

# **Green neo-Nazism**

***Examining the intersection of masculinity, far-right  
extremism and environmentalism in the  
Nordic Resistance Movement***

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# Abstract

This thesis aims to examine the intersections of right-wing extremism, masculinity and environmentalism. The latter is usually associated with the political left rather than the extreme right, and the feminine rather than the masculine. Research has shown that far-right subcultures are male dominated and defined in hyper-masculine terms. Nonetheless, the neo-Nazi group the *Nordic Resistance Movement* (NRM) emphasizes environmental protection and animal welfare in their political manifesto, which challenges our typical ideas of what far-right extremism looks like today. In this study, I ask how gender affects the NRM's construction of identity, what neo-Nazi environmentalism is, and how the NRM relates to fascist and Nazi traditions in a contemporary context. To answer these questions, I have conducted a narrative analysis of the NRM's podcast *Nordic Frontier*. I have relied on discursive problem analysis and role theory in my investigation. The analysis includes a contextual perspective, and therefore I also rely on historical literature.

From the analysis, I construct two main lines of argumentation. First, I argue that there are gaps in the general understanding of neo-Nazi environmentalism. While some have discarded neo-Nazi environmentalism as a strategic effort to mask and expand racism and discrimination, I argue that neo-Nazi environmentalism is also a reflection of Nazi nature-ideology. I also find that neo-Nazi environmentalism is an expression of anti-cosmopolitanism, and a response to a fear of a changing social world. Additionally, neo-Nazi environmentalism serves as a new arena for proving manhood in a time where traditional manhood is challenged. Second, I argue that masculinity is an organizing principle for the NRM's far-right resistance. I find that the NRM constructs an ideal masculine Self through othering, and by what I call 'crisising', which refers to the process of accentuating crisis tendencies by problematizing issues like immigration or social change. Drawing on historical references, canonical texts, biological reductionism and contemporary ideas, I find that the NRM has developed a masculinized environmentally oriented neo-Nazism.



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# 1. Introduction

[We wish to] Create a modern society living in harmony with the laws of nature. Our animal protection laws will be developed with an emphasis on ethics as opposed to profits. Nature and all its resources will be utilized using common sense and with future generations in mind.

(Our Path: New politics for a new time, 2016:29)

These words could belong to an environmentalist organization or a green political party. However, this is an excerpt from the neo-Nazi organization *the Nordic Resistance Movement's* (NRM) manifesto. For a decade, the NRM has mobilized throughout the Scandinavian countries, simultaneously with the rise of far-right activism in the western<sup>1</sup> world. The extreme right of today has several faces. In European and North American street protest rallies, white power skinheads will march next to khaki-clad business men, cyber activists, neo-nationalist 'Alt-right'-supporters, and Nazi hipsters; also known as 'nipsters' (Rogers 2014). In this multifaceted far-right scene, the NRM present themselves as advocates for environmentalism, sustainability and animal welfare. In fact, they aim to be "the New Green Party" of their respective Nordic countries (Radio Nordfront 2017a).

Previous research on neo-Nazism emphasizes gender as a significant driving force of extreme right movements, which are largely male dominated and often defined in masculinized terms (Fangen 2003, Kimmel 2018). However, care for nature, animals and the environment has commonly been associated with femininity rather than men and masculinity. Studies have shown that there is a cognitive link between eco-friendliness and perceptions of femininity, and that men tend to shun environmentalism because of what it conveys about their masculinity (Brough et al. 2016). Consequently, this green-feminine stereotype is challenged by the NRM, a seemingly hyper-masculine movement. How does this amalgam congeal?

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<sup>1</sup> Inspired by the scientist and feminist writer Donna Haraway, I will refer to the societies commonly referred to as Western with a decapitalized w (1989). I explain this in further detail in section 2.1.1.

## 1.1 Purpose and research questions

The overall purpose of this thesis is to examine the intersection of gender, far-right extremism and environmentalism, and to explore ways of understanding and performing masculinity in the Nordic Resistance Movement which is specifically interested in nature and ecology.

The research questions that have guided me through this analysis are:

- How does gender affect the NRM's construction of identity?
- What is neo-Nazi environmentalism?
- How does environmentalism and masculinity interact to shape a masculine Self?
- How does the NRM relate to fascist and Nazi traditions in a contemporary context?

## 1.2 Analysis, selection and limitations

To answer the research questions, I conducted a narrative analysis of the discussions in the NRM's podcast *Nordic Frontier*, and supplemented the material with additional sources to draw a broader picture of the NRM. I conducted a discursive problem analysis (Bacchi 2012, Jørgensen and Phillips 2002) to examine which 'problematized' issues of society that constitute crisis tendencies for the NRM, and how these are *explicitly* and *implicitly* presented. Crisis tendencies refers to disruptions of existing social structures and systems (Connell 1995). In the examination of the Self, I relied on symbolic interactionism and role theory to show how the constructed Self excels by conveying different messages simultaneously (Goffman 1992, Mead 1974).

The analysis resulted in two main lines of argumentation. First, I argue that there are gaps in the general understanding of neo-Nazi environmentalism. Some have discarded neo-Nazi environmentalism as a strategic political tactic to attract voters by appealing to a trendy populist agenda (Rogers 2014, Schumaker 2015). 1930s' fascism and Nazism 'absorbed' the trends of its time to assimilate popular opinions, which supports the notion that neo-Nazism incorporates environmentalism for strategic reasons. I argue that there are several meanings to be uncovered which affects ideas and relations of race, gender and nature. It is important to recognize the Nazi nature-ideological heritage to understand contemporary Nazi objectives. Biocentrism, sociobiology and nature romanticism underpinned a worldview which served to legitimize Aryan supremacy. Additionally, to acknowledge the potential attraction of neo-Nazi environmentalism is to acknowledge the fear of a changing world as a driving force of the extreme right. By doing so, this analysis shows how the contemporary 'environmental

crisis' can be appropriated by extreme forces. Furthermore, neo-Nazi environmentalism shapes, and is shaped, by gendered practices. By using gender as an analytical tool, or masculinity 'as a lens', I argue that neo-Nazi environmentalism is used to perform a masculine identity and to restore male dominance. The NRM reinstates environmentalism as a masculine practice founded on *protecting* the white race, animals and nature, and on *othering* of racialized people, liberals<sup>2</sup> and women.

Second, I argue that masculinity is an organizing principle for the NRM's right-wing resistance. I examined what kind of gender ideology that forms the basis of the NRM's ideal masculine Self and found that the NRM constructs a Self through othering, and through what I call 'crisising'. Crisising refers to the process of accentuating crisis tendencies by problematizing issues like immigration and moral decline to incite action. Theory on both masculinity and fascism shows how a perceived crisis of the established social order provokes a fear of change and prompts efforts to take control and reinstate conventional social norms (Griffin 1995, Connell 1995). The crisis tendencies that the NRM are concerned with are formulated through a critique of feminism, liberalism, individualism and a degenerate society. I argue that the NRM's underlying aim is to reclaim power and authority as *real Men* of the authentic Nordic country. Accordingly, the answer to the world's crises and chaos is the NRM's masculinized environmentalist National Socialism. Drawing on historical references, biological reductionism, contemporary ideas and canonical texts of the movement, the NRM reinstates men and masculinity as natural protectors of the non-human sphere, refuting environmentalism's leftist and feminine connotations.

In this study, I am contextually interpreting new data in light of social, historical, geographical and economic conditions. Hence, my analysis does not only incorporate the primary material on the NRM, but also secondary material as existing research and literature on Nazism, neo-Nazism, gender and environmentalism presented in chapter 3. An analysis of neo-Nazism cannot be undertaken without acknowledging the ideological heritage of Nazism. This is however not a historical study. The literature on Nazism is extensive, and while there are numerous debates and interpretations available, the scope of this thesis does not allow a deep venture into the mazes of this field. Therefore, I have focused on ideas and literature suited to explain the Nazi and neo-Nazi relation to race, gender and nature, which were the

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<sup>2</sup> I understand the NRM to equate the term 'liberal' with 'cultural Marxist'. I provide a more thorough explanation of how I employ the term 'liberal' in the section 2.1.1 Clarifications.

dominant themes throughout the study. The selected literature also reflects the contradictions of Nazi ideology and contributes to explain how the NRM's worldview and Self representation appears as inconsistent. Questions of class emerged and will be touched upon, but not discussed in detail due to the scope of the thesis.

