evidence scepticism was diminished. They offer the explanation that as the science has become increasingly certain on climate change, sceptics will change their framing to other more vulnerable aspects of climate change. This in essence a strategical explanation. Although it is likely a part of the equation, I would also dare to suggest that process and response scepticism fit better in the radical-right populist ideology than evidence scepticism does.

Now we wish to explore the main themes present within sceptical radical-right communication on climate change. In line with Forchtner and Özvatan (in press), we identify major structures in far-right climate change communication, that is, we '*carve out an inconclusive list of typical (often implicit) patterns of justification present in far-right environmental communication*' (p. 223). They adopt a discourse-analytical approach, by first looking at the salience of certain far-right environmental topics (similar in the way we categorised climate change communication and illustrated their quantitative salience in hierarchy charts) and then analysing the main arguments within that discourse. We follow their approach by looking through all statements, and reviewing whether we encounter some recurring, key arguments.

Firstly, within evidence and scientific knowledge generation process scepticism, other than disputing the evidence, the flaws in the models, cognitive dissonance of scientists and the absence and irrelevance of a consensus in science are often mentioned, often within the context of the flaws of the IPCC. This is only done by the websites, not the political parties.

We translate some examples to illustrate our point: *'That the earth is warming is still correct, at least for the northern part (a sceptic wouldn't disagree here), but the evolution is very slow (0,6 to 1,3°C/100 years) compared to the IPCC-projections and has remained quasi constant over the last 15 years. The IPCC portrays this as a 'pause' or 'hiatus': the model is not wrong, the climate is.'* (Dwarsliggers, 2018).

This statement is an example of trend scepticism, as they disagree on the trend of global warming (i.e. the rate at which the planet is warming). It is also an example of scientific knowledge generation process scepticism, as the models of the IPCC, and their treatment of the models, is incorrect in their opinion.

Secondly, sceptics claim that the politics of climate change are dominated by left-wing, elite interests. According to these sceptics, the Left and especially the Greens are manufacturing a climate hysteria and a new climate religion, which causes dogmatic thinking. The Left's policies are also portrayed as economically harmful that and impacting people's everyday life. The N-VA often used the term 'a tsunami of taxes' to attack the Green climate proposals. The Right also frequently uses the term climate alarmists.

'Climate and energy politics have nothing to with science, but with ideology. The same ideology that promised the perfect paradise and to make the humans, society and now also the climate formable. If only we want it enough. More than 100 million deaths and a hell on earth were the consequences of that ideology in the last century. Are we making that same mistake again with the Green climate politics? (Dwarsliggers, 2018).

'Wealth tax will also hit the average Flemish person. Tsunami of taxes. No realistic solutions for the climate. Severe economic damage. With the regards of the Greens!' (Theo Francken, 2019).

'What's especially warming is my brain when I have to hear the Greens espouse that we are not allowed to eat meat and drink milk anymore, we're not allowed to drive the car and have to pay taxes on airplane travels' (Tom van Grieken, 2019).

These statements show respectively climate decision making process scepticism, style scepticism and instrument scepticism, and all have in common that they see the Greens or the Left pushing their own climate agenda which will harm the people.

Meanwhile, the students that are striking for the climate are being manipulated by the left, and left-wing teachers. Furthermore, the media serve the left-wing interests by uncritically spreading this propaganda. These are all forms of process and response scepticism.

'That so many manipulated youth and kids are supporting the climate marches is worrying, and not, as the media write, hopeful! It would have been better to teach them some respect for nature and surroundings than to encourage them to protest about matters and political subjects they don't know anything about. Because what else should we think of when we hear, for example, 'The World Bank should print money to sponsor climate policies and Belgium should ban multinationals like MacDonaldis, as the seventeen-year-old Anuna de Wever stated. And all those smartphones and their apps? Ignorance fait la Force!' (Dwarsliggers, 2019)

As opposed to that, the far-right offers rational and logical responses. These responses are not ideological and dogmatic but scientific. There seems to be a gender component to this as well: the calm assured man will take the lead, bringing security and stability to the land, while the feminine left will be led by emotions and hysteria.

'And again, Almaci (president of the Green party) is solving her absence of solutions and knowledge through hysterical, unreasonable behaviour. But you can't squeal the CO₂ away. Doesn't work.' (Theo Francken, 2019)

Finally, the far-right present themselves as victims. Left-wing ideas and views are seen to be privileged in society, while the far-right sceptics are shunned, marginalised and attacked. Perhaps the following example touches upon some core issues of climate scepticism:

'It leads me to say the Gramscian junta has almost succeeded in amputating our critical reasoning, it's busy with demolishing the identity of the West. The white man, of middle age, with a job, kids and a house, is seriously guilty. To what, no one knows, thus to everything. The own traditions are bad and we all have to learn from the most progressive of the progressives: the Islam. In that same vain lies the following politically correct opinion, though factually wrong: CO₂ is a poison that will make the world melt'. (Dwarsliggers, 2019).

We can see that our framework was adequate. Although part of our general reasons cannot be empirically tested, the victimhood argument indicates that conservative identities are threatened by climate change. The (eco-modern) emphasis on security, stability and reasonableness could also serve to combat the ontological insecurity it poses.

More specifically, the untrustworthiness of the scientific world is was a big theme for the far-right websites, as predicted. Furthermore, the Left and especially the greens, as well as the media feature as the elite and the ‘bogeymen’, orchestrating the whole issue, which was also foreseen. Additionally, the economic harm of climate policies proposed by the Left is important because it fits within the frame of economic populist justice.

Our findings are in line with Forchtner, Kroneder and Wetzels (2018) and Forchtner and Özdoğan (in press), who found the same themes. Furthermore, they are in line with Cochez and Walraven’s (2019) findings on climate sceptic discourse in Belgium.

We thus find that there are inherent ideological reasons for the climate scepticism of the radical-right populists, and that these are reflected in their discourse. The Left, the media and scientists are the perpetrators of a harmful climate agenda, an agenda that will harm the economy, and people’s pocketbooks. There also seem to be some connections with this ideology representing the defence of certain masculine and conservative identities.

