

“Save the bees, not refugees”

Far-right environmentalism meets the Internet

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A comparative content analysis of Nazi Germany’s environmentalism  
and four self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram

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# Abstract

This thesis seeks to examine a concept of far-right environmentalism called *ecofascism*. The term is most notably used to describe Nazi Germany's environmental politics in the nineteenth century. In recent years, however, several media outlets have claimed that online, far-right communities are reviving several traits of Nazi ecology by blaming the demise of the natural environment on increased globalization, industrialization, and overpopulation. Building on these claims, this thesis sets out to examine four self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram. A platform said to house most of the present-day, far-right communication. By applying a combined methodology of online ethnography and qualitative content analysis, this thesis asks, "To what extent is the content in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram a revival of classical ecofascism?". Through online observation and a comparative content analysis between classical ecofascism and present-day content collected from Telegram, I argue that a broader understanding of far-right environmentalism is necessary. The study suggests that while ecofascist channels on Telegram are reviving some aspects of classical ecofascism, they reject important features of fascism such as authoritarianism, collectivism, and expansionism. As such, I propose an additional understanding of far-right environmentalism as *libertarian anarchism*. Building on previous research, the aim of this thesis is thus to contribute to scholarly discussions on online, far-right environmentalism.



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# 1. Introduction

This thesis seeks to explore a side of far-right environmentalism called *ecofascism*. A term that combines *ecology* and *fascism* and is claimed to undergo a revival in online far-right communities.

The term *ecofascism* has been used to conceptualize several different notions of far-right environmentalism, from Nazi Germany's environmental politics in the 1940s (Biehl and Staudenmaier 2011; Thomas and Gosink 2021; Forchtner 2019a) to Malthusian beliefs that the world is ending due to overpopulation and resource shortages (Hardin 1995 and Linkola 2004). However, after the terrorist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, the term has received widespread, global attention. In March 2019, a man who proclaimed himself an ecofascist committed the Christchurch terrorist attacks in New Zealand, killing fifty-one people and injuring forty-nine more while live-streaming the event on Facebook. In his manifesto, the terrorist defined the ecofascist ideology along the lines of ethnic autonomy, focusing on preserving nature and the “natural order.” He explicitly stated that “there is no nationalism without environmentalism” (Thomas and Gosink, 2021: 35). Not long after, the attacks in El Paso, United States, happened in August 2019. The El Paso shooter specifically cited the Christchurch shooter’s name in his manifesto as an inspiration for the attacks. The terrorist claimed that the American lifestyle was destroying the environment and endangering future generations – blaming immigration and stating that the only “logical” solution was to decrease the population of the people in the US (ibid). Since these attacks, media outlets have used the term to describe a growing far-right environmental rhetoric on social media (Hanrahan 2020; Shajkovci 2020; Corcione 2020; Kamel, Lamoureux and Makuch 2020; Amundsen 2021; Shukla 2021).

Traditionally, concern with the natural environment is commonly associated with the (liberal) left of the political spectrum (Forchtner, 2019a: 4). However, as the climate crisis steadily becomes more apparent, new research finds that younger generations within the far right are combining environmentalism with a racist and xenophobic rhetoric (Taylor, 2019: 275) on different social media platforms. For example, in a 2018 Master thesis, Maria Darwish analyzed the podcast *Nordic Frontier* by the Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM) and found that the

NRM has developed an environmentally oriented neo-Nazism (Darwish, 2018). Additionally, the space in which far-right communication grows has changed. From previously holding rallies in the streets, researchers are now finding that far-right movements are “utterly at home” (Forchtner and Kølvråa, 2017: 276) on the Internet. This is not to say that physical meetings are no longer happening. However, as seen in the 2021 national threat assessment by The Norwegian Police Security Service (PST), online, far-right communities continue to use the Internet as their “most important arena for promoting their ideas”:

We expect right-wing radicals and extremists to continue to use the internet as the most important arena for promoting their ideas. In recent years, online platforms have been shown to facilitate network-building, and there is every sign that this development will continue. Several of the platforms are publicly accessible, and some function as meeting places for violent right-wing extremist counter-culture that oppose established norms and standards they perceive as political correctness (PST, 2021: 23).

By performing a qualitative content analysis, comparing ecofascist beliefs from the nineteenth and twentieth century – which I have chosen to label *classical ecofascism* – and present-day content published on the social messaging platform Telegram, this thesis sets out to examine the growing phenomenon of modern, online ecofascism.

## **1.1 The claims: three examples**

Before I move on to the purpose and outline of this thesis, I find it essential to include some examples of media outlets claiming that ecofascism is undergoing a revival in online communities. An initial clarification is in order. Additionally, I wish to mention that in this thesis, the terms "environmental" and "ecological" are used interchangeably to denote ideas, attitudes and practices commonly associated with environmental communication. Like Biehl and Staudenmaier, who have written extensively on Nazi Germany's experience with ecological thought in *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German experience* (1996, 2011), this allows for an interpretive approach to environmentalism which highlights connections to present-day concerns.

During the last few years, ecofascism has received much online attention. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019, two mass shootings occurred in a terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand

(The New York Times, 2019). In the terrorist's manifesto, *The Great Replacement. Towards a New Society we March Ever Forward*, he described himself as an "ethnonationalism ecofascist", calling for "ethnic autonomy for all peoples with a strong focus on the preservation of nature, and the natural order" (Forchtner, 2019c). On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, a terrorist attack occurred at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, United States. The El Paso gunman has not described himself as an ecofascist but explicitly expresses support for the Christchurch shooter (BBC, 2019). In his own manifest, *An Inconvenient Truth*, the terrorist blamed a "Hispanic invasion of Texas" as the reason for the attacks (Kenton, 2019). While ecofascism had been addressed in the past, it received particular attention in the media after these attacks. In a sea of news articles, I have chosen three pieces to exemplify the claims.

According to New Statesman magazine, when the Christchurch shooter described himself as an "ecofascist," he invoked the age-old and complicated relationship between nature writing and the far right (Smyth, 2019). The magazine describes ecofascism as a modern-day ideology fueled by the Internet with deep roots. According to The New Statesman articles, by both Manavis (2018) and Smyth (2019), the emergence of a fascist philosophy, enabled by online forums such as Reddit, pulls together anti-Semitism, white supremacy, Norse mythology, animal rights and various takes on deep ecology. Before the Christchurch and El Paso shootings, Manavis wrote that "underneath the pictures of idyllic country-scapes and environmentally-friendly rhetoric, ecofascists are pushing murderous, racist ideology in the name of protecting the planet" (Manavis, 2018). In their 2019 article after the shootings, the magazine argues that "nobody can argue that we shouldn't be taking such movements seriously" (Smyth, 2019).

Similarly, Tom Bennet at Vice Magazine describes ecofascism as a "twisted blend of authoritarianism, white supremacy, ethnonationalism, and a misguided concern for the care of the planet" (Bennet, 2019). The magazine furthermore states that the movement's origins stretch back to the 1930s, to Hitler's Germany and the infamous Nazi slogan "Blood and soil" (Blut und Boden in German). This slogan represented the idea that a racially defined body of people (blood) has an innate connection to the land they live (soil) on. According to Bennet, this emphasized a deep-rooted, mystical relationship between the German people and their land that fed into the idea of an Aryan master race, and it is "this kind of mythical, puritanical take on the human relationship to the earth that ecofascists are so fond of" (Bennet, 2019). Since climate change has become a major global issue and the alt-right has grown, Bennet argues that a modern interpretation of ecofascism has emerged. He furthermore writes that the movement

remains relatively small and primarily online. According to him, the movement makes up “just one strand of the broader alt-right, where climate change denial is still far more popular than environmentalism” (ibid). Still, Bennet writes that a casual stroll across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram reveals a smattering of ecofascist communities:

Some post hashtags like #EcoFash and #MakeEcologyDeepAgain. Some post Anti-Semitic memes featuring rolling hills and Nordic runes. Some upload videos of bearded men weightlifting, swinging axes and chopping up meat – or vegetables, as many ecofascists come across as a bunch of angry young men obsessed with brazen displays of masculinity, Viking aesthetics, misogynistic family values, racial purity, and a rejection of technology (Bennet, 2019).

Looking at communities on 4chan and 8chan that he also describes as ecofascist, Bennet also outlines Ted Kaczynski as an inspiration for online ecofascists, particularly after the Netflix series “Manhunt: Unabomber” became popular in 2017. Otherwise known as the Unabomber, Kaczynski was a math-teacher-turned-terrorist who went on an 18-year bombing spree around the US and who saw himself as a Neo-Luddite – fighting against the corporate world in favour of a more primitive lifestyle (Bennet, 2019). Kaczynski’s way of living consisted of moving to a remote cabin without electricity or running water, where he lived as a recluse while learning survival skills to become self-sufficient. After witnessing the destruction of the wilderness surrounding his cabin, he resolved to fight industrialization and its destruction of nature through terrorism, beginning his bombing campaign in 1978 (History.com “Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski”). According to Bennet, another key thinker on ecofascism was the Finnish polemicist Pentti Linkola who believed that democracy doesn’t function and that the only way to prevent ecological collapse is to impose dictatorships that could force humans to be green. Bennet argues that it is in this curious blend of almost-spiritual Nazi ideology, Finnish authoritarian idealism and the swashbuckling, hyper-masculine, pop-culture appeal of Ted Kaczynski, that the alt-right ecofascist have formed a new, twisted sub-culture. He writes that “Buoyed by an undercurrent of anti-establishment rhetoric peddled by the wider alt-right, and garnished with the aesthetic charm of facial hair, pine trees and Nordic runes, #EcoFash is in reality little more than genocidal authoritarianism with a hippie-ish gloss” (Bennet, 2019).

The Guardian journalist Jason Wilson describes ecofascism as “undergoing a revival in the fetid culture of the extreme right” where some see looming ecological collapse as an opportunity to

re-order society along their preferred, genocidal lines (Wilson, 2019). According to him social media and the more secretive spaces of the online far right, is being used by ecofascists to proselytize genocidal solution to environmental concerns. On Twitter, for example, he states that the “pine tree gang”, which journalist Jake Hanrahan (2018) describes as “less a cohesive movement than a loosely connected online subculture”, have been promoting ideas that blend a sense of impending environmental catastrophe with themes from white nationalism (ibid). Wilson describes this subculture as frequently drawn to a so-called “terror wave” aesthetic, which elevates images of terrorist insurgency; promotes a specific material fashion imagery; and fantasies about armed conflict in the wake of environmental and social collapse (ibid). He furthermore states that ecofascist have lamented the despoliation of nature, which they associate with modernity and an industrial society which they feel has diminished the connections between race and territory. As such, one of their principal concerns tends, according to Wilson, to be what they see as human overpopulation, and the tendency of migration and multiculturalism to move races out of their homelands (ibid). Wilson also connects modern ecofascism to the Nazi belief of “blood and soil” mysticism and elements of deep ecology found in Kaczynski and Linkola. He thus argues that these inspirations “have fueled an online subculture that looks forward to, and even talks about accelerating the end of industrial civilization” and “dreams of a return to a blood and soil relationship between people and territories, and of a post-collapse society which will restore the authority of white men” (Wilson, 2019).

My intent is not to contest these claims. Instead, I wish to examine the phenomenon of ecofascism to gain a greater understanding of far-right environmentalism. These are three examples of media outlets implying a revival of a sinister relationship between environmental concerns and the far right. In the time since the terrorist attacks in Christchurch and El Paso, several media platforms have enforced restrictions on white supremacist content (Ghaffary, Molla, and Stewart, 2019). To examine ecofascism further, I therefore use Telegram in this thesis, a messaging platform with very little supervision and oversight (Schechter, 2021).

## **1.2 Purpose and research question**

The purpose of this thesis is to explore far right environmentalism in online communities. More specifically, I wish to examine to what extent self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram are reviving classical ecofascism. My intention is not to investigate whether these media outlets

are correct in claiming that ecofascism is undergoing a revival or not. Rather, I wish to examine ecofascism as it appears in online communities so that we may gain a greater understanding of the concept.

My overall research question is thus as follows:

*To what extent is the content in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram a revival of classical ecofascism?*

By building on previous research on far-right environmentalism, my intent is that this thesis will provide further insight into the ongoing research field of the digital far right.

### **1.3 Outline of the thesis**

In chapter 2, I start my thesis by providing a detailed overview of the existing scholarship and research field this thesis builds on. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the academic field this thesis is a part of and additionally illustrate my own contribution to the field. To that end, I use this chapter to present research on far-right environmentalism and ecofascism.

Chapter 3 is a background chapter, tasked with presenting clarifications for specific terms used in this thesis. As such, I first explain the choice to use the term “far-right” before I move on to present scholarly understandings of fascism and ecofascism. As the purpose of this thesis is to analyze the extent of classical ecofascism in online content, there first needs to be a comprehensive understanding of fascism in order to do so.

Chapter 4 presents the theoretical perspective I use for comparison in my thesis. This thesis seeks to compare classical themes of ecofascism found in Nazi Germany to self-proclaimed online ecofascist channels on Telegram. To do so, I present the historical background of environmentalism identified in German Nazism.

In chapter 5 I outline the two complementary qualitative methods I use to gather and analyze my material. In this chapter I present a discussion on my methodological choices, the applied methods and analytic tools that are used. The chapter begins by presenting the method of online

ethnography as a tool to reflect on data collection from online communities, before moving on to present the process of performing a qualitative content analysis.

Chapter 6 presents the comparative content analysis between classical ecofascism and modern ecofascist channels. I have sorted the analysis into the two overriding themes of *environmentalism* and *fascist features*. Each of these themes have sub-categorizations that provide a thorough comparison between the two phenomena.

In chapter 7 I discuss my research question considering the results from the comparative analysis. Here I present the key findings of the analysis, interpretations of the results, limitations and indications to my study, before I make some suggestions for further research. The overall purpose of this chapter is to discuss my argument of proposing a supplementing understanding of far-right environmentalism as *libertarian anarchism*. Finally, in chapter 8 I present my concluding remarks.



## **2. Existing scholarship and research**

Researching the far-right welcomes you into a world of previous studies ranging from historical studies on Nazism to contemporary studies on the role of gaming among children. Studies on nationalism, fascism, populism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, radicalization, and terrorism flood search engines like Oria and Google Scholar with articles and books.

Thousands of texts regarding the far right and the environment were found, however, most of them seemed to focus on environmental skepticism among the far right. Meaning, research regarding the doubt about the authenticity or severity of environmental threats facing the world. Moreover, only a few substantial pieces focused primarily on far-right environmentalism, while many others only briefly touched on the subject. Furthermore, while ecofascism has been researched in a historical context, even less research regard ecofascism as a modern phenomenon. As Thomas and Gosink (2021) puts it “despite this new interest and the clear threat of ecofascism in the context of converging sociopolitical and ecological crisis, there is a surprising dearth of academic literature theorizing the concept of ecofascism in the context of the twenty-first century” (Thomas and Gosink, 2021: 32).

Still, recent years have seen a growing interest in the field of far-right environmentalism. In this chapter, I shed light on the relevant literature that expresses a clear focus on far-right environmentalism in a historic and contemporary context.

### **2.1 Historical accounts of far-right environmentalism**

According to Forchtner, “the history of environmental protection and campaigning can be traced back to the nineteenth century when the price of industrialization and urbanization was becoming apparent” (Forchtner, 2019a: 4). He further states that looking back at historical trajectories, the nineteenth and twentieth century saw organic neonationalist, fascist and National Socialist concerns for the environment, which drew on particularistic interpretation of the relation between the land and the people (ibid: 6). In numerous historical retellings of far-right environmentalism, the primary focus seems to be on Nazi Germany. According to Forchtner, the link between the far right and the natural environment became most clearly

articulated in Nazi Germany due to a long history of environmental concerns and ecological thinking being fused with ethnonationalism, Social Darwinism and racist ideas landscape (Forchtner, 2019a: 7).

Biehl and Staudenmaier (2011) explores the German experience of fascism and the political use of ecology in an overview of the ecological components of Nazism, emphasizing both their central role in Nazi ideology and their practical implementations during the Third Reich. In their work *Ecofascism: lessons from the German experience*, they argue that Nazi environmentalism was primarily a philosophy that preached the importance of ecological integrity to maintain the health of the German race. Thomas and Gosink (2021), expands on this stating that these philosophies were ultimately adapted into political policy of the Nazi Party by individuals like Walter Schoenichen, Director of the Reich Agency for Nature Protection and Richard Walther Darré, the Minister of Agriculture. While these philosophies resulted in environmental policies such as the 1935 Reich Law for the Protection of Nature (Closemann, 2005), Thomas and Gosink argue that they served as important parts of the ideological underpinnings of the Nazi Party's longing for *Lebensraum* (German living space) and their grotesque genocidal acts (Thomas and Gosink, 2021: 33).

Uekoetter (2006) provides a discussion of conservation in Nazi Germany by looking at Germany in an international context. Uekoetter analyses how the German conservation movement came to cooperate with the Nazi regime stating, "the Nazi experience shows that environmental ideas could coexist with racist and anti-Semitic clichés" (Uekoetter, 2006: 207). However, he argues that the ideological reproachments of the conservationist's community toward Nazi ideology, remained incomplete stating that "conservationists often came to adopt Nazi rhetoric, but a seamless merger of both set of ideas never materialized" (ibid).

Brüggemeier, Cioc and Zeller's (2005) contribution *How Green Were the Nazis?* provides an in-depth exploration of the Third Reich and the intersection between brown ideologies and green practises. The book presents nine articles by authors who explores Nazi Germany's nature laws, air pollution control, agrarian ideology and the *völkisch* movement. Regarding ecofascism, Brüggemeier, Cioc and Zeller states that ecofascism has become a "media buzzword" and that occasionally one could come across environmentalist factions that espouse an ideology with Nazi undertones (Brüggemeier et al. 2005: 1). However, they argue that such groups "reside on the outer fringes of modern-day politics" and that their antics are "more annoying than dangerous" (ibid). A statement one could argue to be controversial considering the Christchurch massacre by a self-proclaimed ecofascist. However, as the book was written long before the attacks and long before the possibility to live-stream such event on

media platforms like Facebook, their contribution on the historical accounts of Nazi environmentalism, remains both valuable and unproblematic.

As such, the natural environment has played a role in nationalist and far-right political thinking for a long time (Forchtner, 2019a: 2). According to Forchtner, this has ranged from a “full-blown ecological worldview which stresses the interconnectedness of flora, fauna, the nation, and its homeland, including the naturalization of social relations and the significance of ‘the land’ to produce “the people”, to the aesthetic idealization of certain elements of the community's landscape” (ibid). However, modern research on far-right environmentalism remains somewhat scarce. The present-day far right is, according to Forchtner, more commonly investigated for their stance on immigration and refugees and, for example, their views on gender than they are on their environmental concerns (Forchtner, 2019a: 1). According to him, this is because of the common association of ecological issues with the liberal left. However, as climate change has been socially constructed as the critical contemporary environmental crisis and, as such, has become meaningful to a broader audience – research on climate change in mainstream media like newspapers, television and online communication has grown (ibid).

## **2.2 Contemporary far-right environmentalism**

While present-day environmental movements and far-right movements might appear to be on opposing sides of the political-ideological spectrum, researchers are finding that this intersection is bigger than many may realize – and it’s growing (Shapiro, Ozug and Morell, 2022).

Ecofascist researcher Alex Amend argues that there are two big misconceptions of far-right environmentalism. The first is the understanding of the far-right as a climate denialist movement. The second is the belief that environmental politics are always going to be left-leaning (Shapiro, Ozug and Morell, 2022). Newer studies are finding that younger generations within the far-right are more likely to see environmental crisis as a threat to our collective future – adopting xenophobic and racist ideas about what's causing the crisis. In 2017, Forchtner and Kølvråa, investigated the extreme right visual communication through Facebook, focusing on claims to truth and authentic Nazism in relation to history, nature, and gender roles (Forchtner and Kølvråa, 2017: 252). They argue that in recent years, the German extreme right has

undergone significant changes. Given the significance of the Internet for the contemporary extreme right, Forchtner and Kølvrå asks how images negotiate and communicate the connection between contemporary (youth) cultures and National Socialist ideology. They find that the imaginary social relationship these images make available are complex. They include authoritarian ones in which the subject is supposed to accept claims to truth based in what are presented as authentic demands by the ideology (ibid: 267). Yet, Forchtner and Kølvrå also find that these relationships include intimate moments. Intimacy with fellow “soldiers” of the extreme right, with the “ideological leader-figure”, and with the other sex as well as that which offers ultimate stability: nature (ibid).