How important is the environmentalist aspect to understand neo-Nazism? Is it simply 'green fluff' to garnish a hotchpotch of hate, separatism and racism? Throughout this thesis I will show why I believe it is not. Rather than being 'fluff', neo-Nazi environmentalism cements the deep-seated structures of Nazism: identity, race, gender and power. Nazism must be recognized as something more than simply brutality, genocide, destruction and war to understand its contemporary actuality.

In order to contextualize Nazism, my perspective is informed by the field of history of ideas which links Nazism to early currents of nature romanticism and mysticism (Frøland 2017). I take into account the critique of this view for not sufficiently acknowledging social, political and historical conditions and events in the German society, so I supply the historical background with different voices from political science and history. Although not the most conspicuous driving force of Nazism, I argue that understanding the influence of nature-ideology and green ideas is important to nuance the analysis of Nazism and neo-Nazism. While the 'angry white man'-identity has proven to be a potent doorway into the extreme right, idealizing Nazism's utopian promises of purity, community, traditionalism, romanticism and today's environmentalism posits another entry. While this study does not aim to discuss prevention of far-right extremism and exit-strategies, it does examine what aspects of Nazism that continues to appeal to especially young men. Recognizing these aspects will in turn contribute to provide knowledge for how to deradicalize extreme-right sympathizers.

This study enhances the understanding of what the extreme right is, how it communicates, functions and mobilizes its sympathizers. The study also addresses the fear which is generated by the looming environmental crisis and shows how environmentalist agenda can be appropriated to convey extreme and anti-humanist messages. Accordingly, this research challenges and expands the understanding of the extreme right, environmentalism and gender, and it provides new knowledge of the intersection between the three.

### 1.3 Overview of study

Chapter 2 presents the applied methods, analytical tools and a discussion of methodological choices. I discuss my position as a feminist researcher and the ethical considerations of conducting research on extreme movements. Finally, I include an overview of the empirical material.

Chapter 3 presents the relevant theory, background and context for the thesis. I address the historical background regarding Nazism, drawing on a timeline from the Weimar republic in Germany, until the 1990s neo-Nazi rising in Scandinavia. I introduce the NRM and the contemporary context that the extreme right operates in today. Further, I address significant theories on gender and masculinities, as well as literature on nature and environmentalism.

Chapter 4 presents the empirical data gathered from the podcast *Nordic Frontier*. Here I address the explicit ‘frontstage’ concerns of the NRM. What issues do they problematize, and what do they wish to convey to their audience? I have sorted the material into five overriding themes called *Nice guys*, *Protectors*, *The Degenerate society*, *Nature and environmental problems* and *Women and femininity*.

Chapter 5 focuses on the implicit messages of the podcast material. What claims are hidden in the explicit problem constructions? This chapter discusses the NRM’s ‘backstage’ performance, its masculine Self and the possible meanings of neo-Nazi environmentalism.

The study ends with a final conclusion, chapter 6, in which I summarize my arguments and discuss the implications of my findings.

## 2. Method and empirical material

While quantitative social research offers wide scopes of generalization, qualitative research offers the possibility of interpreting subjective experiences (Hesse-Biber and Yaiser 2004:213). As sentiments and identity processes like gendering play significant mobilization roles in far-right extremist movements, qualitative research is the most appropriate alternative for understanding far-right extremism. Qualitative research methods also facilitate the use of empirical material as a point of departure for further analysis, allowing the researcher to conduct a deeper analysis of the material (Hesse-Biber and Yaiser 2004:211-13). In this chapter, I give an account of what methodological choices I have made in this thesis, a clarification of terms, the analytical tools I employ, and the ethical considerations needed for this project. Finally, I present an overview of the empirical data, as well as an exposition of how I sorted and analyzed the podcast material.

### 2.1 Methodological choices

Initially, I wanted to conduct interviews for my empirical basis, but conducting interviews were not possible for several reasons.<sup>3</sup> Instead, the primary material source for this thesis is NRM's podcast show *Nordic Frontier*, where the three Swedish hosts Mikael (Mike), Andreas and Johan discuss news, activism, ideology, popular culture and interview guests. They speak English to make the material available for a broader audience. Their conversations provide dynamic material with personal takes and ideas. The podcast information reads that "the overall message is based on the political direction of the Nordic Resistance Movement, but the individual opinions expressed by the hosts and guests are their own" (Nordfront Editorial Office 2017). Even though the hosts do not officially represent the NRM, I consider them significant conveyors of the NRM's mission and ideology.

I supplied the podcast data with additional sources to produce a nuanced analysis. The secondary sources are the NRM's manifesto *Our Path: New Politics for a New Time* (2016) and will be referred to as *Our Path*. Furthermore, I review mass media reportages on the NRM, including the documentary *Rasekrigerne* (2017) made by the Norwegian Broadcasting

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<sup>3</sup> Interviewing active neo-Nazis or defectors were not an option for my MA-thesis due to lack of access and questions of safety.

Corporation (NRK). *Rasekrigerne* translates to ‘Race Warriors’ and alludes to that the NRM understand themselves as fighting for the Nordic race (Rasekrigerne 2017).

Furthermore, I use historical literature to understand the origins of neo-Nazism, as well as its structure and appeal. I surveyed perspectives from the fields of history of ideas, political science, anthropology and sociology, and included what I considered to be suitable material in order to shed light on contemporary Nordic ‘green’ neo-Nazism. Consequently, I refer to a wide range of historians and scholars throughout the thesis.

### 2.1.1 Clarifications

This section presents clarifications of certain terms and choices that I have made in this study. The NRM is spread out across the Nordic region, but I mostly focus on the Swedish and the Norwegian factions. This is because the NRM’s main seat is located in Sweden, and the Norwegian factions collaborate closely with the Swedish wing. Additionally, Swedish and Norwegian media material were readily accessible to me as a Norwegian speaker.

In this thesis, ‘environmentalism’ and ‘ecology’ are, as historian Peter Staudenmaier puts it, “used more or less interchangeably to denote ideas, attitudes, and practices commonly associated with the contemporary environmental movement” (Biehl and Staudenmaier 2011:14-15). Even though the Nazis did not explicitly use the term ‘environmentalism’, it is not an anachronism. I employ the concept through an interpretative approach which aims to highlight the connection between the past and the present day’s ecological and social concerns (Biehl and Staudenmaier 2011:14-15).

The term ‘liberal’ has several meanings in this thesis. Liberalism is derived from features of western culture that emphasizes human individuality and freedom from the state (Ball et al. 2018). In Europe, the term liberal is commonly associated with limited government and laissez-faire economic policies (Ball et al. 2018). In the USA, ‘a liberal’ often refers to a left leaning democrat, who wishes for a *stronger* state in terms of welfare policies and social services rather than freedom from the state (Ball et al. 2018, Nagle 2017). I understand the *Nordic Frontier* podcast hosts to conflate the use of ‘liberal’ with ‘leftist’ and ‘cultural Marxist’. Culture Marxism is a term that since the 1990s has been used by right-wing oriented groupings as a general signifier of liberal and/or left-leaning politics in western societies (Bangstad 2017). Hence, the term liberal is used by the NRM as a proxy for cultural Marxist urban people who support multiculturalism and non-traditional gender practices.

Finally, I clarify what language I use to refer to the liberal democracies in what has been commonly understood as ‘the West’. Scientist and feminist writer Donna Haraway argues for the avoidance of capitalizing ‘the west’ and ‘western’ “to disrupt the ideological stance that the West is One, even while sometimes indulging in that fiction in order to characterize lines of force in powerful story fields” (Haraway 1989:116). Inspired by Haraway, I chose to ‘decapitalize the west’ in my writing in order to contribute to the disruption that she calls for. By referring to the liberal democracies of Europe and North-America as ‘the west’ and ‘western’, I acknowledge the lines of power that the ‘west’ symbolizes while also attempting to subvert its monolithic and hegemonic structure.