3.4.2. Eco-Fascism, Radical-Right Populism and Development

Let's first see how Eco-Fascism relates to development and the Global South.

Firstly, we discuss immigration. We wrote that there are three reasons to oppose immigration out of ecological reasons, according to Eco-Fascists. The first is that only natives can care for their homeland, which often implicates that non-whites are not ecological subjects. The second is that migration increases population, and the third that immigrants emit more CO_2 when they are in developing countries. We found all these in the rhetoric of the far-right, although, admittedly, such statements were rather sparse compared to the amount of sceptic claims.

One of the only two references by Voorpost on the climate was a tweet stating that stopping immigration is the best way to care about the climate⁵. Theo Francken tweeted that the increasing population is primarily caused by the increasing immigration, which will have a serious carbon footprint⁶, while Nageltjes wrote the ecological footprint of a citizen in Africa is many times lower than of a European citizen, therefore 'importing' Africans is ecologically unsustainable⁷. In that same article of Nageltjes, they linked their anti-immigration stance explicitly to the supposed anti-ecological ideology of Islam and Muslims. They write that *'Whenever Islam is in power, nature changes into a desert'* (Nageltjes, 2019).

Secondly, only Filip De Winter made references to overpopulation. He does so in textbook style of an Eco-Fascist, claiming that the real problem is not the emission diesel cars or the CO_2 that cows emit (cows emit methane, not CO_2). Rather, it is the overpopulation in third world countries that is the real problem. De Winter proposes conditional aid, whereby aid only reaches countries that are willing to promote birth control:

⁵ *'The best environmental policy for our country is stopping immigration. Care for the climate, go for an immigration stop! <https://t.co/IJluTfhAtU>'* (Voorpost, 2019)

⁶ *'Fast population growth in the Netherlands continues and is mostly migration related. [...] Fast growth has serious consequences for ecological footprint, environment, nature, congestion, ... <https://t.co/nVO7rzUzkK>'* (Francken, 2019)

⁷ *'I suspect that the those [...] protesting girls are of opinion that we should welcome those 'poor refugees' from Arabic and African conflict areas with open arms. That something like that is irreconcilable with their goal to do something about global warming is apparently not entering their brains. The ecological footprint of a Sub-Saharan African is around 8 times lower than one of a European inhabitant. [...]'* (Nageltjes, 2019)

'The biggest problem is not the CO₂ of cars or cows, who emit too much. The biggest problem for the climate is a gigantic increase in the world's population. [...]. It means restricting the population [growth] through birth control, especially in third world countries where the population boom is exponential right now. For example, by making sure that we don't give development aid to third world countries, without those countries promising to commit to birth control'. (De Winter, 2019)

These statements thus all fit within the Eco-Fascist framework we outlined previously. Whenever the far-right does propose far going climate policies, they reflect an Eco-Fascist ideology. They diminish their own role in climate change and target non-white, non-Western people and regions with their critique, attributing fault only to those regions. There is a paternalistic view where aid is seen as a way to either put pressure on developing countries, or to 'make them learn the hard way'.

It is interesting that actors simultaneously show populist climate scepticism and Eco-Fascist climate belief, although the sceptical claims far outnumber the acceptance of climate change. This could point to the fact that for the far-right, extreme nationalism are core components of their ideology, while the climate is not. Therefore, they will fit climate change however they can to their core ideology. The fact that they are more often climate sceptic could indeed lie with the material, symbolical and aesthetical difficulties of climate change in far-right imaginaries and ideologies, as outlined by Forchtner and Kolvraa (2015), in addition to the ideological connections between climate change and (radical-right) populism explored in this thesis.

It corresponds with Hamilton's (2010) claim that we filter information in such a way that it confirms their world view. Climate change is a creating cognitive dissonance with actors on the far-right, which is why they are sceptics. However, perhaps out of strategic reasons, but also out of ideological reasons, when the dissonance becomes too large (the rising impacts of climate change, the increasing consensus, et cetera), they adapt climate change to fit their core concepts, which then corresponds with Eco-Fascism.

We continue with researching how radical-right populism reflects on development. Most of the statements are coming from the far-right websites. From the political parties, we found only two arguments:

Firstly, Theo Francken links climate policies of the left with failed or dictatorial policies from the Global South. These are the proposal of the Greens to print money to combat climate change, which Francken compares to the failed policies of Idi Amin Dada⁸, and the communism of China⁹. Nageltjes echoed that sentiment, claiming the poor will have to suffer from similar policies, as in Venezuela, and that only nuclear energy could solve the issue¹⁰.

Secondly, Geert Bourgeois (from the N-VA) argues that climate policies should be dealt with internationally, without hurting Europe's economic competitiveness¹¹.

The websites had more to say, however. Their main arguments are the following:

Firstly, climate policies are a way for developing countries to take money from developed countries. Secondly, developing countries are not complying to the Paris agreements and thirdly, the countries in the Global South are the largest polluters, while Belgium is irrelevant. Although we select a few examples, these arguments were prominent when mentioning development.

'The annual climate festivals -the famous COP-meetings- are for the most third world countries great opportunities they can't miss out on.' (Dwarsliggers, 2019)

'Dries & Friends (referencing the neo-fascist youth group Schild & Vrienden) were carrying a sign that argued for nuclear energy as least polluting energy source and that the biggest polluters are in Asia and Africa. The do-gooders quickly went bonkers.' (ReactNieuws, 2019)

Furthermore, Dwarsliggers reference to Gerbert van der Aa saying that the Ngo's and development industry are milking the climate change cash cow and that they are the ones pushing for this agenda (see page 48). Additionally, both Nageltjes and Dwarsliggers claim that banning polluting cars is ineffective, as they would just be transported to Africa and used there^{12/13}.