In a book examining the intersection of environmental communication of far-right party and non-party actors in Europe and the United States, *The Far Right and The Environment* (2019) provides analysis on subjects such as the history of green ideology on Britain’s far right, French patriotic ecology, the Danish far right, and environmental discourse by the Czech far right, to mention some. To shed light on this research field, I highlight some of the articles by Taylor, Kølvrå and Forchtner and Ösvatan below.

Blair Taylor (2019), for example, examines the ecological politics of the “alt-right” in the United States. By focusing on speeches, texts and debates he analyses how the alt-right borrows from the left as well as ecological discourses from fascist predecessors. Taylor finds that there is a changing perspective within far-right environmental communication. For at least a generation, he finds that the political right has been understood primarily as a defense of the status quo: pro-capitalist, pro-state, pro-science, and technology, and anti-environmental. The rise of the so-called ‘alt-right’, or alternative right, however, has transformed this political landscape in several countries by drawing its energy from a critique of the established order, liberal and conservative alike, and not its defense (Taylor, 2019: 275). Thus, resurrecting older right-wing traditions of the antimodernist, revolutionary, and fascist right, which has, according to Taylor, remained marginal in the North American conservative movement until now. Taylor argues that ecology is an increasingly important political vector for the rejection of traditional pro-business conservative positions and finds that the alt-right ecological discourse rediscovers old Nazi themes like organic agriculture and animal rights while articulating “novel right-wing interpretations of concepts like biodiversity, decentralism, deep ecology, bioregionalism, and anti-capitalism” (Taylor, 2019: 275). However, Taylor finds that climate change does not seem to be a core theme in the groups and traditions in his research. This, he argues, is likely due in

part to the conflicting views found within the alt-right, where some dispute climate change as “cultural Marxist” lies, while others accept its reality, but directly blame it on immigration, the third world, or globalization. Taylor explains that the alt-right is more receptive to ecological ideas because it, on the one hand, reflects the growing acceptance of the unavoidable reality of climate change and ecological degradation, especially among young people, while also factoring in the alt-right’s reclamation of previously taboo political traditions like fascism (Taylor, 2019: 276). This has facilitated a rediscovery of the historical connection between far right and ecological ideologies, from Ernst Haeckel (the racist who coined the term ecology) to Nazi environmentalism (ibid). Another factor is, Taylor argues, the intellectual bent of the alt-right. As its political vision centers on the allegedly ‘natural’ conditions of human inequality, there has been a resurgence of interests in right-wing nature philosophy. Taylor argues that various strains of esoteric, mystical, and quasi-anarchist fascism are important currents within the movement, especially within its ecological wing. Several alt-right media outlets are prominently featuring European right-wing ecologists like Savitri Devi, Troy Southgate and Pentti Linkola among mystical fascists like Julius Evola (Taylor, 2019: 276). According to Taylor, these factors, combined with the predominantly white demographic makeup of the environmental movement, makes it highly attractive to the alt-right. As such, he argues that ecology is an important research field, especially as its articulation has shifted with the changing times. That is not to say that classic right ecological emphasis on population and immigration has changed, but that it “takes new forms” (ibid).

Christoffer Kølvråa provides an analysis of the “environmental imaginary” of the populist far right party “The Danish People’s Party”. He states that the far-right Danish People’s Party (DPP) have often been accused of being “wolves in sheep’s clothing” by left-wing opponents. Thus, insinuating that their immigration hostile populism carries fascist elements at heart (2019: 107). However, Kølvråa finds that while the environment is not a core political concern of the DPP, that does not mean that the party is devoid of what might be called “environmental imaginary”. He finds that the DPP has little in common with the organicist, ecological and often more overtly racist, imaginaries found towards the extreme end of the far-right spectrum. Instead, the relationship between the Danes and their countryside is ultimately imagined in terms of property and the resultant right of use (Kølvråa, 2019: 117). In contrast, Forchtner and Ösvatan find that the environmental communication in Germany illustrate the significance of issues directly connecting the land and the people. They find that many far-right actors perpetuate a holistic interpretation of people in nature as rooted in “their land” (Forchtner and Ösvatan, 2019: 230). It is thus the “globalist” structure of today’s world

which threatens the land. While they find that a complete rejection of international cooperation is not implied, solutions are presented as anti-globalist, pro local/national and protecting the people's ecosystem against rationalist and materialist globalist forces (ibid).

In addition to the above-mentioned book, Forchtner also expands on the construction of an "ideal" extreme-right, ecologically sensitive subject in a 2019 article. Through an analysis of articles published in Germany's exemplary extreme-right magazine *Umwelt & Aktiv* (Environment & Active), Forchtner finds that the cultural imaginary of laws of nature as applicable to the social world is being reconstructed (Forchtner, 2019b: 285). Key themes identified in his research were human responsibility for environmental degradation, the ecological value of flora and fauna, and criticism of modernity's levelling tendencies (both biologically and culturally). According to Forchtner, taking responsibility for the community's *Heimat* (homeland) is thus a crucial element for this subject: a subject that aims for purity, order, and the stability of ecosystems (ibid). Extreme-right ecological perspectives are then not limited to one issue (such as biodiversity) but signify "an organic and unifying world view, a holistic perspective according to which organisms should be understood in terms of their embeddedness in an interdependent system" (ibid). As such, Forchtner argues that it covers areas such as the naturalization of social relations (the law of nature), environmental destruction as a symptom of alienation from the homeland and the community's culture (consequently, for instance, of western materialism), the view of "Others" as an ecological problem (human and non-human immigrants as well as overpopulations) and the possibility of an authoritarian state allegedly being able to enforce necessary ecological policies (ibid: 286).

Furthermore, a handful of research also focuses specifically on modern ecofascism. Thomas and Gosink (2021), explores the concept of ecofascism during the twenty-first century. According to them, "during a worsening ecological crisis, a revival of ecofascist rhetoric and action has been observed" (2021: 34). In their 2021 paper they write that "we are currently witnessing a strong revival of populist and far-right rhetoric that have begun to feature some of the key characteristics of fascism" (Thomas and Gosink, 2021: 34). They further state that this has undoubtedly had electoral effects, letting individuals such as Donald Trump into power while "dangerously bolstering the institutionalized political power of groups like France's National Front and Germany's Alternative for Germany" (ibid). According to them, this allows individuals to engage fascist ideologies and adapt them to current contexts of economic, political, and ecological instability. Thomas and Gosink finds that, when viewed alongside the

broader history of ecofascism and contemporary political trends, the heinous acts of the Christchurch and El Paso attacks, represents the enactments of ideologies that have been gaining strength in Internet ecosystems such as alt-right websites and social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (ibid: 35). They thus discuss that the various ways in which ecofascist might manifest in the twenty-first century include:

(1) cultural genocide through the destruction of environments and ecosystems that communities rely on for sociocultural reproduction; (2) using environmental concerns as a justification for neo-Malthusian policies that at best, reinforce and provide legitimacy to far-right actors, and at worst, facilitate atrocities in their own right; and (3) the weaponization of climate change through the manipulation of geographies, namely the securitization of borders (ibid: 48).

In a visual and text-based discourses analysis supported by corpus linguistics, Loadenthal (2022) compared accelerationist-ecofascism and leftist eco-saboteurs on Telegram. His findings show that whereas the far-right networks of the past few decades focused on spreading terror within ethnical, racial, and religious communities, there now appears to be a focus on the disruption of key systems of governance and resource distribution (Loadenthal, 2022: 170). In addition, he argues that the ecofascist-accelerationist discourse online abounds a radical ecology renaissance that is likely to intensify as the effects of climate change become more visible. Loadenthal finds that the coming ecological crisis of the Anthropocene age (the current period of Earths history) thus plays into the accelerationist “embrace the collapse” logic on Telegram. And while both rightist and leftist networks may appear to embrace such breakdowns, Loadenthal finds that they do so with very polarized revolutionary visions – one based on justice and emancipation (the left), and the other in the perseverance and advancement of an ethnically, racially, and religiously select few (the far-right) (Loadenthal, 2022: 199).

Campion (2021) argues for two major branches of ecofascism, the first being *ecocentric*. Meaning that humans believe that humanity is a single part of a complex ecosystem, and the chosen (native) people can appropriately conserve it. This produces the branch of custodians, in which ecofascist position themselves as the exclusive guardians of nature and the ecological needs defined place. The second branch is *anthropocentric*, which is to say that ecofascist believe that protecting their “race” is their single most important task – and protecting the environment is essential for the race to thrive. This, Campion argues, produces the branch of conquerors, in which ecofascists believe that they have shaped nature and been shaped by

nature, creating an exclusive relationship. As such, a modern revival of ecofascism is, according to Campion, the romanizations of a mystical past in which ecofascist imagine that their society was ecologically harmonious and strong. They argue that the forces of modernity, such as industrialization, urbanization, materialism, and individualism have weakened their society and disrupted that ecological harmony. Multiculturalism and immigration are also considered disruptive, with immigrants perceived as parasites or foreign species in the ecosystem (Campion, 2021).

This is where my thesis places itself. In the intersection of research on the far-right, historical and contemporary environmentalism, and digital communication. My intention is thus that this thesis will contribute to this academic field by providing an in-depth, comparative analysis on four self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram.



## 3. Background

To be able to compare to what extent modern, online ecofascism is reviving classical ecofascism, some clarifications are in order. This chapter thus seeks to provide an understanding on some of the specific terms that are used as well as an understanding of fascism – a political term that according to Robinson (1981: 1), “has stubbornly remained the great conundrum for students of the twentieth century”.

### 3.1 The “far-right”

The first clarification I wish to present, is my choice to use the term “far-right”. According to Forchtner (2019a), “it has become common to mourn the lack of coherence concerning the name of the referent of those studying actors to the right of conservative parties” (2019: 3). Besides, for example, “right-wing”, “radical right”, “extreme right”, “right-wing”, “extremist”, and “far right”, we sometimes find the designator “ultra-nationalist” and even “(neo-)fascist” and “(neo-)Nazi” (ibid). At times, this variety is simply due to linguistic and political preferences, but it is also rooted in actual differences, Forchtner explains. Anti-liberal, but (nominally) democratic parties such as the Danish People’s Party and the French National Rally are increasingly “mainstream”, while other actors, however, are anti-democratic as, for example, the Golden Dawn in Greece and so-called Autonomous Nationalists across Europe (ibid). Based on this, this thesis will, like Forchtner, employ “far-right” as the overarching name of such actors. At the core of far-right actors, we find ethnonationalism - linking membership in the nation to biological/racial and/or cultural traits – and authoritarianism (Forchtner, 2019a: 3). Besides these core ideological features, elements dominantly present include, for example, ethnopluralism, anti-socialism, proclivity for scapegoating ‘others’, and an uncritical view of the community’s historical past. The latter results in, for example, the denial of war guilt or the Holocaust (Forchtner, 2019a: 3). After having spent time in the Telegram channels for, I identify this term to be an apt description.

### 3.2 Fascism

As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, understanding *fascism* is a necessary component of understanding ecofascism.

In the twenty-first century, fascism remains a vague political term. Several scholars make the distinction between “Fascism” (with a capital letter), denoting only the Italian interwar phenomenon, and “fascism,” describing a generic phenomenon (Encyclopaedia of Nationalism, Leoussi, s.v. “Fascism”). Other major debates involve such questions as to whether fascism is an ideology or not, whether it denotes one single phenomenon or a multitude of phenomena, and whether it existed in just one “epoch” or is of a generic nature (ibid). According to Kallis, disagreements regarding fascism have focused on a plethora of key questions and at the heart of these debates lies definitional questions such as, was fascism an ideology or a system of rule? Was it a phenomenon of the interwar period or a system of thought that survived the collapse of Nazism and Italian Fascism? Was it revolutionary in its goal, or was it reactionary, regressive, or even counter revolutionary (Kallis, 2003: 45)? In addition, fascism has been termed both right-wing and left-wing, secular and (pseudo-)religious, capitalist, and socialist, irrationalist and rational, the list goes on (Encyclopaedia of Nationalism, Leoussi, s.v. “Fascism”).

A variety of different definitions and potential descriptions has been made by scholars with the most notable agreement being that a Fascist *regime* is first and foremost an authoritarian form of government but that not all authoritarian governments are fascist (Laqueur 1996; Eatwell 2003; Griffin 1993; Payne 1995). Griffin argues that one of the few uncontroversial statements that can be made about fascism, is that it was the name given to the political force headed by Mussolini between March 1919 and April 1945, and which became the official ideological basis of a dictatorial regime established in Italy by him between 1925 and 1943 (Griffin, 1993: 1). Not a surprisingly uncontroversial statement, given that Mussolini himself called his force the *fasci de combattimento* (meaning “fighting bands”), better known as Fascists in March 1919 (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. “Benito Mussolini”). Nevertheless, it illustrates the complicated notion regarding the term. While there are some general agreements regarding fascist regimes, and especially the historically Fascist regime in Italy in the twentieth century, here the consensus stops. Thus, what Robinson called the “great conundrum” (Robinson, 1981: 1) regarding fascism has been established.

Having said all this, the definitions I have chosen to employ in this thesis is provided by Payne (1995) and Griffin (1993). According to the Encyclopaedia of Nationalism, the definition provided by Stanley G. Payne (1995) holds the status of *primus inter pares* within the field (meaning, “first among equals” in Latin). As most elements of Payne’s three-tier definition can be found in almost all other definitions of fascism, I identify this as an apt definition for an environmentalist movement (Encyclopaedia of Nationalism, Leoussi, s.v. “Fascism”). According to Payne, fascism can be understood by the following characteristics:

A. Ideology and goals.

- According to Payne this espousal of an idealist, vitalist, and voluntaristic philosophy, normally involves the attempt to realize a new modern, self-determined and secular culture.
- Creation of a new nationalism authoritarian state not based on traditional principles or models.
- Organization of a new highly regulated, multiclass, integrated national economic structure, whether called national socialist, or national syndicalist
- Positive evaluation and use of, or willingness to use, violence and war
- The goal of empire, expansion, or a radical change in the nation’s relationship with other powers.

B. The fascist negations:

- Anti-liberalism
- Anti-communism
- Anticonservatism (though with the understanding that fascist groups were willing to undertake temporary alliances with other sectors, most commonly with the right)

C. Style and organization:

- Attempted mass mobilization with militarization of political relationships and style with the goal of a mass party militia
- Emphasis on aesthetic structure of meeting, symbols, and political liturgy, stressing emotional and mystical aspects
- Extreme stress on the masculine principles and male dominance, while espousing a strong organic view of society.

- Exaltation of youth above other phases of life, emphasizing the conflict of generations, at least in effecting the initial political transformation
- Specific tendency toward an authoritarian, charismatic, personal style of command, whether or not the command is to some degree initially elective (Payne, 1995: 7).

According to the Encyclopaedia of Nationalism (Leoussi, s.v. “Fascism”), a “more parsimonious, but also more contested definition” is provided by historian and political scientist Roger Griffin, who very closely links fascism to nationalism as “a genus of political ideology whose mythic core is its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism” (Griffin, 1993: 26). This definition emphasizes the populist, fascist rhetoric that argues for a re-birth of a conflated nation and ethnic people with palingenetic meaning the emphasis on the rebirth of the national spirit, culture, and society. The use of the term “populist” does not, according to Griffin, refer to a “specific historical experience, but a generic term for political forces which, even if led by small elite cadres or self-appointed ‘vanguards’, in practice or in principle (and not merely for show) depend on ‘people power’ as the basis for legitimacy” (Griffin, 1993: 37). “Ultra-nationalism”, he argues, refers to forms of nationalism which go beyond, and reject, anything compatible with liberal institutions or with the tradition of Enlightenment humanism which underpins them (ibid).

I use the definitions of both Payne and Griffin in my comparison between classical ecofascism and modern, online ecofascist content. To examine the extent of classical ecofascism in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram, I more specifically apply the three tiers provided by Payne, and Griffin’s focus on fascism as a palingenetic form of ultra-nationalism.

### **3.2.1 Ecofascism**

The prefix *-eco* is added when we discuss a combination of fascism and ecology. According to Biehl and Staudenmaier, “actually existing ecofascism is the preoccupation of authentically fascist movements with environmental concerns” (2011: 14). Griffin (1993) argues that ecofascism sounds like an “embittered taunt directed at manufacturers who claim that ‘Man’ has a natural right to exploit the planet’s resources irrespective of the ecological consequences, but the reality is quite the opposite” (Griffin, 1993: 2). According to him, ecofascism is a technical term used in environmental studies for “dark” Greens who propose that the state

should be empowered to take Draconian (excessively harsh or severe) interventionist measures to solve ecological problems (ibid). Environmental historian Michael E. Zimmerman argues that no ecofascist government has ever existed but important aspects of it can be found in Nazi Germany's environmental politics (Zimmerman, "Ecofascism").

In this thesis, I use Nazi Germany's environmentalism as the foundation for measuring classical ecofascism. I will present the specific features of this environmentalism in the next chapter, however, a presentation on key figures associated with ecofascism is essential to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Thomas Malthus (1766-1834) observed that an increase in a nation's food production improved the well-being of a population. However, the improvements were only temporary because it led to population growth, which in turn restored the original per capita production level (Malthus and Stimson, 2018). He is best known for his theory that population growth would always outrun the food supply and that the betterment of humankind is impossible without stern limits on reproduction. A belief that is thus commonly referred to as "Malthusian" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. "Thomas Malthus"). Madison Grant (1865-1973) (dubbed the father of ecofascism) was a eugenicist who advocated for the culling of the unfit from the human race, and author of *The Passing of the great Race* (which Hitler would later describe as "his bible" (Patin, 2021)). His book contained pseudoscience which claimed to give an account of the anthropological history of Europe by dividing Europeans into three races: Alpines, Mediterraneans and Nordics. Arguing for why the later was the superior race, fit to rule the earth (ibid). Garrett Hardin (1915- 2003) and Pentti Linkola (1932- 2020) were both proponents of what they refer to as "Lifeboat Ethics". Which proposed that the world must solve real and pressing problems of overpopulation, hunger, and moral duty by ending democracy and replacing it with dictatorships that would use totalitarian and even genocidal tactics to end climate change (Hardin, 1995 and Linkola, 2004).

According to Zimmerman, such radical ecology (also known as "deep ecology") found in the above figures, claims that the consequences of human arrogance – manifested in rampant industrial technology and mindless consumerism – are threatening the integrity of the biosphere. He states that such radical ecologists believe that "the longer democratic societies postpone making the difficult political decisions needed to solve environmental problems, the more drastic the political measures that we will have to take later, will have to be" (Zimmerman,

1995: 209). Zimmerman argues that many such practices could be described as draconian or tyrannical, but not necessarily as fascist. According to him, “fascism gains its power by claiming to restore dignity, nobility, purpose, and privilege to some unique people or race whose members feel that their original mystical-organic, social unity and their ties with the homeland are denigrating because of the insidious influence of alien races and foreign ideas” (ibid). Furthermore, he argues (similarly to Payne and Griffin) that fascism involves “an understanding of society in essential military terms that stress struggle, heroism, leadership, masculinity and youth” (Zimmerman, 1995: 209).

Building on this, I assume that an ecofascist movement would have to feature certain key elements of fascism in addition to proposing deep ecological practises. Using Payne and Griffin’s definitions of fascism, as well as the general agreement of a fascist movement as inherently authoritarian, I ascertain that the key features of fascism are the creation of a new palingenetic nation, authoritarianism, the goal of expansion, anti-liberalism, anti-communism, attempted mass mobilization and a tendency towards an authoritarian, charismatic personal style of command with an extreme emphasis on youth, pro-violence and masculinity. As such, a combination of the features presented by Payne and Griffin will be used to determine to what extent the modern, online ecofascist channels on Telegram, are reviving classical ecofascism. I will expand on how I apply this in the methodology chapter.