## 2.2 Analytic tools

Choosing the appropriate method and methodology depends on the object of study, but also on the researcher’s epistemological platform (Ramazanoğlu and Holland 2002:152). I am inspired by feminist research traditions which offers openness, fluidity and interdisciplinary approaches in method and methodology (Hesse-Biber and Yaiser 2004:212), and I therefore employ different tools to analyze the material.

### 2.2.1 Discursive approaches

I draw on discourse analysis by focusing on speech and the understanding of a phenomena (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:61, 78). Discourse analysis was developed as a critical analytic tool to grasp the workings of power (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:3). I do not emphasize discourse analysis but employ it to access the power dynamics as well as the explicit and *implicit* meanings of the material. A discursive approach is beneficial because it holds that there is no single, fixed reality, but rather several conflicting ways of understanding and constructing reality (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:9). Hence, discourse analysis enables me to access the perceived truth of power and social relations that prevail in the NRM reality. I draw on an understanding of the social world as made up by what Jørgensen and Phillips calls non-discursive social institutions, which become discursive when ascribed meaning to (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:7, 9, 62). This means that for instance ecological conditions are not discursive per se, but that the many different meanings ascribed to them are.

I draw on political theorist Carol Bacchi’s ‘What is the Problem Represented to be?’ approach (hereafter WPR) (2012). WPR is a discursive problem analysis where one analyzes the problematization of certain issues. This method encourages critical reflection of the

presentation of a problematized issue, and aims to access the implicit layers of the problem construction (Bacchi 2009:xi). WPR is a versatile approach with no strict formula (Bacchi 2012:23), so I have appropriated a WPR-analysis to discern how the NRM presents problems and to subject this problem representation to critical scrutiny. Hence, a deconstruction of the issues that the NRM problematize, hereby ‘problems’, serves to unmask the implicit power dynamics and ideology that shapes the representation.

The WPR-approach is equally concerned with scrutinizing presented solutions as the problems themselves (2012). Analyzing presented solutions would have fit neatly with a textual analysis of the manifesto *Our Path*, but the podcast discussions presented problems rather than solutions, so I chose to focus on these problems. Inspired by Bacchi’s problem analysis, I examine the explicit problems which the NRM are concerned with an empirical basis in their podcast discussions. Furthermore, I examine which implicit problems are masked by the explicit problem representations.

### 2.2.2 Gender as an analytical tool

According to sociologist Michael Kimmel, gender as a contributing factor must be recognized in research on far-right extremism (2018:8). I use gender as an analytical tool to investigate how gender and masculinity play a role for the NRM’s construction of reality and the Self. Does masculinity exist as an underlying theme of the podcast discussions? This question, however, may create a confirmatory bias. One ‘finds’ gender if one is ‘looking for’ gender (Ramazanoğlu and Holland 2002:53-4). This bias poses a limitation to my methodology because I run the risk of overlooking other aspects or social identifiers that affects social life, like age, race and class (Ramazanoğlu and Holland 2002:53-4). Therefore, rather than using gender as a framework, I will attempt to use gender as a question: Where is gender visible and where is it not? Gender may manifest itself as an explicit theme in a given context. More often, however, gender is an ‘invisible’ part of interactions which takes on different forms in different social settings (Holter 1976, Solheim 1998). Therefore, although there is a risk of bias, one must often deal with ‘invisible’ gender dynamics. By using gender as an analytical tool, I look for the ways in which gender becomes visible in the empirical material.

Accordingly, I chose historical sources that deal with the connection between Nazism and gender (for instance Koonz 1987, Mosse 1996, Theweleit 1987). Acknowledging that conceptions about gender often remain on the level of implicit metaphors, I draw on more contemporary gender theory of the masculinity crisis (Connell 1995, Kimmel 2013, Holter

2005) to tease out underlying masculine patterns in theory on fascism (for instance Griffin 1995). Seeing Nazism and neo-Nazism through a lens of gender helps me comprehend the implicit gendering processes that takes place in the NRM's reality.

### 2.2.3 Role theory and symbolic interactionism

How can we understand the construction of the Self? The renowned sociologist Erving Goffman analyzed social 'performances' through *role theory* (1992). A person's interaction with others are called 'dramatizations' (Goffman 1992:22). One may take on different roles that must be dramatized so they convey what they intend to (Goffman 1992:34). Furthermore, the individuals' performance depends on whether they are 'frontstage' or 'backstage' (Goffman 1992). Observed by an audience, the person puts on a frontstage routine (Goffman 1992). Backstage, however, no one is looking. There, one may unwind and be one's self (Goffman 1992). To make a fallacious performance or to be caught outside one's role often leads to humiliation and shaming of the actor (1992:55).

The individual may take on different roles, which may merge or interchange. Symbolic interactionism is a sociological theory that shows how the Self is informed by dialectical processes with Others (Hall 2016). The individual mirrors the Others and determines which interactional roles they should take on based on expected public evaluation (Mead 1974:255-7). This is similar to *othering*, which refers to the process of transforming diversity to difference, creating positive ideal types and negative stereotypes (Braidotti 2013:15).<sup>4</sup> Like in processes of othering, the Self is understood in relation to another, but symbolic interactionism allows us to understand how the individual may adjust their performance to the relevant audience by interchanging roles (Mead 1974). The individual may even go into the roles of the other person to adjust themselves as member of the group (Mead 1974:256). I will use role theory to understand how the NRM Self is constructed and performed.

## 2.3 Overview of empirical data

In this section I present the empirical data. The *Nordic Frontier* podcast is my primary source material, while I review additional sources to supplement the analysis and nuance the frontstage-image presented through the podcast. I firstly discuss the podcast as a medium.

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<sup>4</sup> For more on othering, see for instance Simone de Beauvoir (1949) or Edward Said (1978).

After a brief overview of the four podcast discussions, I explain how I sorted and analyzed the material.

### 2.3.1 Podcast as a medium

The podcast may be understood as a communicative event in the form of speech (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:67). The speech is located within a discursive practice where the NRM distributes the podcast through the platform *Spreaker*. Their intended listeners are someone who is interested in Nazism and neo-Nazism in the Nordic countries, but the podcast is also accessible to the English-speaking world. The episodes are long, slow and deliberate, with a couple of musical breaks.

Podcast is a trendy medium which is readily accessible from internet and smartphones. As such, it fits into the social practice of the digitalized consumer culture because it can be consumed anywhere at any time. In contrast to the NRM's rather impersonal and stylized media performances, the show hosts' conversations provide dynamic material which is marked by personal reflections and thoughts. Drawing on Goffman's (1992) framework of frontstage and backstage performances, I understand the podcast shows as staged acts, or dramatizations intended for an audience.

### 2.3.2 Nordic Frontier

*Nordic Frontier* is a (near) weekly podcast, and the first episode aired in January 2017. The episodes usually last between two and three hours. The podcast description declares that its aim is to spread the NRM's political message to a wider audience, and "dive deep into what National Socialism has to offer in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (Nordfront Editorial Office 2017). The podcast does this through "theme- and discussion-based episodes" (Nordfront Editorial Office 2017). I analyzed four discussions from four podcast episodes. Although the podcasts are published through Spreaker.com, I listened to them through Player FM.com, which allowed me to control the speed so I could listen more closely and transcribe the relevant parts. All transcription and quotes are directly rendered, with no embellishing of grammar or sentence structure. Below I present the episodes in dated order.