⁸ *'It's good that the Greens give clarity: they want, just like the climate kids, print money to save the climate. With respect to economic intelligence, it puts them in the same category as Idi Amin Dada. [...]'*

⁹ *'Communism is better for our climate. Like in China.'* (Francken, 2019)

¹⁰ *'The Green left-wing ideas primarily harm the poor. And don't think you'll be able to make the rich pay. Just look for example at Venezuela.'* (Nageltjes, 2018)

¹¹ *'The fable that we're not doing anything has to stop. Flanders is going for a CO2 reduction of 35%! And for Europe we see a global role: there has to be a level playing field with China, USA, ...' – Geert Bourgeois (N-VA, 2019)*

¹² *'Similar is the export of all banned cars from here to developing countries, who will drive there on dirty oil as taxis for fifty years.'* (Nageltjes, 2019)

¹³ *'Now diesel cars have to be removed from here [...] and shipped to Africa to pollute there.'* (Dwarsliggers, 2019)

The small amount of references to developing countries is rather surprising. We could have perhaps expected more, as other countries, or an internationalist elite, are an easy target for nationalists. We do indeed see that the Global South is often mentioned in a negative light. These countries are seen as the major causes of global warming, as untrustworthy and a threat to the West's wealth.

The other major theme is the failed climate policy of the Left, which are reflected in the Global South. It seems therefore that the Right (in Belgium) prefers to attack the Left 'elite', both with and without mentioning the Global South.

In our theoretical framework we saw six possible connections between radical-right populism and development: no international solidarity, scepticism towards international climate agreements and compliance, the 'right to development' as unfair, against climate change as a grounds for asylum, unfair economic advantages for the Global South (economic populist justice) and a belief in modernisation theory.

We do find these some of these themes in the discourse of far-right actors in Belgium. Especially the scepticism towards international agreements and the untrustworthiness of developing countries were prominent, which resonates with the nationalism and populism of the far-right. The argument that banned cars will just be used in Africa indicates a scepticism about the South's development trajectory, as they will necessarily pollute in the coming decades. A level economic playing field was also stressed.

Interestingly, the role of the Global South within Eco-Fascist discourse is similar to the role of the Global South within the radical-right populist discourse: it serves to legitimise one's own society and deflect its failings onto others. Whether the Global South is seen as the locus of the main climate change causes, as corrupt and in bad faith, or as a place where incapable governments design failed (left-wing) policies, it is always seen in a negative light. This could reflect the scepticism of nationalist with respect to international cooperation, but it could also mean that the Global South acts as a scapegoat to defer the attention from other regions and responsibilities.

4. Conclusion

We set out to explore the ideologies of the far-right in relation to climate change. We proposed that whenever the far-right would be in favour of far going climate policies, they would draw on Eco-Fascist ideology, while whenever they would not be in favour of far going climate policies, they would draw on radical-right populism. We also set out to see how development and the Global South were seen within that intersection of the far-right and climate change.

We firstly explored Eco-Fascism and found that immigration and overpopulation were seen as the major causes of climate change. We also found racist undertones, as the developing countries and coloured people were seen as the major drivers of climate change.

Afterwards, we looked into radical-right populism and climate scepticism, and found ideological connections between the two, especially relating to the climate agenda being pushed by the Left, and how harmful far going policies would be for the people. Views on the Global South were mostly reflected in the scepticism towards international agreements and the importance of a level playing field, instead of favouring the Global South.

Our empirical analysis of the far-right discourse in Flanders largely confirmed these findings. As this is a topic that is still not much explored, much future research can be done. One interesting subject could be the overlap between far-right and libertarian conservative ideology and discourse. Furthermore, research from other disciplines could test some of our general connections between radical-right populism and climate change scepticism. Finally, our research was necessarily confined to a particular timeframe in a particular context. Testing the generalisability of these finding would be a very interesting undertaking.

This research also aimed to be societally relevant. We hope this paper informs citizens, activists and policy makers on the specific ideology and discourse of the far-right relating to climate change, which improves our understanding of these matters, and helps create a better strategy to counteract these ideologies and actors, and the climate breakdown our society is facing. More specifically, by understanding the themes of the far-right discourse, we can understand to which kinds of sentiments and grievances they are responding and find a way to respond to them differently. For example, the fear of economic losses was a clear theme in radical-right populist ideology. Therefore, others should focus on a just climate transition, and offer people the hope and belief that another world is indeed possible.

5. References

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6. Annex

Eco-Fascism:

Overpopulation:

Filip de Winter:

Het grote probleem is niet de uitstoot van een dieselwagen of koeien die te veel CO2 uitstoten. Het grootste probleem voor het klimaat is de gigantische toename van de wereldbevolking

Dat betekent het inperken van de bevolking door geboortebeperking, zeker in de derdewereldlanden waar de bevolkingsexplosie op dit moment exponentieel is. Door bijvoorbeeld te zorgen dat er geen ontwikkelingshulp meer gegeven wordt aan derdewereldlanden, zonder dat die landen zich engageren tot geboortebeperking.

Neem nu Nigeria als voorbeeld. De problemen zijn er gigantisch op het vlak van milieuproblematiek, maar ook op vlak onderontwikkeling.

Theo Francken:

Snelle bevolkingsgroei in Nederland zet door en blijft vooral migratie-gerelateerd.

De laatste jaren komen er elk jaar ongeveer 100.000 mensen bij, een stad zo groot als Delft of Deventer.

Snelle groei heeft grote gevolgen voor ecologische voetafdruk, milieu, natuur, congestie ...
<https://t.co/nVO7rzUzkK>

Immigration:

Nageltjes:

Ik vermoed ook dat die zeventig procent betogende meisjes van mening zijn dat “arme vluchtelingen” uit de Arabische en Afrikaanse conflictgebieden met open armen verwelkomd moeten worden. Dat zoiets haaks staat op hun doelstelling om iets te doen aan de klimaatopwarming dringt blijkbaar niet tot de bakvishoofdjes door. De ecologische voetafdruk van een Sub-Sahara-Afrikaan is ongeveer acht keer kleiner dan die van een inwoner in Europa. Door massaal die Sub-Sahara Afrikanen in Europa te importeren verhoog je dus significant de ecologische druk op de planeet. Elke geïmporteerde “arme vluchteling” op het Europese continent doet de klimaatopwarming stijgen – met catastrofale gevolgen. Strijden tegen klimaatopwarming en opvangen van Arabische of Afrikaanse vluchtelingen in Europa staan dus haaks op elkaar. Maar ik maak me geen enkele illusie dat zoiets ooit tot de “idealistische” hoofdjes van de bakvisjes die “betogen voor het klimaat” zou doordringen.