Zimmerman’s argument about deep ecology not necessarily representing fascism, is thus one of the primary reasons for why I have chosen to compare online content on Telegram to the case of Nazi Germany. He states that to merit the name “ecofascism”, a radical ecology movement would have to do more than “demand that ecologically vital private property be protected from those who would despoil it” (Zimmerman, 1995: 209). In addition, several scholars (e.g., Zimmerman (1995) and Biehl and Staudenmaier (2011)), argue that no real ecofascist government has ever excised, but the closest case for comparison is found in the Nazi Party’s environmental politics in the twentieth century.

In the next chapter, I outline the specific environmental elements and qualities of Nazi Germany’s environmentalism.

## 4. Theoretical perspective

This chapter explains the specific theoretical perspective I use to analyze and discuss my empirical material. Having previously touched upon a few understandings of ecofascism, I now expand on the environmental elements and qualities found in historical considerations of classical ecofascism – Nazi Germany’s environmentalism. To answer my research question “to what extent is the content in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram a revival of classical ecofascism?”, I apply a comparison between Nazi Germany’s environmentalism and content collected from four self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram.

In this chapter, I begin by looking at the issue of green fascism in a historical perspective. As we’ve seen, the term “fascism” is a highly debated one. One of the few agreed upon consensus of this term is that Mussolini’s Italy was fascist. I therefore begin this chapter by expanding on my choice to use Nazi Germany as the foundation for comparison, and not Fascist Italy. Thereafter, I present an overview of the specific elements of environmentalism found in Nazi Germany.

### 4.1 Green Italian Fascism

As we’ve seen, fascism is notoriously difficult to define. Since the very concept of fascism is contested, Staudenmaier (2004) argues that any general description of its nature and significance will “inevitably be painful and provisional” (2004: 1). As I stated in the previous chapter, I have chosen to use Griffin’s (1993) and Payne’s (1995) descriptions of fascism as built around a chauvinistic and palingenetic nationalism, extreme authoritarianism with a strong supreme leader that stresses the glorification of masculinity, war, and violence. As these qualities are found in most definitions and understanding of fascism (and as the purpose of this thesis is not to contest previous definitions of fascism), I find this to be a fruitful foundation when comparing classical ecofascism to self-proclaimed ecofascist content.

We know that the first fascist movement to attain state power was led by Benito Mussolini (1883-1945), who ruled Italy from 1922 to 1943. According to Staudenmaier, Italian fascism was an “unstable mix of modernizing and reactionary tendencies” (2004: 4). It included a

powerful pro-technology stand while coinciding with a period of industrialization (ibid). An integral component of Italian fascist ideology was the notion of corporatism, an economic model that presented itself as a “third way” between capitalism and communism (ibid). This combination of continued capitalist industrialization and pro-technological bent did little good to the Italian environment. Still, Italian fascism did contain several proto environmentalists stands. The so-called *Strapaese* tendency, for example, celebrated nature and rustic virtues as a contrast to the city and of industrial society (Staudenmaier, 2004: 5). In addition, Mussolini himself announced in 1926:

It is imperative that we create; we, people from this epoch and this generation, because we have the duty to remake the face of the Fatherland both spiritually and materially. In ten years, comrades, Italy will be unrecognizable! This is because we will have transformed it, we will have made a new one, from the mountains which we will have covered with a green coat (of trees), to the fields which will be completely reclaimed (Armiero and Hardenberg, 2013: 284).

As such, in 1928, the “Mussolini Act” launched a large-scale land improvement campaign which included measures to reduce urban sprawl and discourage monocropping in agriculture. The campaign emphasized protection of the soil and non-mechanized methods of cultivation. It was accompanied by reforestation measures and the establishment of wildlife preserves in the Alps (Staudenmaier, 2004: 5).

These measures highlight an ecological focus. However, as Griffin (1993) argues, only the alleged degenerative elements of the modern age were rejected. Griffin states that as fascism is essentially palingenetic, it thrusts towards a *new* type of society. Which means that it builds rhetorically on the cultural achievements attributed to former, more “glorious” or healthy areas in national history only to invoke the regenerative ethos, which is a prerequisite for national rebirth, and not to suggest socio-political models to be duplicated in a literal-minded restoration of the past (Griffin, 1993: 47). Fascism thus represents an alternative modernism rather than a complete rejection of it. When a fascist text bears the title “Revolt Against the Modern World”, as in the case of Julius Evola (1934), Griffin argues that it is thus the *decadent* features of modernity that are being attacked to outline the prospect of a totally different society. Meaning the features of the state's moral or cultural decline and not the entire modern society. As such, a revolt against



the modern world does not indicate a complete rejection of modernity, only against the undesirable features of modernity. In addition, Staudenmaier states that the environmental efforts of the “Mussolini Act”, were offset by other fascist projects like, for instance, the “Battle of Grain” – an attempt to increase wheat productivity which stimulated an increased reliance on machinery and artificial fertilizers (Staudenmaier, 2004: 5). As such, even though there was an environmental focus in Mussolini’s Fascist Italy (e.g., the implementation of national parks, ruralism and re-forestation), modernized industrialization had a stronger foothold in the nation's politics (ibid).

As such, Italian Fascist policy toward the land had decidedly mixed results. While erosion control, water quality, and public health sometimes improved, the regime’s environmentally friendly programs were curtailed or abandoned when the demands of militarization became too pressing (Staudenmaier, 2004: 6). Staudenmaier argues that, above all, Italian fascism’s ecological proclivities were subordinate to its drive toward national aggrandizement and imperial expansion. As such, he argues that Fascist Italy “remained primarily fascist and only secondarily ecological” (ibid).

## **4.2 Green German Nazism**

As such, Staudenmaier argues that the most infamous variant of ecofascism was German National Socialism, commonly known as Nazism (Staudenmaier, 2004: 6). Still, he argues that the notoriety is, however, somewhat misleading since German fascism under the Third Reich differed from its Italian counterpart in several crucial aspects. Unlike Italy, Germany was a fully industrialized country when fascism came to power in 1933 (ibid). In addition, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* describe Nazism as far more extreme both in its ideas and in its practices. They furthermore state that, in almost every respect, Nazism was an anti-intellectual and atheoretical movement, emphasizing the will of the charismatic dictator as the sole source of inspiration of a people and a nation, as well as a vision of annihilation of all enemies of the Aryan Volk (race) as the one and only goal of Nazism (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. «Nazism, »). In this thesis, I thus rely on scholars like Griffin 1993, Spielvogel 2013, Orlow 2009, and Eley’s 2013 understanding of Nazism as an extreme variant of fascism.

Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler (1889-1945), the Nazis implemented “far-reaching programs of environmental protection while simultaneously embarking on massive industrial rearmament in preparation for an aggressive war which devastated much of Europe” (Staudenmaier, 2004: 6). Drawing on beliefs that were already widespread in German environmentalist circles in the early twentieth century, known as the *völkisch* movement, Nazism pursued politics of purity – tying ecological health to racial health (ibid). The foremost proponent of this ideology was the Minister of Agriculture Richard Walther Darré (1895-1953), leader of the so-called “green-wing” of the Nazi Party (ibid). As such, environmental elements quickly found expression in official state policy. As soon as the Nazis took power, several party members initiated legislations and laws to preserve natural areas, protect endangered species, and institute ecologically sensitive land use planning. In addition, laws prohibiting cruelty to animals, restricting commercial development of the countryside, and safeguarding wetlands and waterways were also passed (Staudenmaier, 2004: 7). There were of course Nazi politics that dismissed their environmental focus. I’ve previously stated that no real ecofascist government has ever existed, this includes the Nazi experience. Indeed, Hitler himself stated that “no square meter of German soil shall remain uncultivated” (Uekoetter, 2006: 30). In addition, the Nazis were imperialists who wished to expand the German *Lebensraum* (German living space) by industrial means. Nevertheless, Nazi environmental politics are the *closest* example of ecofascism being implemented and are thus relevant to this thesis. What follows is an overview of the most prominent elements of classical ecofascism found in the Nazi experience.

### **4.3 Mode of interpretation- classical ecofascism**

In this next part, I present the most prominent elements of Nazi ecofascism. While I argue that for something to be ecofascist, it must contain significant features of both ecology and fascism, I find it necessary to divide the term into two separate units of analysis to be able to provide clarity throughout the analysis. I thus start by highlighting some of the fascist features of the Nazi Party before I move on to the environmental concerns. In the analysis I apply Payne’s (1995) and Griffin’s (1993) definitions of fascism as I don’t expect the content in ecofascist channels on Telegram to advocate for the exact same policies that excised in Nazi Germany.

Still, I find it important to highlight some of the fascist features of the Nazi movement to conceptualize how ecofascism might unfold.

### 4.3.1 Fascist features of Nazism

The first element I assume to find in an ecofascist movement are fascist features. As seen in chapter 3, an ecological movement “would have to do more than demand that ecologically vital private property be protected from those who would despoil it” (Zimmerman, 1995: 209). While ecofascism combines both fascism and ecology, I find that separating the two allows for a more precise analysis. After all, how can something be called ecofascist if it is not fascist? The same goes for ecology without fascism. Relying on scholarly understandings of Nazism as a variant of fascism, this part thus presents some of the key features of fascism in Nazi Germany.

One important feature of Payne and Griffin’s description of fascism is understanding the term as inherently collectivistic and opposed to liberalism. In the Nazi experience, countless statements by leaders and minority spokesmen of the Nazi regime made it abundantly clear to Germans that they needed to subordinate their personal desires and interests to the *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community) (Föllmer, 2010: 61). While an appeal to individualized expectations were necessary to motivate Berliners at work, in their social lives and later in combat, the primary focus of Hitler, was not on individual German’s well-being (ibid: 97). Indeed, the Italian *fascio* (Latin *fasces*, French *faisceau*, Spanish *hazi*) means “bundle” or “union” (Payne, 1996: 3). Saying that Nazism is a variety of fascism thus emphasises its collectiveness in the very name of the movement. Hitler envisioned the ideal German society as a racially unified and hierarchically organized body in which the interest of the individual would be strictly subordinate to those of the nation, or *Volk* (race) (Föllmer, 2010: 61). Like a military battalion, the people’s communities would be permanently prepared for war and would accept the discipline that this required (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. “Fascism”).

As such, one of the main goals of the Nazi Party was to create a homogeneous German society based on racial purity that would expand beyond their initial borders. According to Payne, this goal of empire, expansion, and a radical change in the nation’s relationship with other, is an important feature of fascism (Payne, 1995: 7). According to Spielvogel, such ambitions rejected other major ideas that had dominated European political life in the nineteenth century – ideas that had supported the notion of progress. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, European

civilization underwent a tremendous transformation that led to increased urbanization, a new class structure, and new values. By the end of the nineteenth century, 50 percent of Europeans lived in cities (Spielvogel, 2013: 1). According to Spielvogel, this development dazzled some Europeans and led to social discontent among others. Members of the middle class and especially the lower middle class, felt threatened by the rapid changes in society and which led many of them supporting the Nazis as champions of a hierarchal social order that would preserve traditional class positions (ibid). Spielvogel argues that although nationalism was often a liberalizing force in the first half of the nineteenth century because of its stress on the freedom and right of separate peoples to have their own nations, in the second half of the century it became a chauvinistic force that encouraged the right of *some* nationalities (often deemed racially superior) to dominate other inferior people (ibid). Nationalism thus came to destroy nineteenth-century liberal values, fostering fanaticism and violence at the expense of reasoned debate and compromise, along with this extreme nationalism, Spielvogel argues, came a “virulent racism, commonly in the form of anti-Semitism, that insisted on the right of a race to maintain its purity by excluding the Jews”. Advocating leadership and hierarchy, Nazism would also react against the nineteenth- and twentieth-century development of democracy (Spielvogel, 2013: 1). Within a few weeks of being in power, Hitler sealed the demise of the Weimar Republic by a law (the Law to remedy the State of Emergency of *Volk* and Reich, known as the Enabling Act) that ended parliamentary government and gave him and his cabinet full dictatorial power. According to the Encyclopædia Britannica, Hitler attempted to not only control all political power but also the many institutions and organizations that were previously independent of the state such as courts, churches, universities, social clubs, youth clubs, and many more (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. “Fascism”). Another important characteristic of Nazism is Payne’s argument of fascism as inherently anti-communist. In Nazi Germany the Nazi SA (*Strumabteilung*, meaning “assault division”) regularly clashed with German leftists in the streets before 1933. After the Nazi Party took power, hundreds of Marxists were sent to concentration camp and “red” neighbourhoods were intimidated with police raids and beatings (ibid). Marxists and liberal internationalism were thus seen as threats to German national unity (ibid). Rejecting rationalism, liberalism, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and all movements of international cooperation and peace, Nazism stressed instinct, the subordination of the individual to the state, and the necessity of blind and unswerving obedience to leaders appointed from above (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. “Nazism”).

These fascist features of the totalitarian movement that was the Nazi Party, were rooted in a nature mysticism of the nineteenth-century. In this next part, I expand on this and the environmental focus of the Nazi Party.

### **4.3.2 Anti-modernization**

As explored by Biehl and Staudenmaier (2011), the origins of ecofascism have long roots in nineteenth-century nature-mysticism, which fed into the rise of Nazism in the twentieth century (2011: 10).

These ideas were laid by individuals such as Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860) who, in the nineteenth century, bound environmentalism with a xenophobic nationalism that espoused a message of the German peoples' well-being depending on the health of German ecosystems (Thomas and Gosink, 2021: 32). Arndt was particularly dedicated to the cause of the peasantry, which led him to a concern for the welfare of the land itself (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 15). Historians of German environmentalism mention him as the earliest example of "ecological thinking" in the modern sense. His 1815 article *On the Care and Conservation of Forests*, written at the dawn of industrialization in Central Europe, rails against short-sighted exploitation of woodlands and soil, condemning deforestation and its economic causes (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 16). His environmentalism was, as mentioned, inextricably bound up with virulently xenophobic nationalism. His eloquent and prescient appeals for ecological sensitivity were always couched in the well-being of the *German* soil and the *German* people (ibid).

Wilhelm Riehl (1823- 1897), was a student of Arndt's who virulently opposed industrial/urban tendencies while connecting the health of the German land to the robustness and integrity of the German ethnic identity (Thomas and Gosink, 2021: 32). Riehl further developed Arndt's sinister traditions and in some respects, his "green" streak went deeper than Arndt's (ibid). His 1853 essay *Field and Forests*, ended with a call to fight for the "rights of wilderness" (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 16). However, nationalistic pathos set the tone: "We must save the forest, not only so that our ovens do not become cold in winter, but also so that the pulse of life of the people continues to beat warm and joyfully, so that Germany remains German" (ibid). Riehl was thus an implacable opponent of the rise of industrialism and urbanization. His overtly antisemitic glorification of rural peasant values and undifferentiated

condemnation of modernity established him as the “founder of agrarian romanticism and anti-urbanism” (ibid).

Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), who was integral in establishing ecology as a scientific field, infused his scientific studies with the philosophies of Social Darwinism (ideas and practices that applied biological concepts of natural selection and survival of the fittest to sociology, economics and politics in the 1870s) (Thomas and Gosink, 2021: 32). As such, Haeckel was the chief popularizer of the Darwin and evolutionary theory for the German-speaking world and developed a peculiar sort of social Darwinist philosophy he called “monism” (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 18). He founded the German Monist League which combined scientifically based ecological holism with *völkisch* social views. He believed in Nordic racial superiority, strenuously opposed race mixing and enthusiastically supported racial eugenics (ibid). According to Gasman (1971), Haeckel contributed to that special variety of German thought which served as the seed bed for National Socialism and became one of Germany's major ideologists for racism, nationalism, and imperialism.

It is frequently pointed out that the agrarian and romantic moments of Nazi environmentalism and policy were in constant tension with, if not in flat contradiction to, the technocratic-industrial thrust of the Third Reich's rapid modernization (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 34). I don't claim that this was not an important aspect of the Nazi ideology and politics. Nor do I argue that Nazi Germany was more environmental than industrial. Still, these modernizing tendencies had a significant ecological component. Nazi Germany's Reich Nature Protection Law (RNG) of 1935, was, for instance, the first government to pass such a comprehensive piece of pro-environmental legislation (Zeller et al. 2005: 8). This legislation created the possibility for protecting the entire landscape and curbing the destructive effects of economic development on the countryside. It provided a unified definition of areas worthy of protection for the entire nation. It also required any party wishing to alter the terrain through major construction projects to consult with responsible government officials (Closemann, 2005: 18). In addition, two actors principally responsible for sustaining an environmentalist commitment during intensive industrialization were *Reichminister* Fritz Todt and his aide, the high-level planner and engineer Alwin Seifert (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 34). Todt was one of the most influential National Socialists directly responsible for questioning technological and industrial policy. The ecological aspects of his approach to construction (to make it as environmental as possible) went well beyond an emphasis on harmonious adaptations to the natural surroundings for aesthetic reasons (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 35). Todt established strict criteria for

respecting wetlands, forests, and ecologically sensitive areas and just as with Arndt and Riehl, these environmentalist concerns were inseparably bound to a *völkisch*-nationalist outlook (ibid). Todt's chief advisor and collaborator on environmental issues was his lieutenant Alwin Seifert. A man whom Todt reportedly once called a "fanatical ecologist" and who bore the nickname "Mr. Mother Earth" within the Nazi Party (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 36). Seifert dreamed of a total conversion from technology to nature and would wax lyrical about the wonders of German nature and the tragedy of "humankind's" carelessness (ibid).

### **4.3.3 Völkisch beliefs**

The fixations of Arndt, Riehl and Haeckel, matured in the second half of the nineteenth century through to the Nazi era in the context of the *völkisch* movement – a powerful cultural disposition and a social tendency which united ethnocentric populism with nature mysticism, and was, at heart, a pathological response to modernity (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 17). In the face of the very real dislocations brought on by the triumph of industrial capitalism and national unification in nineteenth century, *völkisch* thinkers "preached a return to the land, to the simplicity and wholeness of a life attuned to nature's purity" (ibid). As such, the *völkisch* movement was a German ethnonationalist movement rooted in nature and, as Biehl and Staudenmaier puts it, "the age-old object of peasant hatred and middle-class resentment: the Jews" (2011: 17).

During the Third Reich, the Nazis believed in and enforced the German *Volk*, which they believed excluded Jews, the Romani people, homosexuals, and other foreign elements living in Germany (Hutton, 2005: 95). Although *völkisch*-nationalism was not a product of Nazism, it had a clear influence on Nazi ideology, rooted in an older German tradition (Tourlamain, 2014: 99). According to, Mosse (1964) the word "volk" is a much more comprehensive term than "people". He argues that ever since the birth of a German romanticism in the late eighteenth century, "volk" signified the union of a group of people with a transcendental "essence", one that might be called "nature" or "cosmos" or "mythos" (1964: 4). Somewhat similarly, Camus and Todd (2017) describe the term as expressing racist nostalgia, one based in folklore, for a "mythified" German prehistory. They argue that German romanticism rejected reason and scientism in favor of legendary folklore and the myth of a Golden Age, namely the Roman Holy Empire of the German Nation (962-1806) (Camus and Todd, 2017: 16). This medieval Reich, with its feudal principles and trade guilds, represented an ideal Germany in which society was

supposedly organized into harmonious hierarchal order (ibid). Reformulating traditional German antisemitism into a nature-friendly term, Biehl and Staudenmaier argue that the *völkisch* movement carried a volatile blend of nineteenth century cultural prejudices, romantic obsessions with purity, and the anti-Enlightenment sentiment into the twentieth century political discourse (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 17).

#### **4.3.4 Blood and soil doctrine**

According to Biehl and Staudenmaier (2011), the influence of the *völkisch* movement resulted in an ecofascist philosophy that preached the importance of ecological integrity in maintaining the health of the German race from the late nineteenth century through to the Nazi era. These ecological philosophies, that linked traditional agrarian romanticism and hostility to urban civilization, all revolving around the idea of rootedness in nature (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 28), were ultimately adapted into political policy of the Nazi Party (Thomas and Gosink, 2021). By framing the degradation of the natural environment as the result of industrialization and urbanism as well as the presence of foreign “invaders”, Biehl and Staudenmaier argue that the Nazis attempted to justify not only the totalitarian social order of the Third Reich, but also Germany’s need for *Lebensraum* (the plan of conquering ‘living space’ in Eastern Europe for the German people) (2011: 27).