1) The first episode is called "Nordic Frontier #10: Presenting the New Green Party", dated 16.03.2017 (Radio Nordfront 2017a).<sup>5</sup> In the last part of the podcast, the show hosts discuss

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<sup>5</sup> The episode is 2h, 50 minutes long, and the discussion starts at 01:34:00 and lasts for around 1h and 15 minutes.

point number 6 of the NRM's manifesto (Our Path 2016). This point regards environmentalism and animal welfare, and the ingress is the same as the very first quote presented in the introduction. The point asserts that the NRM wants to create a society in harmony with nature's laws, protect animals, use resources sustainably, and protect the Right of Public Access<sup>6</sup> (Our Path 2016:29). The hosts recite point 6 and then discuss for about one hour and 15 minutes. Due to its length, I have focused on recurring themes when analyzing this conversation. I selected this discussion because the hosts thoroughly undergo both their own and the NRM's views on nature and environmentalism.

2) The second episode is called "Nordic Frontier #19: Privileged Anti-Whites, Integration Malaise and Point No. 7 Continued", dated 18.05.2017 (Radio Nordfront 2017b).<sup>7</sup> Point number 7 of *Our Path* regards trade, industry, taxes and pensions, and one of the subpoints is called "Family policy and the role of women". They recite point 7 and further discuss labor division between the genders, feminism, quota systems and the importance of family. The discussion is 18 minutes long. This discussion is relevant for this thesis because it presents the NRM's views on women, gender roles and labor division for my analysis of environmentalism and neo-Nazism.

3) The third episode is called "Nordic Frontier #26: Having Aryan babies is eco-terrorism?", dated 20.07.2017 (Radio Nordfront 2017c).<sup>8</sup> The title discussion figures as the first headline under their section *Domestic news*. During the discussion they refer to an article from *Sweden's Radio* called "Do you want to save the climate – don't have children" which is based on a study from Lund University (Sveriges Radio 2017, Lund University 2017). I chose this episode to examine how they discuss environmental challenges like overpopulation and whether Nordic people should regulate their birth numbers to maintain sustainable population numbers.

4) The fourth and final episode I examined is called "Nordic Frontier #28: Gender Confusion, Varg Vikernes Response, Moroccan Street Children", dated 03.08.2017 (Radio Nordfront 2017d).<sup>9</sup> In their discussion on 'Gender Confusion' they criticize the VICE Documentary *Raised without gender* concerning the official Swedish discourse of gender fluid

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<sup>6</sup> The Right of Public Access ensures the general public's right to access certain public or privately-owned land, rivers and lakes for tourism, recreation and exercise. This right is ensured by law in the Nordic countries.

<sup>7</sup> The episode is 2h and 51minutes long, and the discussion starts at 02:00:00 and ends at 02:18:30.

<sup>8</sup> The total length of episode is 2h and 32 minutes long, and the discussion starts at 00:09:20 and ends at 00:30:45.

<sup>9</sup> The episode is 2h and 33 minutes long. The discussion lasts from 00:09:50 to 00:35:00.

kindergartens and non-conforming families (2017). I chose this episode because it addresses how the NRM conceptualizes gender and sexuality, what they think of the Swedish non-gendering discourse and how they construct Others through processes of gendering.

In chapter 4 I organized the material by measuring the research questions, analytical tools and empirical material up against each other. By continuously reviewing the research questions, tools and material in the analyzing process, I was able to sort out the significant findings that would serve the study's purpose of examining the intersection of gender, far-right extremism and environmentalism. Initially I looked for phenomena or recurring themes to analyze in the podcast discussions. Instead, I found that what was most recurring were largely forms of problematizations of Others and of society's crisis tendencies. Inspired by the WPR-approach, I therefore sorted the material thematically by looking for explicit and implicit problem representations in the discussions. This uncovered tensions between frontstage and backstage behavior. In other words, I found that the self-representation of the NRM was inconsistent and multivocal.

Following Goffman's role theory, I assumed that the explicit and implicit processes intended to highlight some performative aspects and hide others. It struck me how the podcast hosts assumed a relaxed, respectable tone, seemingly putting on a normal, 'nice guy'-performance. This tendency recurred throughout the podcasts. The first theme presented in chapter 4 is therefore called *Nice guys*, in which I examine how the hosts present themselves as personable and reasonable. The hosts self-representation was influenced by what the NRM consider threats facing the Nordic region. The second theme of chapter 4 is therefore called *Protectors*. The three next themes *The Degenerate society*, *Nature and environmental problems* and *Women and femininity* are sorted by centering on recurring problematizations of social and environmental issues which were imbued with gendered symbolism.

### 2.3.3 Additional sources

*Our Path: New Politics for a New Time* (2016) is the NRM's manifesto and political party program. The manifesto is divided into 9 points which represents the official NRM politics, signed off by the leader Simon Lindberg. The hosts refer to point 6 and 7 in the reviewed podcast-discussions. I have used the manifesto to supply the hosts' discussions, as well as to understand the NRM's politics.

I refer to incidents, quotes and impressions from the documentary *Rasekrigerne* to construct a more comprehensive picture of the NRM. The documentary is produced by the Norwegian

Broadcasting Corporation's (NRK) series 'Brennpunkt', where journalists have followed the NRM for two years "on the movement's own terms" (Rasekrigerne 2017). Furthermore, I reviewed several news articles from mainly Swedish and Norwegian media to understand the movement's background, controversy and dynamics.

## 2.4 Ethics

As mentioned, I draw on feminist research traditions. Feminist methodology is not apolitical, which means that I must situate myself in the research to clarify any bias I may have (Ramazanoğlu and Holland 2002:3). Bacchi considers "self-problematization", or reflexivity, to be a crucial part of the WPR analysis, because the way problems are constituted elicit particular forms of subjectivity and influences how we see ourselves and others (Bacchi 2012:22). The analyst should be aware of potential blindness, because they are a part of the same discourse or society they operate within (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:21).

Taking reflexivity into consideration, I understand myself as a part of the multicultural, western liberal democracy that the NRM positions themselves outside of. In my opinion, a neo-Nazi discourse (here meaning one which emphasizes ethno-nationalism, fascism, racism, anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories) is illegitimate, and located in the margins of society. Therefore, I recognize that my perceptions of the NRM is colored by what I call society's 'monstrosification' of neo-Nazis. I understand the sustained public opinion on Scandinavian, at least Norwegian, neo-Nazis to be that they are vile, brutal and dysfunctional, perhaps even psychopaths (Fangen 2001:46).<sup>10</sup> I wish to maneuver around this discourse, and understand which forces drive the people in the movements. I am inspired by Kimmel's research on white supremacists, which originates from curiosity, concern and empathy (2013, 2018).

As a researcher, I do not wish to place any moral judgment on the people I use in my study as representatives of the NRM. Sociologist Katrine Fangen means that when a researcher describes and analyzes what they are studying, the research should be culturally relativist, which for her means that it should try to present how the subjects of study act and

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<sup>10</sup> I make this claim based on general understandings of neo-Nazism as a Norwegian post-World War Two heritage, and as a biracial person growing up in the multicultural suburbs of Oslo in the 1990s. I also base this claim on Sociologist Katrine Fangen's understanding of her neo-Nazi informants as vile, aggressive and obnoxious on the outside, but many appeared to be sensitive and vulnerable behind their brutal façade (Fangen 2001:46).

think on their own terms (Fangen 2001:43). I did, however, encounter a dilemma along the way. The NRM does not wish to be called '(neo)-Nazis' but prefer instead the label 'National Socialists' (Rasekrigerne 2017). I will use the term Nazi in lieu of National Socialist because National Socialism is a broad term that I understand to mean something different. A National Socialist may for instance be someone who is patriotic in terms of venerating Nordic history, language, sport and democratic traditions, as well as being a socialist who believes in fair distribution of wealth and is opposed to privatization of public institutions. It does not necessarily have something to do with anti-Semitism and racial hierarchization. Furthermore, that the NRM call themselves National Socialists may be a part of a mainstreaming attempt at appealing to the general masses. I do not wish to contribute to such a normalization. Additionally, I will call them Nazis due to the direct linkages with historical Nazism. Even though I attempt to understand the individual subjects of study on their own terms, I will not participate in perpetuating the political propaganda that ultimately serves the political agendas of the NRM.