Sinds wanneer is het mohammedanisme een schoolvoorbeeld van ecologische zorgzaamheid? Wie objectief de ecologische situatie bekijkt in het overgrote deel van de moslimlanden – van Noord-Afrika tot Indonesië – wéét dat het geloof in Allah en de zorg voor de planeet absoluut niet samengaan. Ook al proberen propagandistische boekjes ons van het tegendeel te overtuigen. Waar de islam de macht krijgt – verandert de natuur in woestijn. Het is dan ook niet voor niets een woestijn-godsdienst. Planten en dieren hebben in het mohammedaans antropocentrisme geen ziel.

Theo Francken:

Snelle bevolkingsgroei in Nederland zet door en blijft vooral migratie-gerelateerd.

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Snelle groei heeft grote gevolgen voor ecologische voetafdruk, milieu, natuur, congestie ...
<https://t.co/nVO7rzUzkK>

Voorpost:

De beste milieumaatregel voor ons land is het stoppen van de immigratie.

Geef om het klimaat, ga voor een immigratiestop! <https://t.co/IJluTfhAtU>

Radical-right populist climate scepticism:

Evidence Scepticism:

Nageltjes:

Tom Harris, directeur van de International Climate Science Coalition, verwees naar een uitspraak gedaan door de Canadese klimatoloog Tim Ball.

Die heeft gezegd dat het in de afgelopen 10.000 jaar vrijwel altijd warmer is geweest dan nu.

Meteoroloog Stanley B. Goldenberg citeerde uit een alarmerend rapport van de American Meteorological Society, waarin wordt gesteld dat het meeste ijs op aarde binnen nu en enkele jaren zal smelten en dat de meeste kuststeden als gevolg van de zeespiegelstijging onbewoonbaar zullen worden.

Het rapport is geschreven in november 1922. “Raad eens wat er daarna gebeurde,” zei Goldenberg. “De aarde koelde af.”

Emeritus hoogleraar Richard A. Keen van de Universiteit van Colorado vulde de uitspraak van dr. Ball aan en wees erop dat het sinds het ontstaan van de aarde bijna altijd warmer is geweest dan nu.

Uit het geologische bewijs blijkt dat er in de afgelopen 4,65 miljard jaar gedurende vijf tot 10 procent van die tijd substantiële hoeveelheden ijs op aarde waren, aldus Keen.

Harris voegde daaraan toe dat de CO₂-waarden niet eerder zo laag waren als nu.

CO₂ heeft niets met het klimaat te maken. Onze atmosfeer bestaat voor:

– 78% uit stikstof – 21% uit zuurstof – 1% uit edelgassen – 0,038% is CO₂

Van deze 0,038% produceert de natuur 96% zélf. De mens staat voor de resterende 4%. De invloed van de mens in zijn geheel op CO₂ staat dus welgeteld voor 0,00152%.

Dwarsliggers:

Men spreekt niet over de weerfenomenen zoals koude zomers en natte, milde winters die zouden veroorzaakt worden door de Noord-Atlantische Oscillatie (NAO) en het Oost-Atlantische Patroon (EA), althans volgens gezaghebbende bronnen onder leiding van prof. Ivan Janssens van de Universiteit van Antwerpen (07 juni 2016).

Maar ook variaties in de jaarlijkse baan van de aarde om de zon zou een impact hebben op het klimaat.

Waar zijn de heerlijke ijstijdvoorspellingen van de jaren zeventig? Door al dat opgehoopte ijs zou de zeespiegel dramatisch dalen. We zouden strandvolleybal kunnen spelen in de Noordzee want die zou grotendeels droogvallen. Nu blijkt plots de ijstijd voorbij en gaat het over de opwarming van de aarde en de verhoging van het zeewaterpeil. Dat zal wel, doch weer maar eens een ecocatastrofe die ons te wachten staat?

Dat slaat natuurlijk op niets. Voor het ogenblik stijgt het zeeniveau volgens maregrafen met 1 millimeter per jaar. Dat zou volgens François Gervais, 8 cm in honderd jaar betekenen. En hoe komt het dat de landmassa van sommige eilanden, zoals bij de Marshall-eilanden, ‘groeit’? Van de 27 Pacifische Eilanden heeft 14 procent landmassa verloren en bij 43 procent is er een toename, en de rest is stabiel gebleven.⁷ Heel die bangmakerij van de zeespiegelstijging werd nogmaals ontkracht (maart 2019) in een rapport genaamd Zeespiegelmonitor 2018 door het gerenommeerde Nederlandse kennisinstituut Deltares. Volgens Fedor Baart ‘zien we nog steeds dezelfde stijging als toen we in 1890 begonnen met nauwkeurige metingen’. (de Volkskrant) Trouwens een deel van de gemeten stijging is overigens het gevolg van een normale bodemdaling van 4,5 cm per eeuw. In 2018 is de zeespiegel aan de Nederlandse kust ten opzichte van 2017 met 7,2 mm gedaald.

Het waren waarschijnlijk de cycli die de intensiteit en de verdeling van de instraling van het zonlicht op aarde bepaalden en die zijn daarmee over langere perioden gezien in belangrijke mate verantwoordelijk voor de variaties in het klimaat en de klimaatverandering.⁸ Toen zeker geen uitstotingen door menselijke activiteiten of nijlpaarden- en olifantenscheten!...

In de jaren rond 1945 toen het verbruik van steenkool, petroleum en gas op zijn hoogtepunt waren zakte de temperatuur gedurende dertig jaar et dat terwijl de uitstoot van CO₂ verhoogde. En wie zegt wat de juiste temperatuur is voor de planeet? Al Gore?