The blood purity of the German race was assumed to be directly connected to German soil, a view that developed into the infamous *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil) doctrine by Richard Walther Darré who in 1930 proclaimed that “The unity of blood and soil must be restored” (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 31). This doctrine suggested that any race abolishes its genuine spirit and its true essence if it is disconnected from its natural surroundings. In this case, the Aryan race could not have survived while alienated from the unique environment that had forged the race into what it is (Protopapadakis, 2014: 588). Thus, every civilization can only emerge due to the unique connection between a specific race and the environment; therefore, any civilization can only be local (ibid). For that reason, the infamous phrase by Darré, denoted a “quasi-mystical connection” between ‘blood’ (the race or *Volk*) and ‘soil’ (the land and the natural environment) specific to Germanic people (ibid). The slogan furthermore strengthened the belief that the Jewish people were an especially rootless, wandering people, incapable of any true relationship with the land (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 31).



These connections between the worlds of “blood” and “soil” had been made before the Nazis. Arndt had already linked peasant romanticism with nationalism and Riehl had stressed the political value of peasants as a conservative bloc in society (Gerhard, 2005: 131). Darré gave the idea a new connotation, however. He wanted “blood” to be understood as “race”. As such, German blood generated an exclusive claim to the sacred German soil. Darré was a specialist in genetic livestock selection, and he applied his findings from animal breeding to human beings. This commitment to Social Darwinism proposed a system of racial selection to “breed” a new rural nobility. These beliefs led to Darré suggesting marriage restrictions for Jews and “less valuable” non-Jews, strict state control of all marriages and fertility and sterilization of those members of the community who were considered to be a threat to the “racial purity” of the German people (Gerhard, 2005: 132). In addition, “blood and soil” was used to justify Germany’s right to acquire land in the east and to settle ethnic Germans there (ibid). In language replete with the biologicistic metaphors of organism, Darré proclaimed: “The concept of Blood and Soil gives us the moral right to take back as much land in the East as is necessary to establish a harmony between the body of our Volk and the geopolitical space” (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 32). These politics bridge the beliefs of a “blood and soil” connection between the land and the people, and eugenic practices. The racial ideology of Nazi Germany thus secured the biological improvements of the German people by selectively breeding “Aryan” and “Nordic” traits (Longerich, 2010: 30). Thus, many of Nazi Germany’s physicians and biomedical scientists – including leading academics in the related fields of anthropology, human genetics and racial science – were complicit in the eugenic and racial policies of the Nazi regime that culminated in the holocaust (Wetzell, 2017: 147). The Nuremberg Laws, for example, declared that any sexual contact with non-German, even if conception did not occur, was an act of “racial defilement” punishable by law (Geulen, 2017: 197).

With the Third Reich’s technological policy entrusted to figures such as these, Biehl and Staudenmaier, argue that even the Nazis’ massive industrial build-up took on a “distinctively green hue” (2011: 36). The prominence of nature in the party’s philosophical background helped ensure that more radical initiatives often received a sympathetic hearing in the highest offices of the Nazi state (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 36). Indeed, such musings, Biehl and Staudenmaier stresses (2011: 28), were not mere rhetoric’s. They reflected firmly held beliefs and practices at the very top of the Nazi hierarchy. For example, Hitler and Himmler were both strict vegetarians and animal lovers who were both attracted to nature’s mysticism and homeopathic cures, and staunchly opposed to vivisection and cruelty to animals (Biehl and

Staudenmaier, 2011: 28). Even in the midst of war, Nazi leaders maintained their commitment to ecological ideals which were, for them, an essential element of racial rejuvenation (ibid: 28).

## **4.4 Examining “fascism” and “ecology”**

As Thomas and Gosink puts it, “here we find the haunting legacy of ecofascism - racism and xenophobia attempting to be justified by ecological concerns of overpopulation, foreign and “alien” invaders, and the primacy of a people’s connection to and reliance on health ecologies” (2021: 34). They further argue that “the Third Reich was defeated, but the philosophies of fascism and ecofascism continued to linger in its wake”, even now in the twenty-first century (ibid). Like I have previously stated, my intent is not to contest the claims by researcher or journalists. Instead, my interest lies in examining how ecofascist, self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram are. As such, building on the claims that ecofascism is undergoing a revival in online communities, and the arguments that the most notable case of a real-life ecofascist government is found in the Nazi experience, I assume that modern, online ecofascism will contain key features of Nazi ecology. This includes both fascist features and a strong environmental focus.

As previously stated in this chapter, I find that dividing the term into two separate units of analysis, “ecology” and “fascism”, to be helpful in providing clarity throughout the analysis. To that end, I apply Payne (1995) and Griffin’s (1993) definitions of fascism to evaluate to what extent the content on Telegram is fascist, and themes of Nazi Germany’s environmentalism to measure the extent of ecology in the online content. I will expand on the specific themes in the following chapter: methodology.

## 5. Methodology

As I wish to conduct an in-depth analysis of a social phenomenon, I judge that a qualitative method is most beneficial to my purpose. As Forman and Damschroder puts it, “compared to quantitative inquiry, the goal of all qualitative inquiry is to understand a phenomenon, rather than to make generalizations from the study sample to the population based on statistical inference” (2008: 41). Nevertheless, with any research it is imperative that it is conducted in a rigorous and methodical manner to yield meaningful and useful results. According to Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017), for qualitative research to be accepted as trustworthy, it must demonstrate that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner through recording, systematizing, and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough detail to enable the reader to determine whether the process is credible (Nowell, Norris, White and Moules, 2017: 1). As I conduct my research on loosely defined virtual communities without engaging with any of the subjects, this thesis preforms research methods known as *unobtrusive research*. Meaning, methods of studying social behavior without affecting it (Babbie, 2010: 340). Muis, Klein and Dijkstra (2020), argues that research on social media allows us to get an insight into real-life everyday discussions among far-right supporters (2020: 147). According to Ravndal and Jupskås (2020), available evidence on far-right violence “suffer from several shortcomings hindering comparative research and theory testing from moving forward” (2020: 133). This includes research that fail to ensure that a) all relevant incidents are included; b) all irrelevant incidents are excluded; and c) the target selection is based on right-wing motives (ibid). This thesis does not examine violence specifically, however, I find Ravndal and Jupskås’ arguments to be relevant to my own research on the far-right. Thus, this chapter seeks to explain the methodological considerations and decisions that have been made to ensure that my own project don’t make the same mistakes Ravndal and Jupskås mentions.

To that end, I expand on the set of complementary qualitative methods I use to collect, analyze, and produce my findings. I start with some comments on the specifics of Telegram, before I present a discussion of online ethnography, which I have used to identify my sources and collect the data, before moving on to expand on qualitative content analysis which I use to code and categorize my data.

## 5.1 Telegram

In this thesis, I compare content gathered from four channels on Telegram to Nazi environmentalism to answer my research questions. The channels are all public and describe themselves as ecofascist, but their specific usernames will remain anonymous for privacy reasons. I will expand on this later in the chapter. In this next part, I elaborate on my choice to analyze Telegram.

Telegram is a social messaging platform with little to no supervision or oversight and has been described as a "safe haven" for white supremacists and pro-Nazi content (Gais and Squire 2021; Collier, Schecter and Kaplan 2021). The app was founded by Pavel Durov in 2014 and, as on Twitter or Facebook, an individual user or group can create an account — known as a “channel” on Telegram — that allows them to post messages, pictures, videos, customizable “stickers” and other files for their followers (Gais and Squire, 2021). An important feature of Telegram is the network’s secret chats, a separate feature from its ordinary channels, that allows for end-to-end encryption (meaning that only the sender and receiver can see the messages). These messages cannot be forwarded and can be set to self-destruct after a certain amount of time. One key difference between Telegram’s secret and ordinary chats is that secret chats are not stored in the app’s cloud, which means you can only access the messages from the device of origin (Shu, 2013). As I have previously stated, the data collected for analysis in this thesis are not found in secret and encrypted chats, they were found through extensive research on the platform's open and public channels. Still, I find it relevant to mention the aspect of the encrypted chat rooms, as they demonstrate why Telegram might have become the chosen platform for far-right communication.

The platform makes for an obvious choice for far- right communication as the founder himself has boasted that Telegram is technologically and ideologically unsurveillable (Dewey, 2015). While multiple cryptologists and security experts have claimed that Telegram is not all that secure, it remains an attractive platform for far-right actors today as its content moderation is lax and scattershot (ibid). In addition, compared to other social networks like Signal and WhatsApp where the maximum number of people who can communicate in groups are 1,000 and 256 respectively, Telegram lets its users create channels with up to 200,000 people (Molla, 2021). The network's very brief terms of service forbid the promotion of violence on public channels, but do not mention anything about promoting violence on private channels or groups

(ibid). According to Vox (ibid), Telegram is popular among extremists precisely for the same reason it's popular with everyone else: the app is pretty good. It's easy to use and is not frequently offline. Professor in computer science at Elon University Megan Squire, who studies right-wing political extremism online, says the app is much better than others popular among right-wing extremists like Gab and Parler as Telegram is not “put together with bubble gum and duct tape” (Mollar, 2021).

According to Collier, Schechter and Kaplan (2021), the far-right communication on Telegram had previously been spread on other major platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Parler. However, after events such as, for instance, the siege of the U.S Capitol on January 6th, 2021 – an event where the plans to storm the U.S Capitol were circulating on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Parler for days before the siege – these platforms enforced restrictions on what type of content can be shared and banned several far-right accounts (Collier, Schechter and Kaplan, 2021). This led to increased use of Telegram as actors have been forced off other platforms (Schechter, 2021). The outline of the channels resembles group chats on other major platforms such as, for example, WhatsApp. However, Telegram channels don't necessarily allow for group communication. Instead, they are moderated by a single author who is the only one able to post content. According to Telegram, these channels are thus a “tool for broadcasting your public messages to large audiences” (Telegram, “Telegram Channels”). The channels allow for an unlimited number of subscribers where only the admins have the right to post messages in each channel. Simply put, if you find the content of a given channel likable, you subscribe to it and follow what the moderator is posting. In addition, the moderators decide if the subscribers are allowed to comment or not, which means that in channels where the comment function is disengaged, only a single author is “preaching” to thousands of subscribers.

Building on these technical features, and the increased use of Telegram among the far-right, I identify Telegram as an apt platform for research when discussing far-right content. In the next part I describe how I apply the two complementary methods, online ethnography and content analysis to my research.

## **5.2 Online ethnography**

Skågeby (2011) describes the use of online ethnographic methods as a “qualitative approach and an effective way to reach qualitative understandings of virtual communities” (2011: 410). According to him, user engagement and communication sharing are two very central activities of virtual communities. In themselves these activities “lay the ground for online methods as a practical means of data-collection and the enduring qualities of some conversations and the technological means to record other, more transient, conversations make it possible to collect social data from virtual communities” (Skågeby, 2011: 410).

As I need to collect and analyze large amounts of text, pictures, videos, and symbols from online communities, I judge Skågeby’s online ethnography as a suitable approach. He argues that online ethnography is not very different from traditional ethnography. In fact, online ethnography has been described as traditional ethnography adapted to the study of online communities (Skågeby, 2011: 411). This is indeed what this thesis seeks to explore: a phenomenon from the point of view of the subject of the study. Or as Skågeby puts it “a description of individuals, groups or cultures in their own environment over a (long) period of time” (ibid).

The procedure itself consists of several different steps, namely cultural entrance, collection, and analysis of data while also making sure that trustworthy interpretations are made, conducting ethically sound research, and making sure that members of the studied milieu can provide feedback to the research(er) (Skågeby, 2011: 411).

### **5.2.1 Declaring a perspective**

Skågeby strongly recommends that the first critical step of any ethnographic research process is to “declare the perspective from which the researcher(s) are initiating their endeavor”. This step, he argues, is often overlooked by online ethnographic research papers (Skågeby, 2011: 413). He states that this might be due to the limited space often provided to papers or chapters, but nevertheless, as ethnographic research is so dependent on the relationship between researcher and the researched context, Skågeby argues that it presents itself as a necessary “component of any ethnographic study” (ibid). As such, a certain amount of self-reflection on my position as an Internet user, both as a researcher and as a subjective human being, has been necessary to declare a perspective.

My perspective as an online ethnography researcher is one that falls within the insider/outsider dichotomy. According to Skågeby, this means that the stance of the researcher is to be an

“outsider with certain inside experience” (Skågeby, 2011: 413). He argues that the benefit of such a position is that there is still room for reflective observation as well as improved analytical skills from knowing the basics of interaction and technical features (e.g., by avoiding technical slip-ups or elementary social faux pas) (ibid). Personally, I’ve been using Telegram for years. Not as a participator or observer in the specific communities I’m analyzing in this thesis, but as a messaging tool to stay connected with friends from all over the world. It’s my personal perception that Telegram is not as commonly used in Norway for this reason, but for a person with a lot of friends from different corners of the world, it has become a practical and easy way of communication.

Skågeby also argues that by answering the question regarding the researchers own experiences of the problem area, is likely to enhance the dependability of the research (Skågeby, 2011: 413). As a person whose upbringing consisted of a mother, a father and two siblings on the west coast of Norway, my own experience is elevated and glorified in the channel content I am analyzing. In online channels where such nuclear families are considered the “right way” and where locations such as Scandinavia are glorified, my background ticks all the boxes of a potentially like-minded ally. However, while I fit the description of what is being romanticized and promoted in these communities (blue/green eyes, light colored hair, and fair skin), these opinions and beliefs couldn't be further from my own. This is a position I am very aware of as I move forward with my research. I thus acknowledge my potentially subjective reading of the data and strive towards an unbiased interpretation of the data by basing my analysis on the theoretical perspective.

As such, I consider my insider knowledge limited to the specific technicalities of the platform Telegram, but my position as an observer for a research perspective is that of an outsider.

### **5.2.2 Making a safe and ethical entrance**

According to Skågeby, how to “enter” the studied community depends on whether “hidden or open research is intended”. Meaning if the researcher intends to not only gather data from archives, but also engage or participate in the ongoing activities of the community and its members (Skågeby, 2011: 414). In turn, this could depend on the nature of the studied community and how the results are fed back and ultimately disseminated.

As previously stated, the focus of this thesis is to examine to what extent self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram are reviving classical ecofascism. To do this, I will not be actively participating in the communities I'm analyzing. Instead, I will only be observing them. This is in large part because the moderators of the channels are not of interest in this endeavor, the *content* is. By identifying features of classical ecofascism in Nazi Germany, I seek to investigate if the content in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels are similar or if they differ significantly. The moderator's personal beliefs, opinions, stories, and considerations are certainly an interesting field of research, and arguable present in the content. However, due to the aspect of safety and ethics, this study is a purely observational one.

I assume that the channels on Telegram, however open and public, are not open and public for research purposes. My position as an uninvited observer thus becomes problematic when the content encourages violence on outsiders. A lot of the communication in these groups revolve around spreading hateful and racist rhetoric by, for example, posting pictures of guns with the tagline "stay dangerous". As such, engaging in personal communications with the moderators of these channels is not something I judge to be safe. That's not to say that everyone who posts hateful comments online are automatically dangerous, but rather that keeping a safe distance and staying anonymous by observing and not engaging is more beneficial to my research purpose. In addition to safety, I conclude that engaging with the moderators might lead to other negative outcomes, such as my possible removal of the channels. For instance, in any open channel there is always the possibility of people joining only to observe what is being written because they, for example, find it amusing, inspiring, agreeable, or maybe they belong to the opposition and only join to gather inside information. However, I surmise that there is a difference in knowing that these people maybe exist in a large channel and being confronted with one. By reaching out and declaring myself as a researcher interested in gathering and publishing their thoughts and opinions, I might sabotage the insight I already have in being an anonymous member of the channels. Like I said, there is a difference in knowing that someone might be watching what you're anonymously posting online and being explicitly confronted with the reality of it. However, I am aware of my position as a potential invader and have therefore made certain ethical considerations to ensure the privacy of those I observe.

I surmise that these channels are public because the moderators intend to spread their beliefs and opinions to as many people as possible. However, I don't assume that they are public to researchers intending to systematically code, categorize, analyze, and report on their content.



In addition, the content contains highly sensitive subjects. Beliefs and opinions about religion, politics, immigration, gender, race etc. are published behind anonymous usernames but still include enough information that they could *potentially* lead to the identification of the moderators if someone were to go looking. For example, when you create an account on Telegram you connect it to your phone number. If I were to publish the names of the channels or moderators used in this thesis, I thereby run the risk of revealing personal details about the moderators. Due to the challenges this proposes, I consulted with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) to ensure that I remained ethical throughout the process. Because the material contains highly sensitive details and due to the identifying factors within the user and channel names, they advised me to withhold all identifying features from the data storage and final report. As such, I have taken specific steps to ensure the anonymity and privacy of the channels and moderators, even though they are public. Each of the four channels are described as ecofascist in their channel description and their content have a clear and strong focus on environmentalism. However, the channel names don't necessarily imply an ecofascist focus. In agreement with the NSD, these components remained anonymous in the data storage and will continue to do so in this report. Other research projects have chosen differently (e.g., Loadenthal, 2022), however, the content I have published in this thesis are either screenshots of photos that carry no identifying factors or paraphrased messages.

Finding these channels with a strong focus on environmentalism was undoubtedly a challenge. While finding white supremacist channels was not difficult (rather, it was scarily accessible), finding channels that focused on environmental concerns proved quite time-consuming. As I mentioned above, despite these channels being public to Telegram users, they often appear under anonymous and incognito names that do not necessarily represent or convey the content within. So, the process of locating relevant channels for my analysis took time. In the end, joining channels that focused on traditional white supremacist content became a gateway to other channels. A process that eventually led me to the channels I was seeking. In the next part I expand on how I chose the four samples used in this thesis.

### **5.2.3 Targeted document collection based on observation**

Skågeby (2011) argues that the three most common data collection methods used in online ethnography are document collection, online observation, and online interviews. As I am not

engaging with any of the channel moderators, the two most relevant methods for this thesis are document collection and online observation.

Document collection refers to the gathering of, in some sense, archived data. In general, the data comes from asynchronous genres of communication such as discussion forums, blogs or mailing lists (Skågeby, 2011: 414). The selection of data collected, Skågeby argues, is usually at the “discretion of the ethnographer and should, naturally, be guided by the research question” (ibid). He further states that document collection is typically one of two types: targeted or distributed (2011: 415). In my case, I use targeted document collections. Which means that one specific forum is selected (Telegram) because of its relevance to answering the research question. In this case, the actual collection boils down to identifying relevant channels and saving the content. In this thesis, that included channels that (1) described themselves as ecofascist, and (2) had a strong environmental focus. Ultimately, this amounted to 190 posts of text, audio, videos, and symbols from four channels, from September 2021 to February 2022. I will expand on this further.

### **5.2.3.1 Sampling**

According to Babbie, in social research there is virtually no limit to what or whom can be studied (2010: 101). In this project, the sample size and units for analysis were decided upon based on thorough online observation. As such, I was able to identify three criteria for selecting relevant channels: (1) subject; (2) popularity; and (3) time frame. Which means that the four channels I identified as fruitful for this thesis, were (1) self-proclaimed ecofascist with a strong environmental focus; (2) had a substantial following; and (3) had been active for long enough that I was able to collect an ample amount of data.