### 3. Background and literary review

This chapter aims to present the relevant historical background and the literature that contributes to explain the NRM's development today. First, I define Nazism, and consider the historical factors that is important in explaining contemporary Nordic neo-Nazism. These historical accounts include the origins of Nazism, as well as politics and ideology on race, gender and nature. I draw on a number of theoreticians, but I mainly rely on historians Richard J. Evans, Roger Griffin, Carl M. Frøland, George Mosse and William L. Shirer. Secondly, I present the development of neo-Nazism from after the Second World War until recently. To understand the Nordic neo-Nazi context, I draw on research by anthropologist Tore Bjørge and sociologists Katrine Fangen and Michael Kimmel. Third, I present the employed literature on gender, and define concepts such as masculinities, othering and protective hegemonic masculinity. I also review the relation between nature and masculinity. Fourth, I define and present environmentalism. Fifth, I examine the crisis by help of theories on fascism and masculinity. Finally follows a chapter synopsis, in which I summarize the main points of this chapter.

#### 3.1 Historical background: Nazism

Firstly – what is Nazism? I rely on Griffin's understanding of Nazism as a variant of fascism; a radical authoritarian and totalitarian nationalism (Griffin 1995:1-12). He explains fascism as a “genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism” (1995:4).<sup>11</sup> The typical fascist movement organizes around a mythic core which structures its ideology, politics, symbolism and beliefs (1995:3). This mythic core is

“[...] the vision of the perceived crisis of a nation as betokening the birth-pangs of a new order. It crystallizes in the image of the national community, once purged and rejuvenated, rising phoenix like of the ashes of a morally bankrupt state system and the decadent culture associated with it.”

(Griffin 1995:3)

The fascist's goal is to turn the existing social order around by effectuating a cleansing national effort that will result in a new, authoritarian order (Griffin 1995:4). Utopian ideas of the perfect society are significant components of extreme ideologies like fascism and Nazism

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<sup>11</sup> For clarification, palingenesis means rebirth.

(Hagtvet 2014:23). I understand Griffin's definition as a web of thought that carries with it certain ideals and patterns. An obsession with race, eugenics, anti-Semitism and sociobiology distinguishes Nazism from typical fascism (Griffin 1995:7-8).

Nazism is short for National Socialism, and the Nazi version of socialism draws on Italian fascism's socialist potential (Griffin 1995:17). The rebirth myth was used to mobilize and unite the German community based on racial heritage, transcending class conflict (Griffin 1995:6). This socialism presents the national community as one eradicating economical hierarchy, expunging parasitism and rewarding productive members of the new nation (Griffin 1995:6). However, National Socialism does not have its basis in the socio-economical concept of class, but the biological concept of race (Frøland 2017:173). Nazism strongly opposed communism's internationalism and materialism which were thought to divide the ethno-national foundation Nazism sought to mobilize (Griffin 1995:6).

Historian George L. Mosse understands fascism as masculinized in the sense that it elevates masculinity to a national symbol which plays a vital role in all fascist regimes (Mosse 1996:155). "Fascism heightened the warrior qualities of masculinity, racism brutalized them and transformed theory and rhetoric into reality," he writes about Nazism (1996:180).

Fascism tends to exalt the 'over-man', constructing a masculine figure as both an ideal and an icon (Mosse 1996). The 'New Man' is a recurring figure in fascist movements, developed by Italian fascism (Griffin 1995:3). He was exalted as a symbol of the nation's rebirth, masculine power and resoluteness (Griffin 1995:3, Mosse 1996:157). Moreover, Sociologist Øystein G. Holter asks whether Griffin's formulation of the mythic core contains an element of masculine *hysteria*: An acute anxiety, an uncontrollable outburst of emotion or fear leading to an impulse to cleanse and expunge (2002:25-28). In authoritarian propaganda, this is reflected through the urge to rid oneself of pollution and give birth to a new nation (Holter 2002:26). By drawing on understandings of fascism and Nazism as masculinized ideologies, I will examine how the NRM is constructed through masculinized rhetoric, and how the movement ultimately appear as what I call a male union. By male union, I mean that the movement is both male dominated and constructed in masculinized terms.

### 3.1.1 From Bismarck to The Third Reich

Nazism largely derives from Germany's development of politics and ideology, primarily reflected through Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and the National Socialist German Workers'

Party politics (NSDAP, 1920-1945).<sup>12</sup> I will briefly outline the historical backdrop leading up to Nazi Germany's rise in 1933, as well as Nazism's take on race, gender and nature.

Evans argues that the Bismarck era is an adequate point of departure for understanding Nazism (2005:2). Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was after his expiration in 1888 remembered as a strong leader. He was the first chancellor in the German empire after having united Germany in a series of wars (Evans 2005:2, Shirer 1960:94). He was followed by emperor Wilhelm II. In the 'Wilhelmian' era, Pan-German activists began calling for a more aggressive foreign policy, and ideologies inspired by fascism, social-Darwinism, eugenics and anti-Semitism became prominent (Evans 2005:37, 41). These ideas, as I will return to, would later inspire Nazism. After WW1, the Versailles treaty was exceptionally harsh on Germany, forcing them to accept all guilt for the war and pay enormous rebuking sums to the affected European countries (Evans 2005:60-61). In the time after WW1 there was sense of camaraderie. Several paramilitary groups formed, aiming to restore German pride and counteract the humiliating defeat of WW1 (Evans 2005:69, Shirer 1960:32).

The German Reichstag met in Weimar in 1919 to establish a new constitution, hence the name 'Weimar republic' (1919-1933) for Germany. At this point there were tensions between social democrats and, largely rightists, paramilitary "Freikorps" (Shirer 1960:33). The horrors of WW1 and the economic crisis of the 1920s left many people rejecting existing governmental and economic models such as democracy and large-scale capitalism (Evans 2005:141, 254). The Nazis believed that democracy was a weak institution prone to corruption (Grunberger 1971:90). At this time in Europe, socialism was an alternative to democracy and capitalism, and both fascism and Nazism presented itself as a third alternative (Llewellyn et al., 2018). The NSDAP emerged from The German Workers Party in 1920 (Shirer 1960:42). The party was established with the purpose of drawing workers away from communism and socialism into 'Völkisch' ('folkish') nationalism (Frøland 2017). Völkisch tradition has its roots in German national romanticism from the 1700s, and refers to a romantic, anti-modern, populist understanding of the German people as an organic, rural unity (Frøland 2017:22, 98). The NSDAP initially had an anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois outset but downplayed it as their popularity rose and they needed support from industrial entities (McDonough 2003:64).

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<sup>12</sup> Originally *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*.

Sturmabteilung (SA) was the paramilitary wing of the NSDAP, and one of the Freikorps that were in clashes with social democrats and other political parties (Shirer 1960:42-43). Its primary purposes were to provide protection for Nazi rallies, disrupt oppositional political gatherings, and intimidate Jews and other marginalized groups (Evans 2005:435, Shirer 1960:43, 120). Much due to SA's violent reputation, the NSDAP were known as a hyper-masculine and thuggish party in the 1930s (Evans 2004:230). The NSDAP however managed to attract supporters.

How did the Nazis maneuver their way through the political waters? The NSDAP were successful because they adapted their message to different audiences and modified themselves to please those that were turned off by the SA's street violence (Evans 2004:230, 337). The party leaders tuned down the anti-Semitism and changed the rhetoric to vaguely violent, so that the street activists could exert violence without being explicitly encouraged by the NSDAP (Evans 2004:230, 337). The NSDAP's leader Adolf Hitler decided to 'clean up' the official image to attract women and the middle class (Evans 2004:120, 230). Consequently, the NSDAP were no longer connected to violence, but to order and safety for the family German nation and the family (Koonz 1987:54). Furthermore, Hitler instated "Führerin" Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, and established several women's organizations (Koonz 1987:xix, Shirer 1960:120). This 'clean up-tactic' proved itself effective by masking brutality with decency, traditional morality and safety for the family. The tactic served to construct a twofaced dynamic to Nazism, where a seemingly nice, respectable and serious side masked an aggressive and ruthless side.