Trouwens de verhoging van het CO₂ heeft ook benefieke consequenties voor mens, dier en plant die gewoonlijk

verzwegen worden of niet geweten zijn

Climate Decision Making:

Dwarsliggers:

Nu dare-dare enkele wetten stemmen, grondwetten aanpassen, petitie lanceren en het bedje spreiden onder druk van politiek en gesubsidieerde bedrijven en zo de burgers opzadelen met belastingverhogingen en verkeerde keuzes (aan de juiste kant van de geschiedenis, weet u) zijn zeker geen goede maatregelen om een ernstig klimaat (en milieu) -beleid uit te tekenen.

Vooraf in de debatten waar de tegenspraak volkomen afwezig is, vooral ook omdat klimaatactivisten zonder enige tegenspraak volkomen ongegronde standpunten verkondigen. Is het nut van tegenspraak ook niet dat men zo tot diepere inzichten komt? Maar ja, activisten schijnen niet geïnteresseerd te zijn in diepere inzichten, wel in het absolute 'eigen gelijk en de vernedering van de tegenstander'. (Rob Lemeire)

De krant De Morgen (31 januari 2019) had er heel wat inkt voor over om reuzegroot te kunnen titelen: 'Actievoerders hebben groot gelijk': 3.455 Academics drukken politici met de neus op de feiten. Die stuurden een open brief 'aan de Regeringen in België om hen te vragen meer ambitie te tonen in hun klimaatbeleid'. Als je dan toch wil uitpakken met het gezag van het getal, kan men dan ook verduidelijken hoeveel van die academics relevante ervaring hebben? Hoeveel pedagogen, psychologen, filosofen en sociologen zaten er bij? Hoeveel onder hen hebben alle wetenschappelijke data bestudeerd vooraleer ze de open brief ondertekenden, vraagt Dominique Laridon zich af.

Voeg daarbij het schuldig verzuim van politici en de media die meegaan in een religie zonder zélf de moeite te doen om het debat een kans te geven, en dan weet u wie de democraat is en voor wie de democratie slechts een (electoraal) schaamlapje is

Kortom, een journalist mag zijn boekje te buiten gaan zo lang hij/zij dat doet binnen de krijtlijnen van de consensus over wat goed is en wat niet goed is. In dit geval mag stemmen voor Groen aangemoedigd worden, maar het omgekeerde niet.

En de fameuze film An Inconvenient Truth van Albert Arnold Gore alias Al Gore werd door een rechter in Engeland veroordeeld als zakkenrollerij vanwege negen opzettelijke overdrijvingen en flagrante leugens. Ondertussen was Gore's neptheorie en zijn doemscenario's toch al de wereld rond. Hoe kreeg Al Gore het gedaan dat met één profilm in 2006 het klimaat tot wereldwijd probleem werd uitgeroepen? Daarvoor kwam dit amper aan bod.

Zijn eigen levensstijl heeft een carbon footprint van een klein Derdewereldland maar zijn groene aanhangers blijven hem trouw. Een conferentie van hem kost je 600.000 dollar. Hij kreeg er zelfs nog een halve Nobelprijs bovenop en de andere helft ging naar het IPCC. Niets aan de hand... De 'meerderheid van wetenschappers' weet u. Maar meerderheden zijn volatiel, wat nu geldt als een grondstelling kan binnen enkele jaren voorbijgestreefde dwaasheid worden aanzien. De geschiedenis staat er bol van.

Of zit er toch platte politieke manipulatie of recapitulatie achter al die jeugdige klimaatbetogingen?

Trouwens klimaatwetenschap an sich bestaat nog niet echt (waar studeert men dat?), wél meteorologen, astronomen, chemici, fysici, wiskundigen, oceanografen, geologen, paleontologen... 'Maar plots noemt elke weerman (weervrouw - ik ben voorzichtig) zich klimaatspecialist, voortgestuwd door het politieke programma van het internationale klimaatpanel IPCC dat volgestouwd zit met NGO's. De klimaatsceptici komen zelden of nooit aan bod.' (Wim van Rooy)

Toen president Barack Obama tweette: 'Ninety-seven percent of scientists agree: #climate change is real, man-made and dangerous' was twijfel niet alleen politiek niet correct, wie het wel aandurfde werd vanaf dan als 'klimaatontkenner' of erger nog 'klimaatnegationist' weggezet. Dat Obama die tweet zelf niet eens stuurde, maar de activistische 'Organizing for Action' (OFA)-groep die het account beheert, het zal de activisten worst wezen.

Geen weldenkend mens die het ongebreideld omgaan met de natuur en met fossiele brandstof zal goedpraten. Fijnstofsteden wil niemand. Koolmonoxyde is wel degelijk een schadelijk gas en vervuiling is er zeker. Maar het

zou ook goed zijn meer oog te hebben voor een rabiante eco-business erachter en een politiek die zich aan het opbouwen is en waar niet alles koosjer en met groene vingers wordt opgediend. Banken hebben er een flinke stuiver aan verdiend en de faillissementen nadat de subsidiekassa werd leeggehaald, zijn legio.¹²

Dat men zoveel gemanipuleerde jongeren en zelfs kinderen achter klimaatbetogingen krijgt is zorgwekkend en helemaal niet, zoals de media schrijven, hoopgevend! Het zou beter zijn hen respect voor natuur en omgeving bij te brengen in plaats van hen aan te moedigen te gaan betogen over onderwerpen en politieke partijthema's die hen totaal ontgaan. Want wat te denken van bv. 'de Wereldbank moest maar geld bijdrukken om het klimaatbeleid te financieren en België moest multinationals zoals McDonald's verbieden en verbannen' dixit initiatiefneemster, de 17-jarige Anuna De Wever.¹⁷ En al die smartphones met hun apps? Ignorance fait la Force!

En geograaf Jan Nyssen van de UGent bevestigt in het Radioprogramma 'De wereld vandaag' de stelling van Van der Aa. Die laatste wijst met de vinger naar wat hij 'de hulpindustrie' noemt die het probleem van de 'global warming' uitbuit. 'Het zijn de hulporganisaties die maar blijven hameren op droogte en klimaatopwarming.'

Reactieus:

Laat ons stoppen met het manipuleren van de jeugd, en hen correcte en neutrale informatie geven in plaats van hen te misbruiken voor politieke doeleinden.