Skågeby argues that users in virtual communities do not act in “sociotechnical vacuums” (2011: 415). Instead, the motivations, technology, netiquette, and conflicts of interest emerge during social interactions (ibid). Through online observation on Telegram, I was thus able to get a sense of what was relevant, important, and significant to my thesis (ibid). As I’ve previously stated, Telegram is a largely unsupervised platform, but channels are still banned and/or deleted if the content is identified as violating the terms of agreements (by promoting violence for instance). As these self-proclaimed ecofascist channels often promote violence they are (if not often) sometimes banned and deleted. In addition, if a channel moderator is inactive for a

specific time frame, the channel will self-delete. As such, when I identified relevant channels, I had to act quickly and save the content before the channels disappeared. Thus, the time frame of six months (September 2021 to February 2022), was decided upon because the channels I identified with relevant content and popularity had all been active alongside each other during this time frame. Which, in turn, provided me with an ample amount of content to compare to the themes of classical ecofascism. Other channels that had been active for a longer period had either no focus on environmentalism or had only a small focus on environmentalism, mainly by re-posting environmental content already found in the other four channels. As such, there were no new codes or concepts emerging in these other, older channels (Derrick, 2017).

Through online observation, I was thus able to identify four self-proclaimed ecofascist channels with a strong environmental focus, each with more than 1000 subscribers that had been active for at least six months. Which amounted to 190 posts. Many other self-proclaimed ecofascist channels were also found. However, due to their time frame being significantly shorter, they were excluded in favor of the channels with more subscribers and content. This is not to say that I assumed that the younger channels were “less” ecofascist. Rather, I judged that the channels that had been active for longer with a larger following would provide me with more content to analyse, and that their large following indicated a strong appeal to other users.

An important disclosure before we move forward regarding the four different channels used in this thesis, is that their content did not differ significantly. While I first intended to compare the similarities and differences of each channel to the themes of classical ecofascism, I quickly observed that they contained much of the same themes. For instance, while one channel had a heavier focus on violence by publishing more pictures of guns, the other three channels still had a meaningful focus on violence. Thus, I have chosen to analyse the four channels as a whole and not separate them into four different units of analysis. Thus, when the four channels were identified and the content was collected, I applied a qualitative content analysis to code, analyze and report on my findings.

### **5.3 Qualitative content analysis**

According to Babbie, content analysis is the study of “recorded human communication” (Babbie, 2010: 341). Grønmo (2016) expands on this by describes a qualitative content analysis as based on a systematic assessment of documents with an aim to categorize the content that is

relevant to the research question. Grønmo argues that the data collection happens partially alongside the data analysis. Which means that as the researcher collects the data, the researcher also studies, analyzes, and interprets the content – resulting in an understanding of which features are fruitful to the study (Grønmo, 2016: 165). In this thesis, I build on Jane Forman and Laura Damschroder’s description of qualitative content analysis “in which categories are largely derived from the data, applied to the data through close reading, and analyzed solely qualitative” (2008: 39). They furthermore state that for some authors, qualitative content analysis entails counting words or categories to detect patterns in the data and then analyzing those patterns to understand what they mean (ibid). In this thesis, however, I apply some of the same techniques as Forman and Damschroder. Which entails collecting the content and interpreting the meaning based on categories and themes of my theoretical perspective – classical ecofascism. As this is a complicated process, Grønmo argues that the data collection and categorization must be done manually by the researcher. In this thesis I did not apply a text analysis software to assist me in generating codes from my material. On the one hand, this was based on Grønmo’s argument, but also because the data consisted of a combination of text, photos, audio files, and videos. Instead of looking for software programs able to identify codes and categories without losing or missing out on important aspects, I thus chose to keep it simple and stick with what I already knew. Which meant using Microsoft Word and manual coding.

### **5.3.1 Measurement techniques**

Some comments on the validity and reliability of this study are necessary to ensure what Neuendorf calls, “good” measurements (2017: 113). According to Neuendorf, validity may be seen as encompassing the criteria of reliability. Which means that a measure cannot be valid if it is not reliable (ibid). Neuendorf’s arguments were made in a quantitative context, but I still want to apply some of them to my own qualitative study to illustrate how I ensure the validity and reliability of my findings.

According to Neuendorf, validity is the extent to which a measuring procedure “represents the intended, and only the intended, concept” (2017: 112). Asking the question “Are we measuring what we want to measure?”, is thus necessary (ibid). My research question asks, “To what extent is the content in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram a revival of classical ecofascism?”. As such, the intended concept in this project is the content in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram. I therefore judge an unobtrusive method of research to be

beneficial to my study (Babbie, 2010: 340). More specifically, a complimentary set of qualitative methods. According to Babbie, among the forms suitable for a content analysis are “postings on the Internet” (ibid: 342). As I seek to provide an in-depth analysis of the content in a specific online community, I argue therefore judge a qualitative content analysis is fitting for the topic being investigated and ensures the validity of my research.

Reliability, Neuendorf argues, refers to the extent to which a “measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials” (2017: 112). Neuendorf furthermore states that “the notion relevant to content analysis is that a measure is not valuable if it can be conducted only once or only by one particular person” (ibid). To ensure that my work is reliable, and in turn considered valid (ibid: 141), I build on Whitemore, Chase and Mandele’s (2001) four criteria of qualitative research: credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity (2001: 530-531). They argue that assuring credibility “refers to the conscious effort to establish confidence in an accurate interpretation of the meaning of the data”, with authenticity involving the “portrayal of research that reflects the meanings and experiences that are lived and perceived by the participants” (ibid: 530). In my study, I analyse written messages and audiovisual files. In doing so, I don’t report on what I can’t interpret. Which means that to ensure the reliability of my study, I only interpret and report on the explicitly stated meanings in the content. This includes the explicitly stated written texts, photos, videos, and audio files and excludes any assumption about the moderators’ own intentions and perceptions about the content. I then examining those findings in light of my theoretical perspective, thereby ensuring that I don’t run the risk of making biased assumptions about underlying context that I can’t verify. This is furthermore discussed by Whitemore, Chase and Mandele in their criteria of criticality and integrity (2001: 531). They argue that the “infinitely differing interpretations, assumptions and knowledge background of investigators that can potentially influence the process, require a devout attention to integrity and criticality” (ibid). Building on this, I recognize my position as a subjective human being, and therefore demonstrate the systematic research design I apply in my study to ensure my objectivity in interpreting the content in this next part.

### **5.3.2 Themes and categories**

According to Neuendorf, in a content analysis, operationalization means the “construction of a coding scheme” (2017: 118). To do this, I rely on Mayring’s argument that the first step of this

process is the “procedure of textual interpretation” (2000: 3). The following part therefore explains the process of defining the themes and categories of my study.

As I’m examining the extent of classical ecofascism in online content, I apply a deductive approach to code and interpret my data. When using a deductive approach, the researcher will be using predetermined codes, also known as priori codes, which are developed before the researcher interacts with the data. In my case, these codes are the themes and categories of classical ecofascism found in Nazi environmentalism. Babbie argues that this allows the researcher to undertake their analysis with a very tightly focused lens and quickly identify relevant data as it moves from (1) a pattern that might be logically or theoretically expected to (2) observations that test whether the expected pattern occurs (2010: 22).

As I stated in the last chapter, I find that dividing the term “ecofascism” into separate units of analysis (ecology on the one side and fascism on the other) allows for an in-depth analysis of the extent of classical ecofascism in the online content. This is not to say that one unit is more heavily emphasised than the other when discussing my findings and research question. The two units are inherently interconnected so understanding the Nazi Party as a fascist movement, consequently, understands their environmentalism as fascist practises. Still, I find that dividing the term allows for more *clarity* throughout the analysis. As such, I compare the theme of “Nazi environmentalism” to the content by emphasizing the categories listed in Table 1. Next, I compare the theme of “Payne and Griffin’s definitions of fascism” from Table 1 to the content on Telegram. In doing so, I am able to examine the presence of classical ecofascism to modern, self-proclaimed ecofascist content.

This let’s me interpret the content in light of theoretically derived aspects of classical ecofascism by bringing them in and connect them with my data material (Mayring, 2000: 4).

As such, the themes and categories I apply in a deductive approach to interpreting the data are:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Category</b>
<b>Nazi environmentalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• anti-modernity</li><li>• nature mysticism</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emphasising the unique connection between a specific race and the environment (as seen in the “blood and soil” doctrine)</li> <li>• anti-Semitism</li> <li>• framing the degradation of the natural environment as the result of the presence of foreign “invaders”.</li> </ul>
<b>Payne and Griffin’s definitions of fascism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• palingenetic</li> <li>• ultra-nationalistic</li> <li>• authoritarian</li> <li>• pro-violence</li> <li>• anti-liberalism</li> <li>• anti-communism</li> <li>• pro-military mobilization</li> <li>• the goal of expansion</li> <li>• emphasis on aesthetic structures</li> <li>• extreme stress on masculinity and youth</li> <li>• a specific tendency toward an authoritarian, charismatic, personal style of command.</li> </ul>

*Table 1. Themes and categories of Nazi environmentalism.*

However, as I intend to examine to what extent classical ecofascism is undergoing a revival in the data I have collected, I do not wish to limit my analysis to only including the themes and categories in Table 1. I also wish to examine other aspect of these channels as they appear in the comparison. Thus, I start my analysis by comparing the themes of classical ecofascism to the content, while also allowing any potentially new themes to emerge from the content. To achieve this, the data is read through several times, and as many headings as necessary are written down in the margins to describe all aspects of the content. The headings then are collected from the margins onto coding sheets and categories are grouped under higher order headings (Elo and Kyngäs, 2007: 109). This allowed me to examine how self-proclaimed modern ecofascism might differ from classical ecofascism.

To furthermore ensure the trustworthiness of my study, I wish to comment on how I categorized the content from Telegram within the themes and categories of classical ecofascism. As I have

previously stated, there are limitations to what I can interpret. I thus only categorize the explicitly stated meaning in each message. Which means that I don't make assumptions on what the moderator's might have intended when they published a message. Thus, I limit my analysis to what is explicitly written, explicitly said in an audio file, and explicitly showed in a photo or video. This does not mean that each message had to contain the specifically labeled category. Rather, it means that a message had to convey a clear and explicit representation of each category. In coding the content on Telegram, this means that for content to be placed in the category "anti-modernity" for example, the messages must include a clear rejection of modernity. This was expressed in messages just as "Reject the urban; embrace the rural" or "Revolt against the modern world", to mention some. Additionally, for content to be categorized as "pro-violence", they had to convey a clear and explicit pro-violence message. Messages such as "Why should we ask for permission to carry weapons when our ancestors never did? Everyone has the human right to self defense" or photos glorifying weapons, soldiers or war, was henceforth included within the "pro-violence" category.

This allows me to analyse to what extent classical ecofascism is present in the content and furthermore discuss how these channels on Telegram communicate modern, online self-proclaimed ecofascism.



## 6. Analysis

In this chapter I set out to compare to what extent the content in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram are reviving classical ecofascism. As we've seen in the claims from the introductory chapter, online, far-right environmentalism is said to revive several traits of classical ecofascism by blaming the demise of the natural environment on overpopulation, immigration, and over-industrialization (Smyth 2019; Bennet 2019 and Wilson, 2019). As I have previously stated, the most notable case of a fascist government with a strong environmental focus, is found in the Nazi experience. Thus, the following chapter compares the environmental themes found in Nazi Germany to the content collected from four self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram. Before I begin, I wish to reiterate that all the quotes used in this analysis are paraphrased while keeping the intended message. Additionally, I have ensured that the photos used in this analysis do not depict identifying features of the channel moderators.

I start by comparing the theme of Nazi environmentalism to the content on Telegram before I move on to compare the theme of fascism. Throughout the analysis I will describe how the content relates to classical ecofascism and how it might differ. Lastly, I present a chapter synopsis in which I summarize the main points of this chapter.

### 6.1 Environmentalism

*United we stand, against this degenerate and modern world. No  
retreat, no surrender, give em' hell (Telegram post)*

The first category I undertake in my comparative content analysis is “anti-modernity”. According to Biehl and Staudenmaier, today’s fascists have a “distinct ideological legacy from their fascist forebears upon which to draw inspiration from” (2011: 44). At the end of the nineteenth century, a cultural revolt against positivism (meaning that only “factual” knowledge gained through observation (the senses), including measurement, was trustworthy) swept through much of Europe. In Germany, this revolt became infused with both nature-mysticism

and racial nationalism (ibid). Biehl and Staudenmaier furthermore state that, culminating in the 1920s, an assortment of occult and pseudo-scientific ideas united around the idea of a German *Volk* (race) into a romantic nationalism, romantic racism, and a mystical nature-worshipping faith (ibid). As seen in chapter 4, the völkisch movement of the 1920s thus regarded modern materialism, urbanism, rationalism, and science to be artificial and evil and, furthermore, alien to the “essence” of the race.

From 1918 to 1933, Germany was known as the Weimar Republic. Named after the city of Weimar which hosted the constituent assembly that established the Republic. In this time of bitter social dislocation after World War 1, Biehl and Staudenmaier explains that the völkisch movement saw the Weimar democracy as a product of Western democratic and liberal ideals and, further, as a puppet regime controlled by people who did not represent German “essence” (2011: 44). Many alleged that a Jewish world conspiracy lay behind the discontents of modernism, including materialistic consumerism, soulless industrialism, a homogenized commercial culture, and excessive modern technology, all of which were said to be systematically destroying traditional German values (ibid). As such, only the true nationalistic patriots could save Germans from ruin. This movement, that sought to assert a truly Germanic alternative (one that Biehl and Staudenmaier (2011: 44), calls as “racialist as it was naturalist in nature”) invoked a nature-romanticism in which closeness to the natural landscape was to give people a heightened sense of aliveness and “authenticity” (ibid)

However inadvertently, the romantic nationalists of the völkisch movement became an important source of inspiration for Nazi ideology (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 46). Which, Biehl and Staudenmaier argues, somewhat ironically drew on its “anti-modern sentiments even as it built a technologically modern and virulently nationalistic and genocidal totalitarian state” (ibid). Thus, by appealing to a very real sense of alienation, Biehl and Staudenmaier describe that the Nazis’ “stage-managed indoctrination extravaganzas that promised “authenticity” in a mystical, romantic nationalism that was “closer” to nature” (ibid). By stressing the need to return to simpler, healthier, and more “natural” lifestyles, they glorified the ideas and practices of a “Nordic peasantry”.

The category of anti-modernism as seen in both the völkisch movement and in Nazi Party members such as Todt and Seifert, appeals to the so-called “New” Right today, according to

Biehl and Staudenmaier (2011: 44). The four channels I analysed on Telegram all published content that fit within this understanding of ecofascism. I will illustrate this by comparing the categories of the environmental theme to the data I have collected from ecofascist channels on Telegram.

### 6.1.1 Anti-modernity

In all four channels, photos such as figure 1 were posted with various green and assumed to be Nordic backgrounds.

The caption “reject the concrete jungle” is a reference to large cities where people live close together. Britannica Dictionary defines it as “a modern city or part of a city regarded as an unpleasant place filled with large, ugly buildings” (Britannica, “Concrete jungle”). Similarly, Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a concrete jungle as “a modern city or urban area filled with large buildings and regarded especially as a harshly competitive, unwelcome, or dangerous place” (Merriam-Webster “Concrete jungle”). In any understanding of the caption, the concrete jungle is presented as something negative and undesirable. Returning to nature, on the other hand, is represented as a return to a place of beauty. This describes the importance of nature in contrast to an urban and modern life. Several other posts include photos of forests with captions such as:

*Reject the urban; embrace the rural.*

*The woods are holy a place. Not like the wicked concrete. It's so easy to tell unless you're a dopamine slave that can't pry your eyes and senses away from a screen. Hail nature.*

*Get out of cities if you value your life!*

As such, urbanization and modernity seem to represent a “wicked” and undesirable development of society. This is exemplified further in the content that proposes one should not only “reject the urban”, but also “revolt against the modern world”. Figure 2 shows a cabin in a forest with the

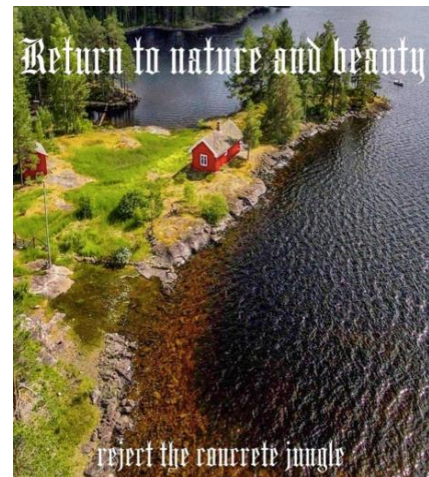


Figure 1. "Return to nature and beauty. reject the concrete jungle".

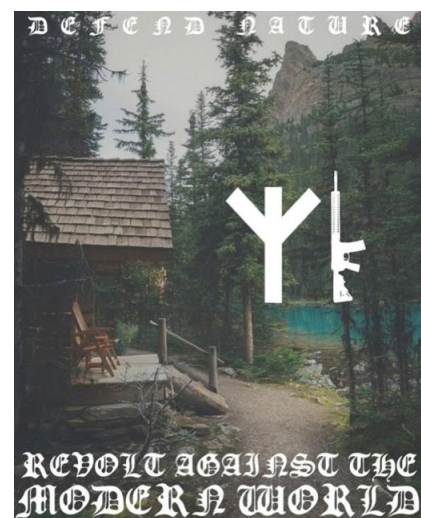


Figure 2. "Defend nature. Revolt against the modern world".

caption “Defend nature. Revolt against the modern world” accompanied by a Norse Life rune and a machine gun. A caption and a symbol that is repeatedly published in the four Telegram channels. I conclude that the caption is inspired by Julius Evola (1898-1974), one of the early Italian proponents of an uncompromising antisemitic stance, who published a stream of articles, pamphlets, and books on race from the early 1930s onward (Staudenmaier, 2020: 474). Evola had extensive contacts in Germany and worked behind the scenes with Nazi officials (ibid). As a writer and author, Evola espoused a worldview known as *traditionalism*, which combined occultist and neo-pagan influences in an aristocratic rejection of modernity. Described as his most influential work, his book *Revolt Against the Modern World: Politics, Religion, and Social Order in the Kali Yuga* aimed to restore a primeval hierarchical order (Staudenmaier, 2020: 475). As such, his ideologies promoted an idealized traditional society in which religious and temporal power were created and united by warriors expressing spiritual power (Furlong, 2011). Much of the content on Telegram seem to be immensely inspired by Evola and this thinking as they repeatedly post caption such as “Uncle Evola 🌲” under photos with his book title “Revolt against the modern world”. While Evola had no direct links to Nazi environmentalism, Ferraresi (2001) describes him as admiring Heinrich Himmler whom he knew personally and considers Evola’s thoughts as “one of the most radical and consistent antiegalitarian, antiliberal, antidemocratic, and antipopular system in the twentieth century” (2001: 44). Ferraresi furthermore states that Evola’s beliefs are a blend of several schools and traditions, including German idealism (ibid).

The content in the self-proclaimed ecofascist channels seems to explicitly connect Evola and his anti-modernity beliefs to Nazism. In figure 2, we also see the Life rune. According to Dahmer (2019), the intellectual entanglement of rune lore and German Nazism in the early twentieth century, largely resulted from the scholarship and enthusiastic ideologizing of one Nazi intellectual: the German Indo-Europeanist academic and political propagandist Alfred Rosenberg (Dahmer, 2019: 141). According to Dahmer, Rosenberg helped articulate and popularize the now discredited theory that the first Indo-Europeans – an ethnonym at that time synonymous with “Aryans” – had been essentially Germanic in speech, behavior, and appearance (ibid). For Rosenberg and others who supposed the essential Germanness of the Aryans, this entailed the “worship of gods known to have been revered by the pre-Christian Germans, and the use of runes” (ibid). Regarding environmentalism, Rosenberg wrote: “Today we see the steady stream from the countryside to the city, deadly for the Volk. The cities swell larger, unnerving the Volk and destroying threads which binds humanity to nature. They attract

adventurers and profiteers of all colors, thereby fostering racial chaos” (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 28). As such, these symbols represented anti-urbanization and anti-modernity in Nazi Germany. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the Life rune was used by the Nazis in various contexts to help create an idealized Aryan/Norse heritage (Anti-Defamation League, 2022). This is also seen in content including runes and symbols such as the Odal rune (See figure 3), the Sun Wheel (See figure 4) and the Sun Cross (See figure 5), and the infamous swastika.