The clean-up-tactic highlights several notable characteristics of Nazism. First, it serves as a *strategy* on the path to a broader political appeal. Nazi ideology differs from fascism in that it is extremely 'absorbing': It incorporates several, often contradictive political tenets, and draws on trends of its time (Bendersky 2007:27, Frøland 2017:413). The NSDAP, and especially the SA, drew on socialist tenets like anti-capitalism, altruism and workers' rights (Frøland 2017:412). Nazism encompasses *conservative* tenets in its exalting of traditional morals and ideals, like conventional gender roles and disapproval of homosexuality and prostitution (Frøland 2017:174). Certain *liberal* elements like free competition, and social Darwinism's idealization of the competitive individual are also present in Nazism, although liberalism's individuality and freedom from the state clashes with Nazi totalitarianism (Frøland 2017:174, 412). Nazism is even linked to Stalinist communism because of its authoritarianism and revolutionary potential (Frøland 2017:413). Even though Nazism were

full of inconsistencies and contradictions, it served as a source of strength because it allowed the ideology to represent a wide range of ideas and interests (Bendersky 2007:27-8). This understanding highlights how Nazism has the potential of adapting to new social conditions, both by and absorbing new trends, and adapting its image to different audiences.

Hitler was appointed chancellor in 1933, after a rise of support and significant political maneuvering (Evans 2005:442-3). He quickly appointed the SA as the auxiliary police, and effectuated the Enabling act, which allowed the chancellor to act without support of the Reichstag (Evans 2005:341, 349). A weakness of the Weimar republic was that considerable power could be seized by the chancellor in ‘emergencies’, which were now drawn upon by the Nazis (Evans 2005:80, 351). The Nazi party suppressed all political parties throughout the spring of 1933, while different ministries were established to coordinate media, arts, culture and education (Evans 2005: 372, 365, 396-7). The first concentration camp opened in March, and in April, the first anti-Semitic laws were in place (Evans 2005:346, 437-8). In chapter 5, I use the historical accounts presented in this section to better understand and contextualize the strategies and developments of the NRM today.

### 3.1.2 Race

Nazism idealized the Aryan race, also referred to as the Nordic-Germanic race, as the noblest of all, and each political and ideological effort were focused towards securing continuation of the Germanic people and Aryan domination (Frøland 2017:284). Nazism largely fashioned philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche’s idea of the spiritual *Übermensch*, or ‘superman’, to mean a racial over-man, the exalted personification of the mastery race (Evans 2005:39).<sup>13</sup> Non-Aryan people were unwanted, and especially Jews, Slavs and Roma people were antagonized (Griffin 1995:6-7). The Nazis sought to cleanse their perceived territory of undesirable races, as they were understood to threaten the Aryan race and its *lebensraum*, translated to ‘living space’ (Evans 2005:34).

New fields of sciences and humanities developed in the 1800s, and particularly biology, philology and anthropology aided the Nazis in developing their ideology (Evans 2005:450). These sciences justified inequality by making it possible to contradict Christianity’s claim that all humans are made equal: Different peoples had different inherent qualities (Goldhagen

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<sup>13</sup> It must be noted that Nietzsche himself was a strong opponent of anti-Semitism. However, his opposition to what he called the slave morality based in Christian ethical codes has been appropriated by different movements, from feminists to Nazis (Evans 2005:39, Nagle 2017:34).

1996). Difference translated to hierarchy, and the Nazis placed the Aryan on top of a hierarchy of developed peoples (Grunberger 1971:288-9). These research fields served as an underpinning of racist theories that were already flourishing at the time (Evans 2005:450-1). The idea that one should promote certain desirable traits and discourage ‘unnatural’ racial mixing propagated into western societies in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Evans 2005:450-1).

Charles Darwin developed the evolutionary theory of natural selection in his book *On the Origins of Species* (1859),<sup>14</sup> which was later appropriated by Herbert Spencer (1897). Spencer is known as the ‘founder’ of Social Darwinism, which is a sociobiological application of Darwin’s framework onto humans. Spencer also coined the term ‘survival of the fittest’.<sup>15</sup> The Nazis embraced Social Darwinism’s hierarchy and interpreted it to mean that the strong must rule and the weak submit (Evans 2005:34). To the Nazis, Social Darwinism’s morality coupled with racial hierarchy was referred to as the ‘laws of Nature’ (Frøland 2017:177). This Social Darwinist idea complex repeats itself in the NRM’s rhetoric and will be referred to as the ‘laws of Nature’ from here on.

The Nazis embraced the pseudo-science of eugenics that claimed society could be optimized by racial hygiene (Evans 2005:37-8). The new sciences lay ground for a modern racism that impacted European views on Jews – they were othered because of foreign religion and language, and their infiltration into European society was thought to be immutable (Goldhagen 1996:37-9). Jews were considered a parasitic and unnatural *anti-race*, and, as I will later return to, a cosmic force of evil (Evans 2005:34). The Nazis incited the Christian antipathy towards Jewish peoples which is connected to the belief that Judas killed Jesus by betrayal – the Jews committed deicide (Goldhagen 1996:49-51). Nazism used biblical tales and superstitions and to gain support from a Christian Europe in demonizing the Jews (Goldhagen 1996:49-51). Although all non-Aryan races were othered as inferior, the crux of Nazism is anti-Semitism (Kimmel 2018:58). I will refer to the Nazi understanding of racial hygiene and anti-Semitism to understand the NRM’s concept of race.

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<sup>14</sup> The actual title is *On the Origins of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.

<sup>15</sup> While ‘fit’ does not necessarily mean ‘strong’, this was the implicit meaning given to Nazism’s version of the laws of Nature (Evans 2005:34).

### 3.1.3 Gender

Suffrage of 1918 contributed to introduce new social and political possibilities for German women in the Weimar era (1919-1933). This led to the popularization of the Women's emancipation movement, and a new social dynamic followed where women felt free to smoke, drink, cut their hair short, and appropriate new, often masculine, clothing (Loroff 2011:52). Nazi ideology, however, required the individual to submit to the authoritarian state. This idea led the Nazis to reject existing gender roles and redevelop traditionalist ideals (Loroff 2011:49). The Weimar republic represented moral degeneration and cultural decay, so in order to "prevent further cultural decomposition" of the German society, the regime rejected almost everything associated with the Weimar era, including women's newly found freedoms (Loroff 2011:51).

Nazi masculine gender ideology drew heavily on fascism's development of the 'New Man' (Mosse 1996:157). The New Man was disciplined, combative, energetic, unromantic and lived in a sober manner (Loroff 2011:50). These ideas shaped fascist ideology as a whole, as the New Fascist Man embodied qualities that should permeate both the state and the individual (Loroff 2011:51). The construction of Nazi masculinity was also informed by the *Übermensch*, which here represented a balanced figure of willpower and self-mastery (Loroff 2011:50).

Manhood was no longer asserted through "virtues that could be expressed in ordinary life", but through heroic activities and self-sacrifice in war (Mosse 1996:167). After the loss of WW1, there were intense wishes to reinvent masculinity in Germany, and the Nazis saw themselves as inheritors of war experience (Loroff 2011:51, Mosse 1996:158). As a result, the soldier's sacrifice defined the masculinity that developed in the Third Reich (Loroff 2011:51). The soldier figured as the epitome of manhood and embodied the gender ideals passed down by the Nazi regime (Mosse 1996:155-157). Men were expected to join male dominated paramilitary groups like the SS and SA (Loroff 2011: 49-50). The wartime comradery between men appealed to the Nazis, and male bonding and male collectives, called *Männerbund*, was considered to be the foundation of the state (Loroff 2011:51, Mosse 1996:158). Men in the Third Reich were often in conflict between the masculine comradery world and family life, as they were also expected to fill roles as patriarchs (Mosse 1996:166). This tension was solved by subordinating women and children to male dominance (Mosse 1996:167). In the propaganda, they were soldiers, but also the 'Happy SS-father', a dominant

figure who supported and protected a thriving family of racially pure children (Loroff 2011:55, Mosse 1996:167).