In Nederland zijn er ook talloze scholieren in de puberleeftijd die willen gaan demonstreren omdat het klimaat er volgens hen slecht aan toe is. Net als in Vlaanderen daartoe opgeroepen en ondersteund door de eigen leraren. Dan moeten de leerlingen natuurlijk wel de straat opgaan voor de juiste onderwerpen, de denkrichting van de leraren overnemen en vooral niet zelf gaan nadenken...

Filip de Winter:

Kristof Calvo legt als eerste CO2 vast op camera. #vrtnws vraagt lab om de beelden te onderzoeken.

Klimaat-spijbelen mag maar dan moet je je wel a/d linkse agenda houden. Pro-kernenergie bord wordt niet getolereerd!

Tom Van Grieken:

Na dertig jaar is er niet één file opgelost, maar de autobestuurder-(eigenaar) is wel steeds meer belast en gecriminaliseerd. De sigaret van de werkman, zijne biefstuk en zijn auto, links wil nu alles terugnemen wat verworven was

Onaanvaardbaar. Klimaat is inderdaad niet politiek, maar deze klimaatbetogingen, -marsen, -stakingen,... zijn dat wel. Minister @crevits dwaalt. Onze leerlingen worden misbruikt om deze klimaathysterie te verspreiden.

Dit is toch ongelooflijk!

- Betogen tegen klimaathysterie: Zwaardere straf!
- Betogen voor klimaathysterie: Ah ok. Geen probleem.

Twee maten. Twee gewichten.
Stop Linkse Taal In Ons Klaslokaal!

In de politiek zijn er grenzen die je niet mag overschrijden: liegen als minister in functie is er zo één. Hopelijk komt met het ontslag van @JokeSchauvliege ook een eind aan de politieke recuperatie en ophitsing van de klimaathysterie. Door CD&V én door links!

Scientific Knowledge Generation:

Nageltjes

De kinderen die spijbelen voor een echte hoax zijn slachtoffers van hun onderwijzers en onderwijzeressen.

Dwarsliggers

Om te beginnen is de ‘antropogene’ bijdrage bovenop de sowieso optredende natuurlijke opwarming niet direct onafhankelijk meetbaar. Ze wordt berekend met behulp van het IPCC -Klimaatmodel. Voor iedereen die ooit met de constructie van mathematische modellen te maken had gaan bij de term ‘klimaatmodel’ alle alarmbellen af.

Het klimaat is een ontzettend complex gegeven waarvan we vandaag de vele samenhangen vast niet kwantitatief en zelfs niet volledig kwalitatief begrijpen. Desondanks kunnen modellen bij de studie van dergelijke systemen nuttig zijn om een beter gevoel voor het relatief belang van samenhangen en parameters te ontwikkelen. Als prognostische instrumenten zijn dergelijke modellen echter volledig ongeschikt.

Gedurende de laatste twintig jaar is meer kennis ter beschikking gekomen. Die is nog altijd ver van voldoende om gegarandeerd betrouwbare prognostische modellen te kunnen bouwen, maar volstaat wel om de meest voor de hand liggende foutenbronnen te elimineren. De modellen werden echter niet aangepast.

Een andere (ongewilde?) manipulatie is het achterhouden van resultaten, zo was er hoge interesse voor de bosbranden in California zagezegd wegens de “catastrofale “ opwarming van de aarde, nu blijkt een oorzaak het elektriciteitsnet te zijn wat de voorstanders van groene energie niet graag horen. Dus wordt het gewoon niet vermeld.

“De Afspraak” van 23 januari was deels gewijd aan “iedereen klimaatexpert” met tussenkomsten van Maarten Boudry (filosoof) en Tine Hens (journaliste”MO” magazine). Beiden vertolkten de IPCC standpunten van rond de jaren 2000 terwijl de nieuwe verworven, ook door het IPCC gepubliceerde, wetenschappelijke resultaten niet ingebracht of genegeerd werden. Beiden boden ook geen zicht op de aankomende maatschappelijke risico’s die hun standpunten uitlokken.

Ook bij de media loopt het aanpassen van de gebruikte feitenbasis aan de nieuwste kennisstand ernstig fout. Zo is er de stelling dat vlees eten veel schadelijker is voor het milieu dan transport en dit als gevolg van een FAO-publicatie waarbij knollen

(levensduur cyclus analyse) met citroenen (netto uitstoot) vergeleken werden. Het FAO gaf in 2006 18% en nu 14,5% als aandeel van de vleesconsumptie in broeikasgasproductie. Dat bedrag is zo hoog omdat ontbossing (te) zwaar doorweegt en transport zwaar onderschat is. Het IPCC geeft 5%, EPA 3,9%, de BBC 3% en een publicatie in PNAS geeft aan dat bij een totale ban op vlees in de VS de uitstoot met 2,5% daalt. De echte uitstoot van vleesproductie ligt waarschijnlijk tussen 3 à 5%, wat ongeveer overeenstemt met het vliegverkeer. Tot vandaag wordt echter die 18% (en soms zelfs 40%) nog steeds gebruikt, niet enkel door de media maar ook door (klimaat)wetenschappers, terwijl de werkelijkheid is dat vlees verminderen voor het milieu nauwelijks effect heeft (voor het lichaam wel: dat mist daardoor vitale voedingselementen) waarbij we ook moeten bedenken dat 70% van het landbouwareaal enkel bruikbaar is voor begrazing. Dit is doemdenken en plat bedrog.

Een ander voorbeeld van geknoei met cijfers is de foute lage CO₂-uitstoot van zonnepanelen door (onbewust?) foutief gebruik van genormeerde waarden voor California, ook bij de VRT.

Een goede klimaatwetenschapper is per definitie een criticus. Wetenschap is gebaseerd op voortschrijdende inzichten en is dus nooit eindigend: “the science is never settled”. Wetenschap gaat over inhoud, niet over geloof en consensus (dat laatste is geen criterium dat juistheid of nauwkeurigheid garandeert). Om beide redenen is het aanhalen van een consensus onder wetenschappers als bewijs van juistheid (zoals Boudry en Hens doen) en het afwijzen van een wetenschappelijk debat totaal onwetenschappelijk en maatschappelijk schadelijk. De geprezen consensuswetenschap is pseudowetenschap en ze als echte wetenschap declareren is waardeloos en gevaarlijk. Hier wreekt zich nu het enorme schisma dat door de postmoderne filosofie tussen positieve- en menswetenschappen is ontstaan: voor menswetenschappen is consensus vandaag alles, voor natuurwetenschappen was consensus nooit van enige betekenis.