Figure 3. "Nature is not a place to visit. It is home". Depicted with the Odal rune.

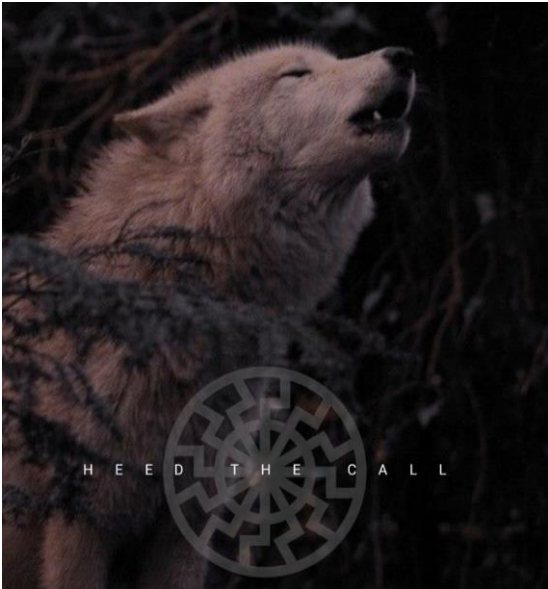


Figure 4. "Heed the call". Depicted with the Sun Wheel.



Figure 5. "Nature is not a place to visit. It is home". Depicted with a Sun Cross

According to the ADL, these symbols are known to have been used by the Nazi Party. I assume that these runes are not random choices based on other content that explicitly states a connection to Nazism. Figure 6 shown a photo that was posted in one of the channels (with similar content posted in the other three). The photo shows Adolf Hitler with a caption celebrating Hitler's

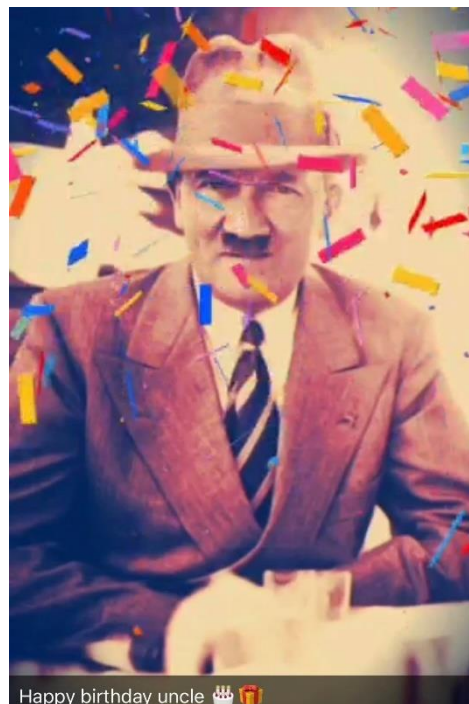


Figure 6. "Happy birthday uncle". Photo of Adolf Hitler.

birthday. For the sake of clarity: the post was published in January 2021 and Hitler's birthday is in April. However, this distinction does not seem to matter to any of the channels. As such, I conclude that publishing content that celebrates the leader of the Nazi Party (as well as other

prominent figures like Julius Evola), alongside landscape photos with symbols regularly used by the Nazis, indicate a deeper connection between classical ecofascism and online, modern ecofascism than mere random chance. As such, the self-proclaimed ecofascist channels, similarly to the völkisch movement and Nazi members like Todt and Seifert, describes cities as an artificial and “wicked” place compared to the beauty that nature has to offer.

Biehl and Staudenmaier argues that “in many variants of the Nazi world view, ecological themes were linked with traditional agrarian romanticism and hostility to urban civilization, all revolving around the idea of rootedness in nature” (2011: 28). This world view is represented in the content found in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels as well. As we’ve seen, nature is represented as a place of beauty, removed from the “degenerate” world of urban civilization. One channel described urbanization as a “wicked” place where “dopamine slave(s) are unable to pry their eyes and senses away from screens”. In the channels on Telegram, anti-modernity thus seems to represent both an aesthetically pleasing alternative to the “concrete jungles” and the “rootedness” of the people.



Figure 7. "It wasn't meant to be like this. Return to nature and beauty". With a Sun Wheel.

Figure 7 shows a photo of an undesirable situation (left side) and a place of beauty on the other (right side). The caption of “it wasn’t meant to be like this”, is repeated in several similar looking photos and videos. Sometimes depicting children sitting in front of a television on the left side and children playing outside on the right side. The belief that society was not meant to

belong in modern and urban settings is further strengthened by photos explicitly stating a connection between nature and the Volk.

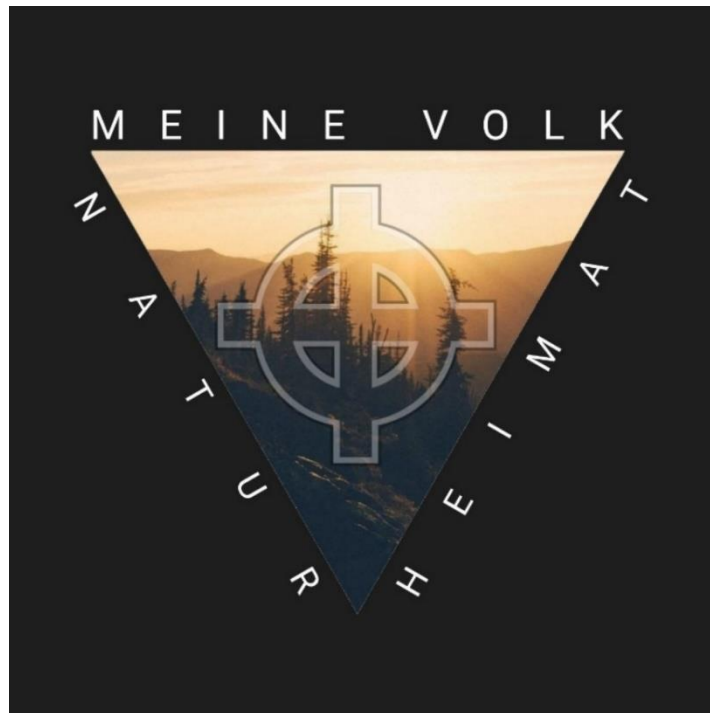


Figure 8. "Meine Volk. Heimat. Nature". Depicted with a Sun Cross.

The emphasis on “volk”, “heimat” and “nature” (as seen in figure 8), are all components of classical ecofascism as it is presented in Nazi environmentalism. In fact, as Biehl and Staudenmaier argues, Heimat, the agrarian mystique, the health of the Volk, and the closeness and respect for nature (explicitly constructed as the standard against which society is to be judged), “recapitulates almost all the tropes comprised by classical ecofascist ideology” (2011: 29).

In the next part I expand on how the nature mysticism and blood and soil focus of the Nazi Party compares to the online content.

### **6.1.2 Nature mysticism and “blood and soil” romanticism**

In addition to opposing urban societies and modernity for aesthetic reasons, another important aspect of the environmental focus found in both classical ecofascism and self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram, is the nature mysticism.



In Nazi Germany, people of the völkisch movement and several Nazi members believed in a mystical connection between a race and their land. Tourlamain argues that “the völkisch movement is also understood as a mode of thought based on an understanding of society based on the German race” (Tourlamain, 2014: 25). The alienation of a people severed from their native soil was one of the fundamental concerns underlying völkisch ideology (Tourlamain, 2014: 68). According to Bassin (2005), since the middle of the nineteenth century, the völkisch nationalists’ beliefs and attitudes centered around a naturalistic vision of the national community as a cohesive organic entity. In its genuine state, the race was seen as an “integral part of the ecology of the natural world, providing the conditions for the latter’s’ existence while being dependent upon it in turn” (Bassin, 2005: 206). Furthermore, he states that the agent that made the race organic and natural was understood in the fact that the individual members of the race were infused together by ties of blood, into was essentially a biological and racial community. The fundamental natural qualities and characteristics of the race were thus racial qualities and characteristics (Bassin, 2005: 207). These ideas culminated in the “infamous phrase” (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 31), “The unity of blood and soil must be restored”, by Richard Walther Darré which denoted a quasi-mystical connection between the race (Volk) of the people and land (soil).

There is no doubt a strong focus on “blood and soil” romanticism in all four ecofascist channels. Indeed, it is explicitly stated several times in photos of landscapes, forests, and maps (to mention a few).

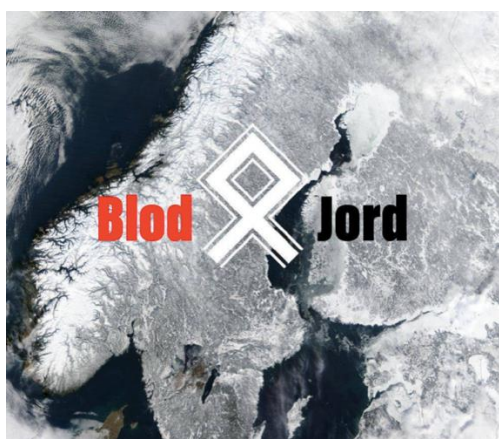


Figure 9. "Blod, Jord", a Scandinavian translation for "blood and soil". Depicted with the Odal rune.

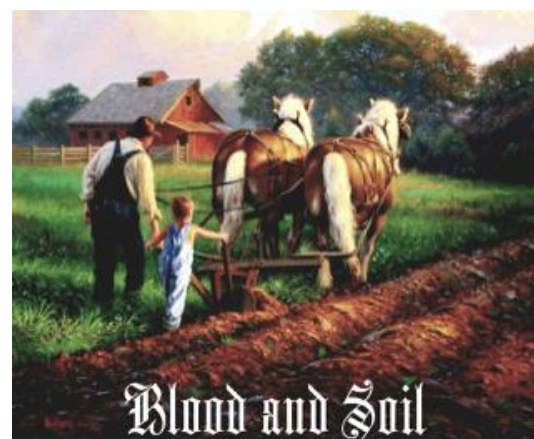


Figure 10. "Blood and soil".

In figure 9, we see a map of mostly Norway, Sweden, and Finland with the caption “Blod” and “Jord”. Based on classical ecofascist beliefs that the German race (blood) was connected to the

German land (soil), I surmise that this photo illustrates a connection between the race and the land of these countries. In addition, figure 10, shows the caption above two figures farming. In Nazi Germany, peasants were seen as the cultural heroes, and the only ones who understood the “natural order” (Mosse, 1966: 134). In the content from Telegram, there is also a strong focus on agrarianism and self-proficiency. As such, much of the online content on Telegram formulates a return to nature as both a return to beauty and a return to the place where humans belong:

Those who live in very rural areas can see it all around. Even those who live in towns can see it. The birds and the squirrels and the insects go about their day. The trees are dropping their seeds. Nothing has changed in thousands and thousands of years. Everything is as it was meant to be. Only we have changed. The world has not modernized, societies have. We live in a system that has become a monstrosity and has enslaved us. But it's just an illusion. We can reject it. We can let go. Live a far more natural life in nature.

In the above paragraph, one of the channel moderators is arguing that in nature “it’s all as it has been and was meant to be”. By breaking free of the “monstrosity” that have enslaved humanity, the content is arguing that we can “let go and live a far more natural life”. Two other text messages published in other channels also exemplify the connection between humans and nature:

Your heritage is a gift from your ancestors. You should live within nature, not build a reality along side nature, and constantly plunder nature to sustain the alternate reality. Your blood is a duty to your descendants.

The way we look at nature is all wrong in my opinion. We view the natural environment as the “other place”. A place to sometimes visit. Not a part of our everyday existence. It’s different for me. The wild is an original, perfect, pure, organic creation. Modern civilization it an alteration. It is something that use to be originally perfect, but gradually over time it became more & more contaminated, spoiled, altered, turned artificial, synthetic, unnatural, taken further and further away from the source. Nature is the place we truly belong.

The first quote was published with a photo of a green field in Gotland, Sweden and the second paragraph was published with a photo that just said “Norway”. As Telegram channels and user-profiles are anonymous, I won’t speculate on the moderators’ nationalities. However, there

seems to be an emphasis on primarily Scandinavian nature and the “blood” that belongs there in a sort of “oneness” with nature. I find that this idolization of the “old ways”, is substantially represented in all four channels. By returning to nature, online ecofascists channels argue that humanity will escape a “system that has become a monstrosity and has enslaved us”. However, in contrast to the claims by The Guardian journalist Wilson (2019) as seen in the introductory chapter, that “modern ecofascists are calling for genocidal solution to environmental concerns such as overpopulation”, seems to not pertain to the ecofascist channels I have analyzed in this thesis. Instead, anyone who is not a part of the “blood and soil” perspective, is encouraged to leave the land and return to their respective homelands.

Additionally, unlike classical ecofascism, modern ecofascist content does not connect “blood and soil” to imperialism and expansionism. The content in these channels use the slogan to connect racial ideologies to the land, but don’t argue for an expansion of said land. According to Bassin, by the mid 1920s, “blood and soil reinforced a naturalistic view of the national community as a biological organism, fused into a cohesive whole by ties of blood and racial affinity” (2005: 215). Furthermore, “the pointed juxtaposition of blood and soil, moreover, indicated a persisting preoccupation with the organic territoriality of the race-organism, and the conviction that its future welfare could be insured only by strengthening the roots that fixed it



Figure 11. "Save the bees, not refugees".

in and bonded it to the soil of its native homeland” (Bassin, 2005: 215). This understanding “blood and soil” romanticism is consistent with the content on Telegram. However, Nazi Germany’s wish to expand German territory in the name of the German people’s blood, is not.

As such, conceptions of the channel's "homeland", or *Heimat*, is connected to what Biehl and Staudenmaier calls "a nationalistic regionalism where a region's traditions and language are mystically tied to an "ancestral" landscape" (2011: 48). Thus, the content proposes a connection between a race and their homeland, however, not a single mention of expansion is found. Rather, the content argues for nations to close their borders and to send "outsiders" back to their respective homelands so that they might reconnect with their own "blood and soil". In fact, a popular slogan that is repeatedly posted (with various visuals) is "save the bees, not refugees" (see figure 11). Which, according to the channel moderators, means that the focus of today should be on saving local environmental issues, such as the disappearing bees, instead of foreigners who have no connection to neither the blood nor the soil.

Thus, modern, online nature mysticism and "blood and soil" romanticism relates more to völkisch beliefs that rapid growth of industrial capitalism and dramatic urbanization would lead to the "upheaval that appeared to threaten traditional ways of life" (Tourlamain, 2014: 23), than Nazi imperialism in the name of for *Lebensraum* (the plan of conquering 'living space' in Eastern Europe for the German people).

### **6.1.3 Framing the degradation of the natural environment**

As I've previously stated, many saw the Weimar democracy of the early twentieth century as the product of "Western democratic and liberal ideals, and as a puppet regime controlled by people who did not represent German 'essence'" (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 44). In addition, many at that time alleged that a "Jewish world conspiracy lay behind discontents of modernism, including materialistic consumerism, soulless industrialism, a homogenized commercial culture, and excessive modern technology" that were said to be systematically destroying traditional German values (ibid). The content collected in the self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram often blamed "others" for the degradation of the environment. In fact, an occurring theme in the content opposing urbanization and modernization, was the explicit stated belief that cities are controlled by a corrupt elite with evil intentions. In any fight, there is always the other side. The side to blame and the side to beat. In their fight against modernity, online ecofascists seem to be first and foremost fighting *the elite*.

The NWO, known as the New World Order, is a term used to refer to a right-wing conspiracy theory that became popular among anti-government extremists from the 1990s onwards (ADL, 2022). People who believe in the NWO believe that a tyrannical, totalitarian, socialist “one-world” conspiracy has taken over most of the planet and schemes to eliminate the last bastion of freedom with the help from collaborators within the government (ibid). This idea that a secretive powerful elite with a globalist agenda conspiring to eventually rule the world is referenced in many of the posts arguing for a return to nature. One example is a photo of a green landscape representing a world without the NWO (see figure 12).



Figure 12. "Imagine a world free from the NWO".

Another example can be seen in figure 13 and 14. If the NWO is a secret elite collaborating with the government, then becoming self-sufficient in nature saves humans from the fate of being controlled. Nature is thus not only a mystical and romanticized place of ethnic heritage, but also a place free from the controlling mechanisms of a modern society. As I don't ask the



Figure 13. "Government can't profit from self sufficient people".



Figure 14. "Become self sufficient. Teach your children the old ways. Starve the beast".

moderators questions, I won't presume to know who exactly "the beast" is. Yet, as Biehl and Staudenmaier states when describing the völkisch movement's opposition to urbanization and modernity, "The stand-in for all of these was the age-old object of peasant hatred and middle-class resentment: the Jews" (2011: 17). While the content on Telegram does not identify "the Jews" as being behind the NWO, they often blame Israel and in turn Jewish people for the degradation of the environment.

When the Jews fled Europe following the second World War, they proceeded to ethnically cleanse the Palestinians to establish Israel. This displacement in the Middle East created resentment towards the western world. The Zionist drives them out and we must take them in. Liberals will claim they are standing for human rights, but the minute you tell them that whites have the right to self-determination, they scream "you're part of the problem!". Thereby embracing the cultural, demographic genocide of the race that has created the very civilization they take for granted. The White Race.

The above paragraph is collected from one of the channels on Telegram. It argues that because of Israel, the western world is facing a cultural and demographic genocide. According to Cassam (2019), it is striking how often, in the world of conspiracy theories, "the Jews are identified as the conspirators, either explicitly or in code" (2019: 13). According to Hartmann (1984), the upsurge of Nazi votes after 1929 was due to many factors. Hartmann argues that national greatness and economic despair probably loomed much larger in most people's minds than the "remote so-called Jewish question" (1984: 636). However, the core of the Nazi political ideology was drenched in hatred for the Jewish from beginning to end (ibid). Indeed, in the context of the economic depression of the 1930s, the Nazi Party gained popularity in part by presenting "Jews" as the source for a variety of political, social, economic, and ethical problems facing the German people (Holocaust encyclopedia, "Antisemitism in history: Nazi antisemitism"). As I stated, the four Telegram channels are no exception to that. This will ultimately lead to what all four channels are calling a "white genocide".

Sending white children to public school is child abuse. More than six hours of indoctrination every day from people that want our race to die out is unacceptable. White genocide isn't just a conspiracy!! The time it takes to homeschool and the financial trade off ... is an investment in both your family and our race.

The above paragraph, extracted from one of the channels, exemplifies the belief that a “white genocide” is happening. The Anti Defamation League describes that the term is coined by white supremacists who believe that the white race is dying due to growing non-white populations and “forced assimilation” (ADL, “White genocide”). Included in this, is content depicted with the number “14” (see figure 15). The number is a code within the white power movement, coined by neo-Nazi David Lane (1938-2007). His “14 Words” credo – “*We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children*” – became a call for action for radical activists around the globe (Michael, 2009: 43).



Figure 15. "A picture worth fourteen words. Folk. Nation. Culture. Tradition. Heritage. Family".

Ecofascist channels on Telegram are no exception. Lane was a former member of an underground terrorist group called “The Order”, and since his incarceration in 1985 he immersed himself in reading and devoting much energy to writing tracts on revolutionary strategy (ibid). In addition, Lane founded the organization “Wotansvolk” that developed a strident form of Norse neo-paganism that became a popular alternative religion for those in a movement in which Christianity had long predominated (ibid). Both Lane and his “14 Words” slogan are commonly depicted on Telegram. Furthermore, Lane’s “88 Precepts” (a list of statements on what he calls “natural law”), is regularly mentioned along with “14 Words” on Telegram. This document, (88 Precepts), contained criticism on democracy, multiculturalism, and racial integration. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), 88 stands for “Heil Hitler” in neo-Nazi communities because H is the eight letter of the alphabet (SPLC, 2022).

As such, modern, online ecofascist is presented as a worldview where the white race is disappearing due to increased immigration, multiculturalism, and “race mixing”. In fact, the channels often post messages with instruction on how to save the “white race”.

To avoid becoming a persecuted minority in our own nations, these are a few practical steps you can take to help change the tides in our direction.

