



Nature and Nation in Harmony: The Ecological Component of Far Right Ideology

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Abstract

The protection of nature constitutes a core component of the ideology of contemporary far right political parties in Western Europe. Through a cross-national comparative study utilizing mixed methods, this research finds that the far right promotes policies aimed at protecting nature based on the connection of organic nationalism and political ecology, challenging perceptions in academia and society that the protection of nature is a leftwing issue or the domain of leftwing parties, and that far right positions regarding ecological issues are incompatible, oppositional, hostile, indifferent, and/or incoherent. Organic nationalist connections with the protection of nature, present at least from Romanticism to National Socialism, provide a theoretical framework to explain the position of contemporary far right parties, including the integration of elements of a critique of Judeo-Christian and Enlightenment ideas and subsequent modern developments perceived as breaking the cherished harmony between man and nature. Influenced by elements of this ecological worldview of organic nationalists of anti-anthropocentrism, organicism, and the sanctity and supremacy of nature, contemporary far right parties promote many ecological goals. A quantitative analysis of manifesto, media, and expert survey data and qualitative analysis of party documents indicate that nature protection for the far right is salient, fundamental, and comprehensive, particularly permeating a number of policy areas, including agriculture, animals, conservation, economics, energy, fish, immigration, individualism, international relations, science and technology, spatial planning, traditional culture, transportation, and waste management, and many associated sub-issues. Furthermore, a case study on Austria reveals that nature protection also remains an important priority for far right activity in a legislature. Overall, far right parties located further right on the political spectrum, or more organic nationalist, are more supportive of the protection of nature and adhere to a more ecological perspective.



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Bio Kristian Voss holds a B.A. in International Relations and History from the State University of New York at New Paltz, M.Phil. in Political Science Research - Institutional Analysis from the University of Leiden, and M.Res from the European University Institute. His main research interests are generally comparative party politics, political ideology, and American politics, and specifically contemporary and interwar far right political parties and ideology, political ecology and environmentalism, patronage and clientelism, and the United States Congress. Before attending the EUI, he was an intern at the United States Senate and the United States Mission to International Organizations in the International Atomic Energy Agency section.