Dat er momenteel een ‘consensus’ bestaat die zegt dat het anders is, verandert aan de realiteit geen jota. Dit toont aan hoe gevaarlijk het is om wetenschap enkel op basis van modellen te willen bedrijven. Dat geldt ook, en a fortiori, voor het veel te simplistisch CO₂-klimaatmodel dat als prognostisch instrument volkomen waardeloos is en dan ook eclatant faalt.

Maar tot op heden is de nieuwe kennis rond broeikasgassen, die de originele vertrekpunten van het klimaatmodel tegensprekt, niet in de modellen ingevoerd. Dit is nalatigheid en wetenschappelijk misbruik. Wetenschappelijke modellen simuleren tot een bepaalde nauwkeurigheid de werkelijkheid. Maar een voldoende precies model voor het klimaat overstijgt momenteel onze mogelijkheden nog torenhoog. Modellen worden in de wetenschap gebruikt

om effecten te bestuderen en niet om voorspellingen te maken. Dat zeggen volgens een Duitse studie ook ca. 550 klimaatwetenschappers. Essentieel voor een model is de toetsing, en die loopt hier totaal fout. De reactie daarop is mogelijk nog rampzaliger dan de fout zelf. De zware afwijkingen tussen de gemeten temperatuur en de voorspellingen door het model worden niet toegeschreven aan onvolkomenheden van het model, maar aan de aarde zelf (de “pauze” of “hiatus”) die het koppig vertikt op te warmen zoals het model dicteert. Gekker kan het niet! De oplossing is nu zoals hoger aangegeven de natuurlijke opwarming vanaf 1800 tot nu als antropogene opwarming te bestempelen. Opnieuw is de oorzaak voor de verwarring dat de IPCC- resultaten nooit werden bijgewerkt of aangepast aan de nieuwste kennis. De media hebben het permanent geweer veranderen van schouder gewoon niet opgemerkt.

De ijskern boringen en andere metingen tonen aan dat de CO₂-concentratie altijd na-ijlt (+/- 800 jaar) op de temperatuur wat mogelijk wijst op een sterke demping (effect van de oceanen). Daardoor is duidelijk dat, als er tussen temperatuur en CO₂ niet enkel een correlatie bestaat maar ook een causaal verband (en dat is wel degelijk het geval: wet van Henry), de temperatuursverhoging de oorzaak moet zijn en de stijging van de CO₂-concentratie het gevolg. Het IPCC CO₂-klimaatmodel is gebaseerd is op het omwisselen door Hansen van oorzaak en gevolg en het ontstaan van een circulaire redenering met een positieve terugkoppeling die totaal onbetrouwbare (te hoge) resultaten oplevert en een aarde die op hol kan slaan. Een dergelijk “tipping point”, waarvoor in apocalyptische termen wordt gewaarschuwd, is al vele malen overschreden: alarmisme is hier bewezen niet op zijn plaats. Het klimaatmodel is, voor wat de invloed factor CO₂ betreft, onbruikbaar met het gevolg dat de ganse klimaatpaniek op drijfzand is gebouwd.

Het besluit is dat de gemeten opwarming overeenstemt met de waarde uit het IPCC-model bij zero CO₂-klimaatgevoeligheid, wat betekent dat de werkelijke temperatuur van de aarde vrij CO₂ ongevoelig is. Het zou verkeerd zijn hier nu aan te nemen dat die CO₂-gevoeligheid het enige is wat aan die klimaatmodellen niet klopt. Dat is hiermee geenszins aangetoond! Maar het gaat hier wel – waarschijnlijk – om de grootste fout omdat die gebruikt wordt als argument voor een zinloze en dure energietransitie.

De klimaatwetenschap is ziek. Dit is vooral te wijten aan haar samenwerking met het IPCC en klimaatlobby's. Daardoor worden fondsenstromen gegarandeerd maar de vrijheid van wetenschapsbeoefening en spreken wordt ondergraven

De meest ingrijpende doorbraken zijn in het verleden net geleverd door “dwarsliggende” wetenschappers. Een treffend voorbeeld is het wegpesten van prof Pielke jr., van een IPCC “lead author” naar sportwetenschapper. Het feit dat wetenschappers onder pseudoniem schrijven om hun carrière niet te beschadigen, en dat zelfs de oprichting van een website (analoog Wikipedia) hiervoor in de steigers staat, stelt vragen over deze wetenschap.

Policy style scepticism:

N-VA:

Als je ervan uitgaat dat we ons gedrag moeten aanpassen en allerlei verworvenheden moeten afbouwen, zullen we de strijd voor klimaat voelen in onze portefeuilles. Wij stellen een economisch groeimodel als oplossing voorop waarbij je aan die strijd ook geld kan verdienen

“Dat fabeltje dat we niks doen, moet eens stoppen. Vlaanderen gaat voor een CO₂-reductie van 35%! En voor Europa zien we een rol wereldwijd: er moet een gelijk speelveld komen met China, Verenigde Staten, ...”
@GeertBourgeois

De N-VA zet ecorealisme tegenover apocalyptische boodschappen. Heb je een vraag over energie of klimaat? Stel ze dan hier. Oost-Vlaams lijsttrekker voor de Kamer @anneleen_vb beantwoordt ze tijdens een Live Q&A op maandag 13 mei om 12.30 uur.

Meneer Calvo las een andere studie van het Planbureau en vergeet de tsunami van 13 miljard aan belastingen. Daarnaast daalt bij ons de CO₂-uitstoot vier keer zo fel als bij @groen. Waarom stel je een klimaatplan op als je niet het maximum aan CO₂-uitstoot vermindert?