1. Promote consciousness of the white race among your family, friends, and colleagues whenever possible. Share our documentaries, our books, and our articles. Always keep things positive, this type of thinking can be brand new and shocking to most of our brothers and sisters.
2. Raise large white families! Our birth rates has been an enormous issue for the past couple generations, this is something that MUST change if we wish for the white race to survive.

The above paragraph argues for the reality of the decline of the “white race”. Additionally, photos such as figure 16 are often depicted to “prove” that the “white race” is disappearing. While there is no environmental focus in that specific quote or figure 16, other messages often go hand in hand with photos such as figure 14.



Figure 16. "It's only a conspiracy theory".

Becoming self-sufficient in nature thus seems to indicate both an escape from an established system that wishes to control and “indoctrinate” humans, and a way to ensure the future of a “race” that is disappearing. Maintaining this worldview, the issue does not seem to be overpopulation and resource shortages per se. Instead, the issue seems to be the “displacement”



of “other” who do not belong to the specific “blood and soil” of the channel’s nations. Moreover, the degradation of the natural environment, that the channels argue “is home” (see figure 3, 5 and 8), is blamed on conspiracy theories of the NWO and Israel.

The environmental focus in all four self-proclaimed ecofascist channels thus combines the aesthetic “beauty” of nature with the wish to reconnect with their people’s ancient roots which is mystically linked together by a shared history – as seen in quotes like “Your heritage is a gift from your ancestors. You should live within nature”. The degradation of the environment is moreover blamed on the controlling mechanisms of an evil elite (NWO) and the displacement caused by Israel. As such, nature is then both the place where humans ultimately belong, and a place to escape corrupt systems that are found in urbanization and industrialization.

## **6.2 Fascist features**

As I stated in the background chapter, fascism is a notoriously difficult term to define. Many scholars have tried and while there is still no universal acceptance of one definition over another, some are more generally accepted than other. The understandings I use in this thesis are provided by Payne (1995) and Griffin (1993). Payne provided the three-tier definition where the first tier denotes the ideology and goals of fascism (e.g., nationalism, authoritarianism, modernism, secularism, militarism, expansionism). The second lists the “fascist negotiations” (i.e., anti-communism, anti-liberalism, anti-conservatism). And the third tier entails both the style (masculine, youthful, military mystical) and the organization (mass party, militia, leadership principles) of fascism (Encyclopaedia of Nationalism, Leoussi, s.v. “Fascism”). Griffin’s definition focused on connected fascism to nationalism and the re-birth of a nation. As such, this next part compares the fascist elements of Nazim, to the content in ecofascist channels on Telegram.

### **6.2.1 Masculinity, violence, and a palingenetic re-birth**

The first categories I compare are masculinity, violence, and a nation’s re-birth.

During their time in power, the Nazis worked to establish their own conceptions regarding gender. Like other fascist movements, the Nazi Party subscribes to the idea of creating a “new

man” that would function as a symbol of the start (Loroff, 2011: 49). In promoting this concept, the Nazis redefined existing notions on manliness and masculinity. Within this definition, manliness could not be ascertained through virtues that could be expressed in ordinary life. Instead, a man could only achieve true manliness by engaging in heroic activities, such as fighting a war (ibid). On Telegram, this notion of masculinity is tightly connected to the support and encouragement to carry weapons.



Figure 17. "Don't be scared. Be prepared. Fuck the new world order".

Indeed, the content argues that their ancestors, both Vikings and Nazi soldiers, did not ask for permission to carry weapons and neither should they:

Why should we ask for permission to carry weapons when our ancestors never did?  
EVERYONE has the human right to self defense.

Death and destruction are necessary to the health of the world, and therefore as natural and lovable as birth and life. Only weak men and cowards moan and weep over dying. Brave men face it with approving nonchalance.

Modern men who act against this idealized understanding of masculinity is presented as weak and a degenerate development of a corrupt society. The content argues that only men who are willing to fight for their nation's environment, like the Vikings and the Nazis did, are real men. An important element of this, is the protection of women so that they will be able to stay home and raise the children. These ideas combine glorifications of Vikings as the ultimate version of manliness (see figure 18) and traditional views on women as nurturing beings.



What they fear

Figure 18. "Pure raw masculinity. What they fear".



Figure 19. "What we think we need. What we really need".

While women in the Viking Age generally enjoyed more freedom and held more power in their society than many other women of their day (Pruitt, 2019), the content on Telegram don't depict this version of women. Instead, it is the version of a housewife that's promoted as the preferred version of femininity (see figure 19). The preferred women are always presented as a gentle and modest contrast to the hyper masculinity of men. And in turn, the photos of men are often depicted as modern soldiers fighting to protect the defend "What they love" from corrupt governments and foreign invaders. For instance, in figure 20, we see a photo of a modern, male soldier and two white children with the caption to defend them and the "14 Words" credo – "*We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children*".



Figure 20. "Defend what you love. 14".

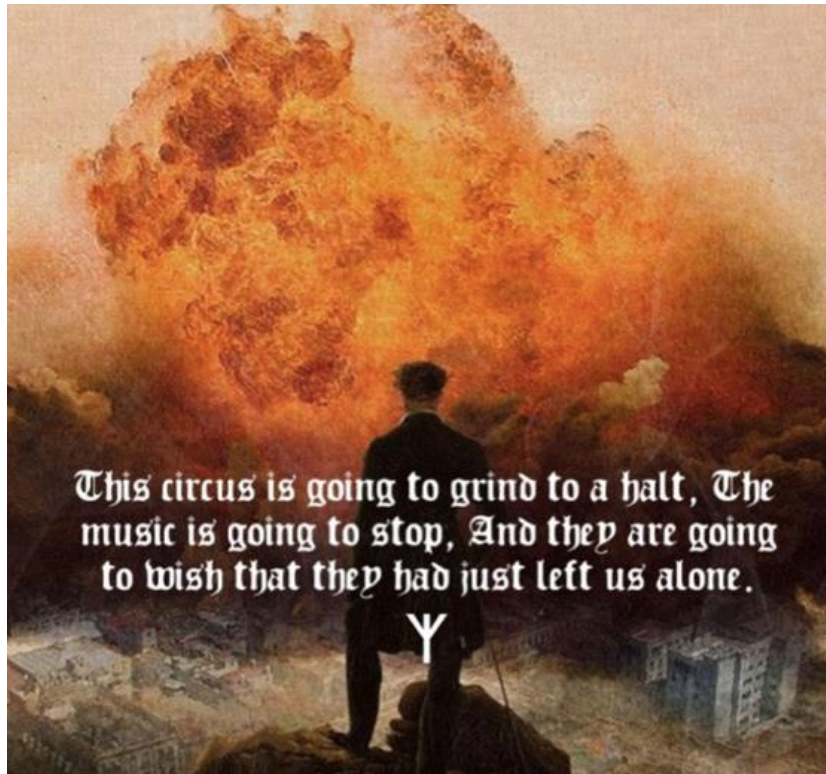


Figure 21. "This circus is going to grind to a halt. The music is going to stop. And they are going to wish that they had just left us alone".

These roles of women and men fits well within the Nazi's views on gender. The man as a strong and fierce patriot and femininity as synonymous with motherhood and fertility (Loroff, 2011: 50). In addition to a fascist view on masculinity, there is a recurring theme of content stating that war and change is coming. Photos and videos of cities that are on fire is published with captions such as:

We must start to prepare for disaster... Start NOW! Stock up on food and water, guns, and ammo... Because things are about to get a lot worse my dear brothers and sisters.

Into nature, we return where we belong. Let the war come there. We will be ready.

These posts justify violence and destruction as a necessary evil to achieve a society where the ecofascist values of the moderators can flourish. By destroying the concrete jungles that ensnares humanity in cages and the political mechanisms that control them – a new and superior society based on traditional values can once again thrive (see figure 14).

These posts correlate with Griffin's definition of fascism as "a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultranationalism" (Griffin, 1993, 26). The content on Telegram indeed argues for a re-birth of

a nations previously preferred state by rejecting urbanization, modernity and returning to nature. Additionally, the ultranationalism that Griffin mentions as a defining characteristic of fascism, is present in the channel's content. According to Griffin, ultranationalism refers to a form of nationalism which "go beyond, and reject, anything compatible with liberal institutions or with the traditions of Enlightenment humanism which underpins them" (Griffin, 1993, 26). In all the data I have gathered from Telegram, nationalism (understood the advancement of a particular nation's interests) is clearly present. The content explicitly argues for the sovereignty of the homeland as belonging to the "white race" by arguing that their race is disappearing due to increased multiculturalism. Additionally, nationalism holds that each nation should govern itself free from outside interferences. As we've seen in the previous categories, ecofascist channels believe that their interests are being abused by the corrupted elites that have "enslaved" them. The ultranationalism presented by Griffin is thus represented in the channels in content that argues for a re-birth of the nation where only a single national identity based on shared characteristics of culture, ethnicity, geographical location, and heritage exists.

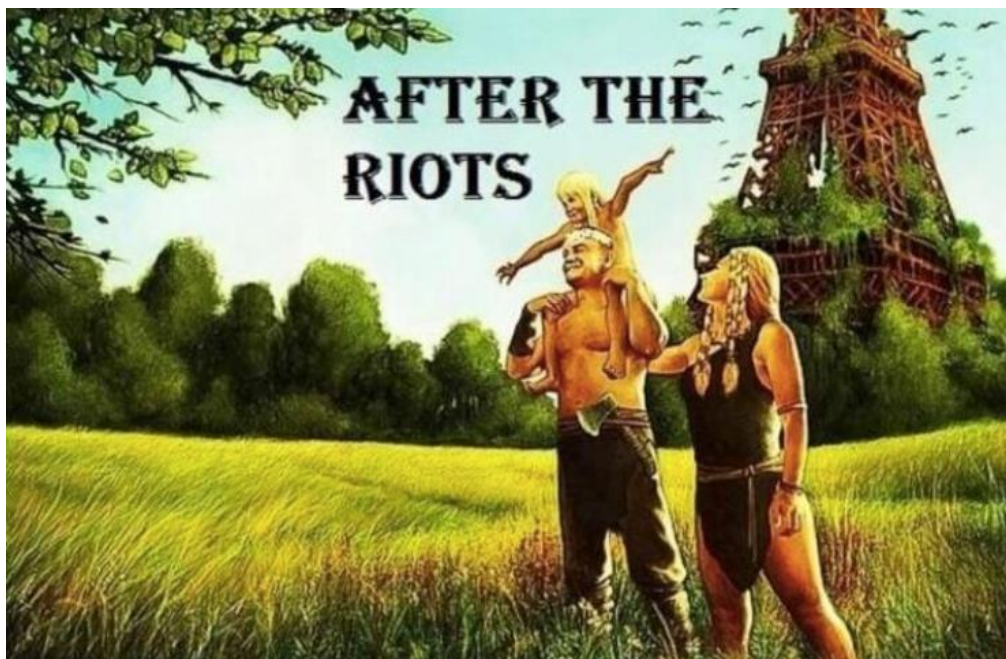


Figure 22. "After the riots".

Furthermore, the content on Telegram overtly opposes and reject anything related to the established political institutions and governance and additionally claims that only through a return to the old ways (seemingly through violence or war), can the nation (and thus the race) thrive. This also relates to democracy as a system of government. In the below paragraph a channel moderator is arguing that democracy compares to a sinking ship. Political actors have

steered society into a “downgraded spiral” and the only way to fix it is by removing oneself from the entire situation. According to the moderator, not even changing the political actors who manage the situation, will be enough to save society.

We are unsuccessful in maintain ourselves and our nature. Society, democracy, and the modern civilization are going down in a downward spiral. Other people have chosen to be blinded by the degeneracy and lies from the rulers of this world. Others choose to stay asleep while we awake from our sleep. The situation can be compared to a ship that is sinking. Of course, we jump off to get rescued. That is human instinct if we are heading for danger. Well, other people have decided to let the captain on the ship control the situation. So, they are blind whilst they enjoy the great win and food onboard. We therefore cannot let the politician’s mange our situation! The ship is sinking! “Hmm maybe we can change the captain onboard to try to prevent the sinking of the ship? That could work?”. NO! It won’t. Move away from the degenerate urban cities, start your own life in harmony with that we left behind in the so called “civilization”. If you think changing the captain on the sinking ship is an option, you should start to rethink. And do it fast 🌲

In the next part, I build on this rejection of “the rulers of the world” by comparing the categories of fascism as inherently authoritarian by opposing democracy and communism.

### **6.2.2 Authoritarian rule opposing democracy and communism**

As this analysis has showed so far, there are element of Nazi ecological thinking being revived in online communities on Telegram. However, as the paragraph in the last category showed, while the content argues for change, it rejects institutionalized regimes by encouraging people to break free and become self-sufficient in nature:

We are being trained from a young age how to be a slave in their never-ending rat race. They tell us to go to school, get a job, buy a home, live in debt, pay our taxes, save up for retirement and then we die. There is no purpose in life like this. We must break free from the chains and work towards true freedom. By becoming self-sufficient and getting closer to nature will not only help us but also our future generations. Learn and teach your children the way of our ancestors. Fuck the rat race.

According to Rabinbach and Gilman (2013), although the Nazis despised constitutional government, they were apt at mobilizing a mass electorate that regarded them as a people's protest party. As historian Walter Frank observed (seen in Rabinbach and Gilman), Hitler's aim was to topple the Weimar democracy by legal means and then "destroy democracy using democratic methods" (2013: 37). Within a few weeks of being in power, Hitler sealed the demise of the Weimar Republic by a law (the Law to remedy the State of Emergency of *Volk* and Reich, known as the Enabling Act) that ended parliamentary government and gave him and his cabinet full dictatorial power (ibid: 38).



Figure 23. "A patriot must always be ready to defend his country against his government".

While the content in the channels certainly glorify, and at times worship, Hitler, often calling him "uncle" (see figure 6), the content never demands an authoritarian state, leader, or dictatorial power to change or rescue them from the world they reject. Instead, they seemingly oppose all forms of governance. As anarchist Sébastien Faure himself said, "whoever denies authority and fights against it is an anarchist" (Woodcock, 2004: 11). It is, of course, slightly more complicated than this. Without knowing where the channel moderators are from, the content could be understood as simply calling for their respective present-day governments to resign. Figure 23, for instance, depicts a quote by American author and environmental activist, Edward Abbey. A man who has been cited as an inspiration by environmentalists and groups defending nature by various means. Furthermore, an important aspect of fascism (as seen in

Payne's (1995) three tiers), is the emphasis on fascism as opposed to communism. The Encyclopædia Britannica expands on this by stating that "Fascists made no secret of their hatred of Marxists of all stripes, from totalitarian communists to democratic socialists" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. "Fascism"). Compared to the channels on Telegram, there are substantial mentions of anti-Marxist rhetoric in the content. Mostly by publishing the quote "Destroy cultural Marxism" (see figure 24), which according to Jamin (2014) refers to a far-right, anti-Semitic conspiracy theory which holds that academics launched a campaign to overtake the intellectual, cultural, and artistic institutions. Which, in turn, would lead to the destruction of Western values (2014: 84-103). However, while the caption is regularly published, the channels don't expand on any other explanation regarding communism or cultural Marxism beyond advocacy for the destruction of it. Instead, the majority of the content proposed a harmonious future, devoid of any governance – whether communist, democratic, or fascist.



Figure 24. "Destroy cultural Marxism".

This desire of a future society devoid of governance, rejects the totalitarian and authoritarian rule of the Nazi Party. At the very core of the Nazi Party, was a complex hierarchy that was structured like a pyramid with Hitler and his closest associates at the top, wielding undisputed power and authority (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. "Nazi Party"). As such, the content in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram admires Hitler's actions by, for instance, celebrating his birthday and calling him "Uncle", while still advocating for a future in nature, free from any institutionalised power. Additionally, the next part will describe how collectivism is also rejected in the Telegram channels.





Figure 25. "Become ungovernable".

### 6.2.3 Anti-liberalism and aesthetic structures

*Find your tribe. Keep your circle small (Telegram post)*

In Payne's (1995: 7) description of fascism, a fascist movement is described as anti-liberalist by including mass party militia, leadership principles, and aesthetic hierarchy structures. As we've seen in chapter 4, the very meaning of the name "fascism" means "bundle" or "union" (Payne, 1995: 3). In Nazi Germany, The Nazi Party made it clear to Germans that they needed to subordinate themselves and their personal desires to the national community (Föllmer, 2910: 61). As such, there was no room for individuality in the Third Reich's wish to create and expand a racially unified and homogenous German society.

One of the first discoveries I made when I familiarized myself, collected and analyzed the material from Telegram was the focus on individuality. Throughout the content there was always an "us and them" approach to everything that was posted. However, within this, the content maintained that they were a select few that had uncovered the truth about modern societies and had therefore withdrawn to nature. The channels often argued that they were awoken "wolfs" in a society where the "sheep" remains unaware of the controlling mechanisms around them (see figure 26).

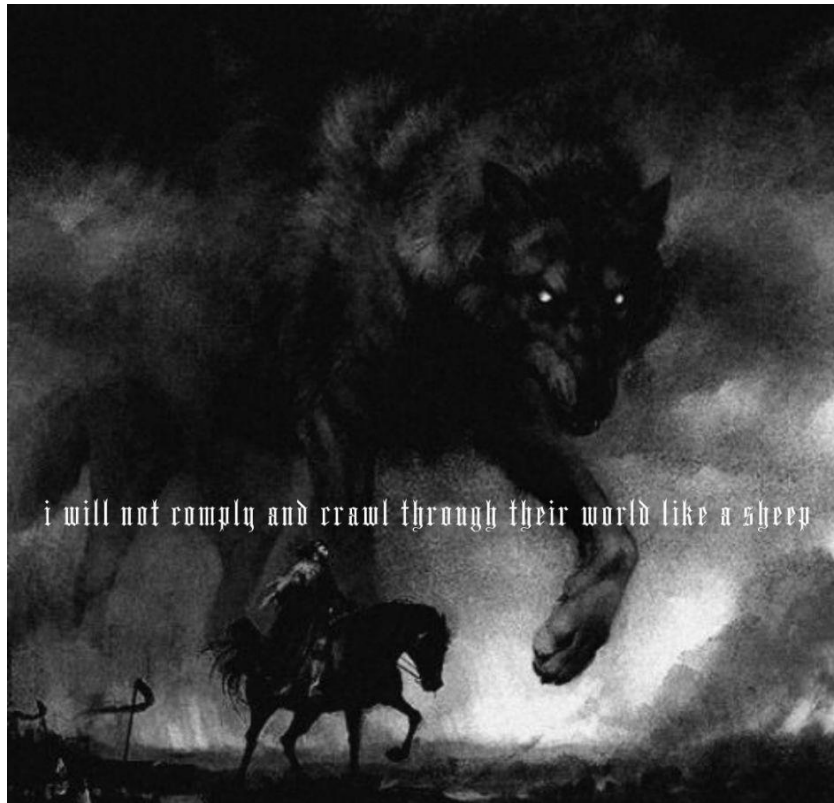


Figure 26. "I will not comply and crawl through this world like a sheep".

Within this identity as an awoken wolf, there is a focus on joining forces and fighting together is the situation calls for it. In many re-posted messages with various photos and videos of wolfs is this caption:

Be strong enough to stand alone, be yourself enough to stand apart, but be wise enough to stand together when the time comes.

There is content that indicate a collective movement. Continuing the theme of wolfs, several photos of aggressive wolfs with the caption "We are everywhere" are posted in all four channels (see figure 27). In addition, a symbol that has been repeated in, for example, the usernames, channel names, several text messages, photos, and videos, is a pine tree emoji: 🌲. According to Hanrahan at Wired, this symbol is used by "self-defined primitivists and neo-luddites" ("Luddite" is a term usen to describe people who dislike technology) on the Internet as a call for the destruction of modern civilization (Hanrahan, 2018).



Figure 27. "We are everywhere". Depicted with a Sun Wheel.

These features incorporate some elements of collectiveness. However, the majority of posts advocate for reclusiveness in a natural environment, either a forest or a mountain. Quite often, the content references Ted Kaczynski (also known as the Unabomber). In fact, Hanrahan (2018), explains that the "self-defined primitivists and neo-luddites" who, in his experience, use the pine tree emoji, do so to indicate a following to Kaczynski.