In his book *Male Fantasies*, sociologist Klaus Theweleit delineates the processes that brought on the sexual politics of fascism in the aftermath of women's suffrage and German defeat in WW1, showing its connection to a wish of reinstating male power (1987). The Nazis conceived the 'masculinization' of women to be a grave threat to the continuation of the Wehrmacht's racial purity (Loroff 2011:52). Feminism was thought to be a Jewish and communist ploy to destroy the German race by decomposing families and thereby the 'natural' structures of society (Loroff 2011:52).

Theweleit delineates how the German Nazi Freikorps soldiers constructed women as 'White nurses' or 'Red women', a version of the Madonna/Whore-complex<sup>16</sup> (Theweleit 1987:xiii-xiv). The White nurse was a chaste, maternal, nameless and disembodied figure of goodness, while the Red, often communist, woman symbolized chaos, aggressive sexuality and danger (Theweleit 1987:xiii-xiv). A third category encompassed the absent women which were spouses and family, left back home (Theweleit 1987:xiii-xiv). Like the White nurse, these were also peripheral and abstract figures. Theweleit further reveals the soldiers' misogyny (1987). Through Nazi propaganda and photographs, he shows how the Woman is understood to be the origin of all wrongs in society (Theweleit 1987). I draw on Theweleit's account to examine whether misogyny exist as an underlying neo-Nazi tendency today.

Literature on women in Nazi Germany suggests that they were to interest themselves with domestic activities like raising children and cooking, and that fertility was the highest valued quality of a woman (Grunberger 1971:251, Koonz 1987). Motherhood was equated with soldier-hood in that women were seen to be fighting for their country in the act of raising Aryan children (Günther 2004:93). Her body was the state's domain, but her complicity was rewarded with monetary disbursements as she 'produced' more Aryan offspring (Loroff 2011:58). Propaganda encouraged the woman to live rural, surround herself with children and nourish a big family (Günther 2004:97). Educational programs taught women to shop locally grown produce, like apples instead of imported fruits, and to not deal with Jewish grocers (Günther 2004:97-8). They were also taught to recycle old clothes and household products

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<sup>16</sup> The Madonna/Whore-complex refers to a bipolar sexual code for women which is informed by essential Christian notions of gender and sexuality (Browyn 2006). The woman is either understood as a virginal, modest Madonna or a promiscuous, debased, overtly sexual Whore (Browyn 2006).

(Günther 2004:97). Women were not entirely expelled from workplaces but were encouraged to find work “suited to their biology” (Loroff 2011:55). Family life and wifely duties trumped all other regards.

As noted, Hitler instated *Füherein Scholtz-Klink*, and mobilized women’s organizations. It seems that this may have been a strategic move on Hitler’s part to latch onto the women’s liberation movement as a trend of time to attract voters, but it could also be understood as an effort to strengthen women’s position in the Third Reich. I will compare Nazism’s relation to women and gender equality to the NRM’s treatment of gender.

Like feminism, homosexuality was seen as a demonic Jewish and communist construct aimed to destroy the Aryan family unit (Loroff 2011:52). Homosexuals were undesirable because they could not fulfill their reproductive obligations to the nation (Loroff 2011:59). Gay men were the anti-thesis to the masculine ideal because they lacked the mental strength to not give in to sexual perversions and physical urges, and were at the same time soft and effeminate, far from the heroic masculine ideal (Loroff 2011:59). Nevertheless, some have analyzed Nazism as a homosocial, even homoerotic, male community (see for instance Hewitt 1996, Mosse 1995 and 1999, Halberstam 2011). The links between homoeroticism and Nazism are outside the scope of this thesis, but I draw on ideas of Nazism as a racialized male bonding project that rejects femininity (Halberstam 2011:156).

### 3.1.4 Nature

In this section I ask what relationship there were between Nazism and nature. Hitler was, to popular confusion, known as a vegetarian and an ardent lover of animals (Herzog 2011). Moreover, the Third Reich effectuated the extensive Reich Conservation Act (*Reichsnaturschutzgesetz*) to preserve plant and animal species, as well as animal welfare reforms like banning vivisection (Staudenmaier 2011:98). On the surface, Nazi Germany may have looked like an animal friendly and environmentally responsible regime. The Nazis drew on German romanticist nature conservation traditions, and environmentalist groups stood strong in Germany during the Weimar era (Uekötter 2006). According to Frøland, Nazism partly had roots in the philosophy of German national romanticism (2017). Inspired by Thomas Mann and Arthur Lovejoy, he understands Nazism as an irrational, ecstatic, religion-like worship of phenomena as nature and the nation (Frøland 2017:21). This is based on three romantic ideological trends in German cultural tradition: A nature-oriented holistic ultra-nationalism, a glorification of dynamism and struggle, and the idea of a nation’s distinctiveness (Frøland 2017:21). These three ideas merged into a romanticist, nationalist

understanding of the nation as an organic entity, with a unique, dynamic cultural character, continually expanding (Frøland 2017:23).

Frøland's analysis emphasizes the continuity of a specific form of nature-oriented ideas and how they shaped the events that unfolded in the 1930s' Germany. His analysis can be criticized for not sufficiently acknowledging the historical events that took place on the 'ground' level of society (Salongen 2018). Therefore, I include perspectives from existing research in political science and history which contribute to explain how Nazism developed through social factors like coincidences and unforeseen events. By drawing on Frøland's ideas, I do not argue that German romanticism explains the atrocities that Nazism is known for, like the industrial mass murder of Jews, but that the nature-mysticism idea complex presented above contributed to shape Nazi ideology and can be used to understand neo-Nazism's connection to Nature and environmentalism.

The Nazis legitimized their supremacy by employing rhetoric from sociobiology and research that encouraged eugenics and 'racial hygiene' (Evans 2005:450). Humans and non-human animals were understood to be fellow creatures of the natural sphere, submitted to nature and driven by the same beastly urges (Frøland 2017:177-8). Nazism sought to liberate Man from the Christian morality and the grip of western civilization and let him follow his natural instincts (Frøland 2017:419). These instincts were linked to the survival and barbary of a blood-thirsty predator (Frøland 2017:419-20). Sociobiological and social Darwinist ideas as these permeated most aspects of Nazi social organization, and social life should be ordered after the laws of Nature (Frøland 2017:177-8). Such beliefs were coupled with elements of biocentrism. Biocentrism refers to the idea that all organism has inherent worth and that humans are just another species of nature (Silva 2011). Researcher Mark Musser refers to a quote from SS leader Heinrich Himmler to explain the Nazi's relationship to Nature: "Man is nothing special at all. He is an insignificant part of this earth." (Musser 2010:141). This biocentric view was appropriated to compromise human worth for the Nazis and contributed to legitimize genocide (Musser 2010).

The Nazis sought to connect the German Völk to ‘authentic’ origins, appealing to the Herderian<sup>17</sup> notion of the rural countryside as the ‘natural’ repository of national virtue (Kiernan 2014:34). The Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg wrote of the perils of urbanization:

Today we see the steady stream from the countryside to the city, deadly for the Volk. The cities swell ever larger, unnerving the Volk and destroying the threads which bind humanity to nature; they attract adventurers and profiteers of all colours, thereby fostering racial chaos.

(Rosenberg, cited in Biehl and Staudenmaier 2011:28)

Jewish people often resided in the urban areas (Kiernan 2014:35). For the Nazis, Jews represented the diverse city, the multicultural world that bewildered the rural country farmer (Kiernan 2014). Jews (but also women, femininity and the bourgeois society) were conceptualized as dirt versus the purity of Germany (Theweleit 1987:412). Furthermore, the Nazis referred to racially unwanted people as ‘lice’ and ‘vermin’ (Kiernan 2014:29). These dehumanizing biologicistic metaphors relate to an obsession with racial purity, reflected in the quest for a purged land (Kiernan 2014). Thus, ridding the country of unwanted peoples meant cleansing the city, purifying the countryside and restoring the land (Kiernan 2014:29, 34).

Hence, ‘Nazi environmentalism’ may be understood as anti-cosmopolitan and anti-Semitic.