Het Planbureau bevestigt de doelstellingen van de N-VA: we verhogen de koopkracht met focus op de middenklasse en bescheiden pensioenen en creëren nóg 220000 extra jobs. Met ons realistisch energie- en klimaatverhaal verlagen we als enige partij snel en drastisch de CO₂-uitstoot.

Na het vele doemdenken over klimaat brengt @NVA_Limburg vandaag bezoek aan Vlaamse investeringen in innovatie. @LRM_nv maakte van Terhills dé bakermat van #ecorealisme waar innovatie, wetenschap, natuur én economie samenkomen.

We gaan het klimaatprobleem niet oplossen door onze welvaart kapot te maken

Bekijk de reportage of lees meer over onze tweede V-dag 'Energie en Ecologie': Ecorealisme combineert ecologische vooruitgang met economische groei

Hallo?! De wereld op zijn kop: Genkse scholieren spijbelen als ze níet meegaan naar klimaatbetoging en naar school komen. De klimaatbetoging wordt immers gezien als schooluitstap. Het staat er echt

Waarom we bij @de_NVA als ecorealisten ambitieus zijn voor het klimaat en geloven in innovatie en haalbare en betaalbare oplossingen

Dwarsliggers:

Relativeringszin in tijden van klimaathysterie

Tienduizenden jongeren vrezen voor het voortbestaan van Moeder Aarde, spijbelen er op los en willen van geen wijken weten: je bent mét ons of tegen ons want het is vijf voor twaalf!

Zoals steeds is elke discussie met milieu-alarmisten overbodig. Wie dat wel tracht te doen, is een populist of een negationist.

ReactNieuws:

Dries & Vrienden droegen een bord dat pleit voor kernenergie als minst vervuilende energiebron én een bord dat aantoonde dat de grootste vervuilers zich in Azië en Afrika bevinden. De stoppen sloegen al snel door bij de wereldverbeteraars.

Het klimaatthema ís belangrijk. Maatregelen tegen vervuiling zijn noodzakelijk. Gezonder leven voor mens en planeet is geen abnormaliteit. Maar laten we de hysterie waarmee heel wat planeetbewoners ons mee om de oren slaan het hoofd bieden door zélf met realistische alternatieven voor de dag te komen en het klimaatthema niet als iets onbelangrijks te beschouwen.

Instrument Scepticism:

Dwarsliggers:

Oplossingen moet je van de groene vogels niet verwachten tenzij je 'minder vliegen' en 'minder scheten laten' als oplossing ziet. Ze willen zelfs af van kerncentrales omdat die te gevaarlijk zouden zijn en te belastend voor het milieu. Maar als je hun vraagt hoeveel doden Fukushima kende, weten ze het niet. De (natuur)ramp, die aan de basis van het ongeval lag, kostte aan 19.000 mensen het leven. De kernramp kostte één man het leven. En ja, men verwacht inderdaad dat er nog een aantal zullen volgen: men gokt op veertig. Kent er iemand het dodenaantal door vervuilde lucht, fijn stof en dergelijke?

Zijn wij vervuilers? Moeten we het milieu beter verzorgen? Uiteraard! Maar daar zal een vliegtuigticket of een scheet meer of minder weinig aan veranderen.

Theo Francken:

Als sommigen de gelddrukpers willen inzetten voor het klimaat, waarom dan niet voor veiligheid of armoedebestrijding? Simpelweg omdat de gevolgen in het verleden een beproefd recept voor grote miserie waren.

Het is goed dat @groen duidelijkheid verschaft: ze willen, net als de #klimaat-#pubers, geld bijdrukken "om het klimaat te redden". Dat plaatst hen qua economisch inzicht in dezelfde categorie als Idi Amin Dada.

Ieder zijn gedacht, maar stem in mei op intelligente mensen.

- Groene partijvoorzitter Almaci valt totaal dr mand @terzaketv
 - Lichtzinnige klimaatwet stuit op stevig bezwaar Raad v State
 - Kernenergie blijft taboe
 - Groen-kopstuk Staes wil gewoon geld laten bijdrukken om klimaatopwarming op te lossen
- En die willen het land besturen?

Klimaatactivisten, laat de drogredenen tegen kernenergie maar achterwege". Over het dubieuze argument dat onze kernuitstap "klimaatneutraal" zou zijn, omdat de CO2-uitstoot op Europees niveau (ETS) wordt geregeld. Dat is #broekzak-#vestzak logica.

Sterke @de_NVA studiedag over klimaat en energie met nadruk op betrouwbare en duurzame oplossingen zoals innovatie, CO2-opvang en omzetting, circulaire economie en nucleaire energie. Met @gryffroy , @BertWollants @anneleen_vb @markdemesmaeker, W.Vandaele. Realisme geen utopie.

Onbegrijpelijk dat alle andere partijen vasthouden aan sluiting jongste kerncentrales. Is onrealistisch en onhaalbaar. Verlenging is veel realistischere en betaalbare optie. En veel beter voor het klimaat!

Met uitzondering van @de_NVA pleit iedereen voor stopzetten van kernenergie binnen de 5 jr maar vandaag is alle groene energie opgebruikt!

Mochten we dus visie van anderen volgen zitten we morgen zonder stroom en aan die mensen moeten we het land toevertrouwen!

"Deze linkse hypocrisie moet stoppen: wie strijdt voor het milieu, kan onmogelijk strijden tegen vrij ondernemerschap, voor open grenzen of tegen kernenergie. Echte milieubescherming is ecorealistisch." Lees het opiniestuk van @TRoggeman op @DoorbraakBe.

Tom van Grieken:

Wat vooral opwarmt is mijn gezond verstand wanneer ik de Groenen hoor uitkramen dat we geen vlees meer mogen eten en geen melk meer mogen drinken; niet meer met de auto mogen rijden en taksen moeten betalen op vliegtuigreizen.

Spijbelen is gemakkelijk. Wie zou op 16-17 niet gaan betogen ipv naar les te gaan? Eerlijke oplossingen bieden is moeilijker. Als nationalistische partij vinden wij milieu heel belangrijk. Daarom dat investeren in CO2-neutrale kerncentrales hoognodig is.