Kaczynski (see figure 28) is an American domestic terrorist who abandoned his career in 1969 to pursue a primitive life (Marbella, 1996). His way of living consisted of moving to a remote cabin without electricity or running water, where he lived as a recluse while learning survival skills to become self-sufficient. After witnessing the destruction of the wilderness surrounding

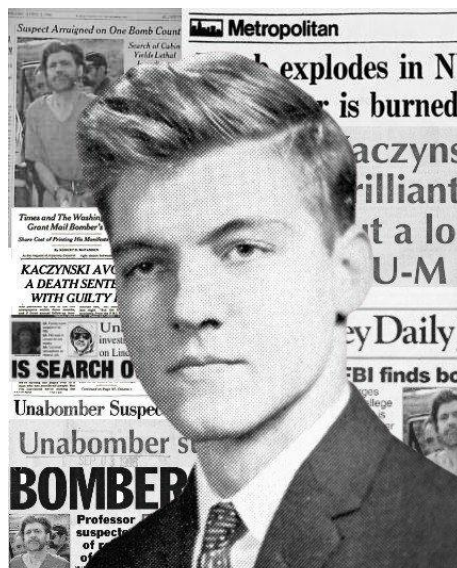


Figure 28. Young Ted Kaczynski

his cabin, he resolved to fight industrialization and its destruction of nature through terrorism, beginning is bombing campaign in 1978 (History.com “Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski”). Photos including Kaszynski often contain the caption “Ted. K was right”, “never let them take your smile” and “Happy 80th birthday uncle Ted! We hope you never lose your memories of the mountains and the woods”. Interestingly, Kaczynski himself rejects any form of fascism (Hanrahan, 2018), including ecofascism (Kaszynski, 2020). Although Kaczynski described ecofascism as an “aberrant branch of leftism” (ibid) and not a far-right movement. Nevertheless, his photos are repeatedly published in the four self-proclaimed ecofascist channels.



Figure 29. "Because fuck people that's why".

While there are some elements of collectiveness and some aesthetic structures indicating a collective ecofascist movement, the majority of the content argues for a return no nature in complete solitary (see figure 29) or with a small tribe of chosen like-minded people.

We either trust in ourselves, have confidence in ourselves, and our own thinking and intuition, or have a groupthink mentality, be afraid to speak your mind as a self who thinks and feels independently of any group, and keep our true thoughts and feelings to ourselves, because we don't want to go against the norms and accepted ideas of our groups. This is the reason why I chose not to be a part of any group.

Compared to Nazi Germany that strongly opposed individualism and liberalism, these self-proclaimed ecofascist channels don't support the notion of setting your own personal interests and desires aside in name of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community) (Föllmer, 2010: 61). Instead, they justify their, at times self-proclaimed radicalization (See figure 30) and their desire to live a life of solitude on the controlling and "brainwashing" systems that are destroying the natural environment. Thereby presenting a worldview in which nature becomes the ultimate escape as it let's you connect with your ancestral roots and additionally free you from evil agendas found in cities.

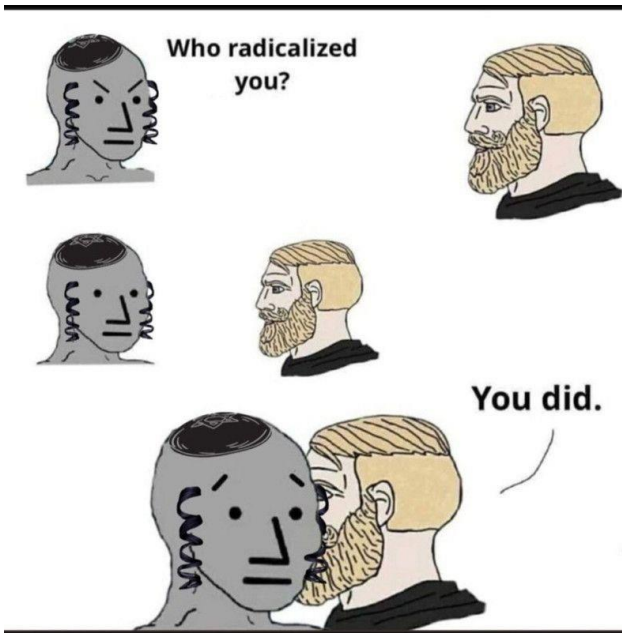


Figure 30. "Who radicalized you?" "You did".

### 6.3 Chapter synopsis

This chapter aimed to compare the themes of classical ecofascism to the content found in four self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram. The analysis shows that while there are elements of classical ecofascism featured in the four Telegram channels such as anti-modernity, "blood and soil" romanticism, the extreme stress on masculinity, pro-violence and a nation's re-birth, there are still important features of fascism mission. Important features of fascism such as the goal of expansion are not mentioned in any of the content collected from the four

ecofascist channels. Additionally, the content seemingly rejects features of fascism such as anti-liberalism and authoritarianism. Thereby raising the question, how can something be called ecofascist, if it opposes features that are important to fascism? In the next chapter, I thus present a discussion on my the finding of my analysis and my research question “To what extent is the content in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram a revival of classical ecofascism?”.

## 7. Discussion

I began this thesis by looking to examine a part of far-right environmentalism claimed to revive Nazi ecological thought in online communities. By asking the question “To what extent is the content in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram a revival of classical ecofascism?”, I have found that there are features of classical ecofascism being revived in the four self-proclaimed ecofascist channels used in this thesis. However, I argue that the term “ecofascism” might not be an apt description of this particular phenomenon.

For clarity’s sake, the term “ecofascism” was divided into two separate units of analysis so that I was able to preform a thorough in-depth analysis in the previous chapter. However, the two units (ecology and fascism) make up a holistic entity that are interconnected and dependent on each other. Understanding the Nazi Party as a fascist movement, consequently, understands all their environmental practises as inherently fascist practises. As such, I argue that there needs to be a strong presence of both units for something to be labeled ecofascist. Thus, since there are significant features of fascism missing in the online, ecofascist content, I propose a new understanding of this aspect of far-right environmentalism as including *libertarian anarchism*.

### 7.1 Interpretations

Similarly, to Nazi Germany’s approach to environmentalism, there is a strong focus on a mystical connection between a nations race (blood) and the land (soil). Additionally, there is a strong belief that modernity, urbanization, and industrialization contribute to the degradation of the natural environment. As I have previously stated, the enthusiasts of the “blood and soil” doctrine viewed Jewish people as an “especially rootless and wandering people, uncappable of any true relationship with the land” (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 31). In modern, ecofascist channels, this view differs somewhat. While there is a strong hatred towards Jewish people, just as in the Nazi Party, the emphasis is not on the Jewish as “rootless” or “wandering”. Instead, they are placed in the role of the conspirators wanting to control and corrupt society with no regards to the natural environment. While there certainly were propaganda describing Jewish people as conspirators in Nazi Germany as well, the focus is now on the displacements of other

people, which is caused by Israel. While the New World Order (NWO) conspiracy does not specifically name Jewish people as the conspirators, both Israel and Cultural Marxism is mentioned by all four channels as the cause of the displacement of others, which in turn lead to the degradation of Western societies and the “white race”. Returning to nature is represented as the solution, where one can be free from the controlling reach of such actors. The NWO is also presented as a contributor to the degradation of the natural environment. At the core, the conspiracy holds that a secretive powerful elite with a globalist agenda is conspiring to rule the world through a totalitarian and “one world” government (ADL, 2022). By partaking in society, the channels argue that humans are “enslaved” in a system that want to control them for the elite’s own personal gain. Arguably, and somewhat ironically, this was more the case with the Nazi Party – an inherently totalitarian and authoritative movement that the content seemingly both admires and simultaneously rejects.

In addition to a strong environmental focus, the ecofascist channels convey some features of fascism as described by Payne (1995) and Griffin (1993), by stressing masculinity, youth, and pro-violent rhetoric. For instance, in there is a strong focus on “real men” as violent and hyper-masculine. Additionally, the environmental focus in the channels is closely related to protecting and teaching children the “old ways”. In Nazi Germany, there was an extensive focus on youth and environmentalism. In 1934, the director of the Reich Agency for Nature Protection, Walter Schoenichen established that from a very early age “the youth must develop an understanding of the civic importance of all parts and organs for the benefit of the one and superior task of life” (Biehl and Staudenmaier, 2011: 27). In the content on Telegram, the combined focus on youth and environmentalism seems to entail two primary tasks: (1) to teach children to be self-sufficient so that they will not be enslaved in a corrupt system and (2) ensure a future where white children are not extinct due to increased multiculturalism.

As seen in Payne’s (1995) third tier regarding the style and organization of fascism, the emphasis on aesthetic structure is also vital to fascism. As such, an emphasis on meetings, symbols, and political liturgy stressing emotional and mystical aspects, are defining features of fascism. The moderators of the ecofascist channels could be conducting or partaking in online meetings that I have no knowledge of. However, in my research there were no mentions of virtual or physical meetings in any of the channels. Instead, the moderators often encouraged their subscribers to get off the internet and return to traditionalism in nature. The irony of such an encouragement is not lost on me. Some of the photos and videos in the material were



intricately and sophisticatedly crafted pieces of visual content that indicate knowledge of complicated computer programs. Nevertheless, meetings can have occurred without my knowing so. Furthermore, in the world of the social and interactive Internet, a new understanding of aesthetic structures might be necessary. For example, in a virtual world with no limitations to time and space, there are other ways of establishing an aesthetic structure beyond concrete meetings. Part of this can be posting appealing photos of natural landscapes or propaganda content that might encourage others to join the cause. Additionally, there are also other, smaller ways of establishing affiliation. The analysis showed that Nazi symbols such as the Life rune for instance, are regularly published in the channels to establish what I assume is a connection to Nazism. Additionally, the pine tree emoji, for example, is a seemingly innocent symbol. However, regarded in the broader aspect of being used alongside Nazi content, it now seems to indicate a more ominous meaning. Publishing a pine tree in the name of your channel or your username seems to indicate unity and solidarity between self-proclaimed ecofascists. As such, one could argue that the channels fulfill Payne's third tier of fascism. Still, I maintain that symbols that express solidarity to an unorganized cause with no leadership hierarchies are not necessarily fascist. Nevertheless, my research question did not ask to what extent online communities are fascist. It asks to what extent the content in ecofascist channels is reviving classical ecofascism.

To that end, I found that while the content on Telegram revives *some* elements of classical ecofascism, my analysis finds that the communication mainly calls for a quasi-anarchist revolution where mankind must break free from the established systems and return to nature as individuals. There are no calls for authoritarian actors to take charge of the ongoing environmental crisis and save nature from damnation. Instead, there is a call to action encouraging individuals to break free from everything institutionalized and become self-sufficient in nature, either in complete solitude or with a small chosen tribe.

As I stated in chapter 3, I assumed that an ecofascist movement must feature certain key elements of fascism in addition to proposing deep ecological practises to warrant the label "ecofascist". As it is not this thesis intention to question our understanding of fascism, I leave that to the better suited, I based the features of fascism on Payne (1995) and Griffin's (1993) definitions. My main argument is thus the following: content that stresses the importance of environmentalism with some fascist features such as masculinity, pro-violence, palingenetic nationalism is not necessarily ecofascist. Not when the content rejects important features of

fascism such as authoritarianism, collectivism, and expansionism. The content in the ecofascist channels used Nazi symbols such as runes known to have been applied by the Nazis, published Nazi and neo-Nazi slogans such as “blood and soil” and “14 words”, and published content celebrating Hitler. Yet, the content still rejected governance as a whole and argued for solitude and liberal freedom in nature. Consequently, rejecting the *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community) that Germans were expected to subordinate themselves to. Thus, I maintain that the environmental focus in the four self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram does not express ecofascism, but far-right libertarian anarchism.

## 7.2 Contributions to existing research

The aspects of nature mysticism and anti-modernity elements builds on previous research.

As seen in chapter 2, Fortchner (2019b), for example, analysed the extreme-right magazine *Umwelt & Aktiv* and found that the cultural imaginary of “laws of nature as applicable to the social world is being reconstructed” (2019b: 285). Similar to my own research, Fortchner identified themes such as human responsibility for environmental degradation, the ecological value of flora and fauna, and criticism of modernity's levelling tendencies (ibid). These themes are also found in Champion's (2021) understanding of ecofascism as the romanizations of a mystical past in which ecofascists imagine that their society was ecologically harmonious and strong.

However, Taylor (2019) and the Guardian Journalist Wilson (2019) argue that far-right online communities are calling for genocidal solutions found in deep ecology and Nazism to solve environmental concerns. While eugenic policies were certainly present in Nazi Germany, the analysis shows that ecofascist channels on Telegram do not consider genocide a solution to environmental concerns. Furthermore, the only concern related to genocide found in the ecofascist channels, is the belief that the “white race” is disappearing due to increased modernization as a result of immigration and multiculturalism. The narrative is thus that a “white genocide” is happening due to increased multiculturalism, and not because overpopulation is threatening the resources of the Earth. As such, the beliefs by deep-ecology thinkers such as Thomas Malthus, Pentti Linkola and Garrett Hardin are not presented in the content on Telegram.

Additionally, Taylor (2019) also found that while non-political actors of the far right, express concerns for the environment, they do so without articulating climate change specifically. Interestingly, this resembles my own findings. I initially assumed that channels dedicated to the environment would address the issue of climate change but there were no mentions of it in any of the channels I analysed. The content explicitly states that the natural environment is where humanity belongs and that increased modernity such as urbanization and industrialization is to blame for the destruction of nature. Burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas to, for example, use for driving cars and heating buildings are features of industrialization which in turn generates greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. As such, one could argue that the content on Telegram inexplicitly blames man-made actions for climate change. However, more explicitly, the content blames immigration and conspiracy theory actors for the destruction of the natural environments, and not greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, the main narrative throughout the channels expresses a reality which places the “white race” in the role of the victims and actors such as the NWO and Israel in the roles of conspirators. Furthermore, as the content only expresses these concerns in relation to an “environmental destruction” and never “climate change” or “climate crisis”, I interpret that the main concerns for the ecofascist channels are not the gas emissions that act like a blanket around the Earth, trapping the sun’s heat and raising temperatures. Instead, the “environment” and “nature” seems to denote a geographical landscape consisting of forests and mountains. The concerns are thus not with the temperature of the earth (as is the case with most climate change concerns), but with the rightful ownership over a land the channels believe are being exploited for profit by conspirators.

Ultimately, my project both support and challenge existing research on far-right environmentalism as ecofascism. I find that there is a strong focus on the aspect of nature-mysticism in the sense of a people’s connectedness to the nature. This seems to correlate to many other theories on far-right environmentalism. The aspects of individuality and liberalism was, however, not something I was prepared to find when researching self-proclaimed fascist movements. Moreover, it was not something I had previously seen in research on the far right. I assumed that the political right could be understood as what Taylor (2019) described as “primarily as a defense of the status quo as pro-capitalist and pro-state” (2019: 275). Which means that I assumed that some elements of ecofascism might entail some aspects of private ownerships regarding the natural environment. And while this is not untrue in the content, the ownership between and a specific race and the land is repeatedly expressed after all, I did not

expect the focus on ungovernable individuality. The content that expressed a wish to live in solitary “because fuck people that’s why” (see figure 29), was an unexpected element of self-proclaimed ecofascism that I had not previously seen in far-right research.

### **7.3 Limitations**

There are of course limitations to my research. As my project is qualitative, I won’t be able to provide results that are generalizable outside of this project. This is not to say that the results are not valid or reliable, only that they are not representative for the population. My results are the product of an in-depth content analysis of four, anonymous, self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on a social messaging platform. Thus, my study is also limited to only interpreting the explicitly stated messages in the content, and not the *intended* message of the channel moderators. Additionally, according to a report by the European Commission, within the context of far-right terrorist attack, they often witness “playful” ways of communicating racist ideologies in online communities. They furthermore state that, “this contributes to blurring the lines between mischief and potentially radicalising messaging” (Fielitz and Ahmed, 2021). This is something I was very aware of when I conducted the analysis. As I stated in my mythology chapter, I acknowledge that there are limitations to what I can interpret. As such, I interpreted the explicitly stated messages compared to a historical phenomenon. However, as I said, I am not able to comment on the intended message of the moderators. Thus, while I assume that there is some degree of seriousness to the messages claiming that the “white race” is disappearing, I am not able to comment on the actual beliefs of the moderators. As Fielitz and Ahmed stated in their report, it could be that these messages are simply the result of the moderator’s playful mischief.

### **7.4 Suggestions for further research**

Building on the limitations, I propose that the field of far-right research will benefit from future projects examining people who identify as ecofascists. As seen in chapter 2, Thomas and Gosink stated that “during worsening ecological crises, a revival of ecofascist rhetoric and action has been observed” (2021: 34). As no immediate solution to the worsening ecological crisis is currently underway, one can assume that the communication in these channels will grow as the crisis increases. Indeed, Loadenthal (2022), who also examined Telegram, argues

that “within the ecofascist-accelerationist online discourse abounds a radical ecology renaissance likely to intensify as the effects of climate change become more visible” (2022: 199). Thomas and Gosink furthermore proposes that the various ways in which ecofascism might manifest in the twenty-first century include:

(1) cultural genocide through the destruction of environments and ecosystems that communities rely on for sociocultural reproduction; (2) using environmental concerns as a justification for neo-Malthusian policies that at best, reinforce and provide legitimacy to far-right actors, and at worst, facilitate atrocities in their own right; and (3) the weaponization of climate change through the manipulation of geographies, namely the securitization of borders (ibid: 48).

The implications of what Thomas and Gosink proposes, combined with the findings of my own research, warrants further research into the field of modern, online self-proclaimed ecofascism. Although this study cannot verify the threats as seen in for example figure 21: “This circus is going to grind to a halt. The music is going to stop. And they are going to wish that they had just left us alone”, I believe that the implications of the environmental crisis will continue to play a significant role in far-right environmentalism. Compared with the unlimited reach and possibilities of the Internet, I thus encourage future researchers to, in a safe and ethical manner, examine the moderators in charge of self-proclaimed ecofascist channels. So that we might gain a greater understanding of these liberal and anarchist features of far-right environmentalism.

## 8. Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine an aspect of far-right environmental communication said to revive Nazi ecology in online communities. More specifically, to what extent Nazi ecology – labeled classical ecofascism – is being revived in self-proclaimed ecofascist channels on Telegram. I found that there is a strong emphasis on Nazism in the content. Alongside symbols known to have been used by the Nazi Party such as the Life rune, Odal rune, the Sun Wheel, and the Sun Cross, are photos and videos of Hitler. These photos are often accompanied with the caption “Uncle” and celebratory elements, indicating a pleasant relationship between the channel moderators and Nazism. Additionally, the channels often published content referencing Nazi environmentalism such as the “blood and soil” romanticism, popularized as a slogan by the Reich Peasant Leader and Minister of Agriculture, Richard Walther Darré. Thus, explicitly denoting a connection between a nation's race (blood) and the land (soil). These features are furthermore accompanied by a narrative that places anyone not included in the “blood” category, in the role of invader or evil conspirators with sinister agendas. Due to the displacements caused by Israel for example, the content argues that increased multiculturalism and globalization has led to the “white race” diminishing. Furthermore, totalitarian, “one world” agendas by the New World Order (NWO), are responsible for the “enslavement” of people in corrupt and brainwashing systems found in cities described as “concrete jungles”. Urbanization is thus seen as an unfavorable site because it traps humans in a “wicked” place controlled by others, and because it removed humans from their true element: nature.

Alongside with these elements of environmentalism and Nazi glorification, however, is the emphasis on liberalism and anarchism. While promoting Nazism and celebrating Hitler, the four channels seemingly reject any type of governance. Consequently, rejecting important features of ecofascism such as authoritarianism, collectivism, and expansionism. My main finding in this thesis is therefore that a broader understanding of far-right environmentalism is necessary – as libertarian anarchism. I find that the subject of modern, far-right environmentalism is a relatively new research field that would benefit greatly from further research. My intent is thus that this thesis, and consequently the argument for a broader

understanding of far-right environmentalism, will contribute to the ongoing research field on the digital far-right.

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