Frøland argues that the appeal of Nazi ideology rested in part in positive aspects of community, romanticism, and nature (2017). As mentioned, the Nazis wanted to extend their territory to make ‘lebensraum’ for the Aryan race. The aim was to seize land by force, exterminate peripheral peoples, and thereby ensure hospitable land for Germans to live and breed (Shirer 1960:82). The Norwegian Nazi Party *Nasjonal Samling* (NS) had a propaganda placard which read: “First the sword, then the plough”, alluding to the fruitful Aryan future (Sæther 2015)<sup>18</sup>. The Nazi quest to make space for the Germanic people reflected a utopian idea of a pure rural life in harmony with nature.

Idealizing farmers and land is not a specific trait of Nazism, but a common theme of genocidal cosmology (Kiernan 2014:34). Such glorification could also be found in Josef Stalin’s Soviet (Weiner 1988). Nevertheless, despite the ‘theoretical’ praise of Nature, both the Nazis and the Soviet communists gladly employed the scorched earth tactic as a

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<sup>17</sup> The 18th-century German theologian Johann Gottfried von Herder is hailed as the “father of Romantic Nationalism” (Fox 1987:565).

<sup>18</sup> This image is reproduced in Sæther (2015), but the picture-pages lacks reference numbers.

systematic part of warfare (Snyder 2010). The Nazis burned down land, supplies, and enormous amounts of natural resources on the Eastern front to clear out 'lebensraum' (Snyder 2010). This dramatic example serves to highlight that the Nazis were first and foremost interested in Aryan domination and land expansion, and not nature conservatism – at least not during warfare.

Historians, philosophers, and political scientists have discussed whether Nazism may be reckoned as a pseudo-religious, nature-worshipping cult (see for instance Bramwell 1985, Emberland 2003, Goodrick-Clarke 1985 or Steigmann-Gall 2003). In Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Frøland finds several religious traits. Hitler upholds a traditional monotheistic way of understanding the world, a dualist model of good versus evil, light versus darkness, and the Aryan versus Jew functions as a natural continuation of this model (Frøland 2017:178). The Jew represents a cosmic force of evil disturbing the celestial order, and the Aryan its complete opposite; a divine, pure cosmic energy (Frøland 2017:178). Rather than Christianity's transcendent and almighty Father, Hitler's higher power takes form of an impersonal, innate divinity in Nature and the Universe (Frøland 2017:179-80). This force manifests itself especially in the Aryan people, whose blood is an enigmatic source of power (Frøland 2017:181). Hitler's understanding of morals is unlike typical religious morals of benevolence and human equality, as the only moral Nazism submit to is the inexorable laws of Nature (Frøland 2017:178, 418). Frøland claims that Hitler himself expresses awe of Nature in *Mein Kampf* (Frøland 2017:181). These understandings of nature as a divine force stems from the Romanticist idea of a holy, metaphysical entity that Man must submit to (Frøland 2017). In this interpretation, Nazism may be understood as a nature-oriented ideology with religious undertones. Furthermore, I understand nature-ideology as a foundational component of Nazi ideology, and I draw on this understanding to explain neo-Nazi environmentalism.

## 3.2 Neo-Nazism and the Nordic Resistance Movement

After the second world war, Norwegian Nazis were prosecuted and tried (Bangsund 1984). Scandinavian political Nazi parties, like NS were banned or otherwise dissolved (Bangsund 1984, Lööw 1990). In Sweden there were no trials, but the Nazi parties were disbanded or went underground (Lööw 1990). The type of Scandinavian neo-Nazism as known today originated around 1960 (Fangen 2001:76). Anti-communism became especially important for the establishers as leftist ideologies got stronger foothold by intellectuals after the Second

World War (Fangen 2001:77). Nazism was by then so stigmatized that the newer movement sought to distance themselves from NS by calling themselves “Radicals” or “Nationals” (Fangen 2001:76). Sociologist Katrine Fangen debates in her fieldwork how some neo-Nazis wished to evade Nazi labels (Fangen 2001:45). The urge to camouflage Nazi sympathies to avoid stigmatization has been stronger in Norway and Denmark than in Sweden and Finland, as the former two were occupied by Nazi Germany during the Second World War, while the latter two remained neutral throughout the war (Bjørge 1997:278-80). This neutrality might explain why the Swedish neo-Nazi scene was, and still is, the largest in the Nordic countries (Fangen 2001:173).

The Nordic neo-Nazi scene of the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s were dominated by (what is referred to as) ‘skinhead culture’<sup>19</sup> (Bjørge 1997, Fangen 2001, Kimmel 2007). There were several groups at play. Many were skinheads, like the Norwegian Boot Boys and the Swedish Vitt Ariskt Motstånd (White Aryan Resistance), while some were more disciplined Viking-inspired groups similar to “militant boys’ scouts” (Fangen 2001:34). By contrast, the neo-Nazi skinhead culture was characterized by street rallying, violence, alcohol, partying and an aggressive music arena (Fangen 2001, Bjørge 1997). White power music played a significant recruitment role (Kimmel 2007). Young people seeking a community were enticed by the skinhead lifestyle and the blatant music scene (Kimmel 2007). Today, the skinheads no longer dominate the neo-Nazi scene, which is instead dominated by the politically and ideologically oriented Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM).

### 3.2.1 The Nordic Resistance Movement

The NRM is a militant National Socialist organization and political party based in the Nordic countries. Nordic national security authorities consider the NRM to be the most dangerous far-right group that is presently operating in the Nordic countries. Swedish Simon Lindberg is the official leader, and the administrative seat is in Sweden. There are no official affiliate numbers, but researchers suggest there are around 500 activists in the Nordic countries (Bjørge and Ravndal 2018). The participant age is significantly higher than in 1990s’ skinhead movements, which were dominated by youth (Skybakmoen 2018). The NRM’s political goal is to overthrow the Nordic democracies by revolution and establish a regional

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<sup>19</sup> ‘Skinhead culture’ here refers to the neo-Nazi appropriation of English working class originated skinhead style. Skinhead members shaved their heads, usually wear bomber jackets and military boots (Brown 2004). There are many different political and ethnic fringes of skinheads, and neo-Nazis are one of these multiple variations (Brown 2004).

Nordic nation based on National Socialist politics and ideology (Our Path 2016). They do, however, want to work within the parliamentary systems at the time being (Rasekrikerne 2017).

The NRM claims their understanding of National Socialism is closer to the Danish version than the German, because the Danish version emphasizes an understanding of National Socialism “from a biological point of view, seeing it as a comprehensive solution to the problems we see in the world today” (Our Path 2016:10). I understand the NRM’s worldview to draw on the National Socialist ideology which originated in Germany in the 1930s, but that the NRM emphasizes what they call the “biological” aspects of Nazism. I take these biological aspects to relate to racial hygiene, Social Darwinism and the laws of Nature. In addition to drawing on Nazi ideology, the NRM’s specific worldview, politics and ideology is conveyed through the manifesto *Our Path*. The Socialism of the NRM’s National Socialism transcends class conflict and bases itself in race (Our Path 2016:22). As noted, they aim to be the New Green Party of their respective Nordic countries and seem to focus on environmentalism in addition to racial politics (Our Path 2016). For instance, they wish to enforce a sustainable human relationship with nature, establish stricter organic standards and improve animal rights and animal welfare (Our Path 2016:30).

The NRM parade in the streets, donned in white shirts, ties and black pants. Women walk in the middle, flanked by men who carry the green and white NRM flag which is printed with the Viking inspired Tyr-rune.<sup>20</sup> Sometimes they carry shields and even helmets (Skybakmoen 2018). In the media, members often appear casually dressed in outdoorsy, practical clothing. They distribute ideological information in private mail-boxes and glue propaganda stickers onto surfaces in public places. In November 2017, the organization was outlawed in Finland on the grounds that they promote and support violence (Krekling et al. 2017). Several NRM activists have been sentenced for violent offences (Aftonbladet 2017). Most known is perhaps the case of the Finnish activist Jesse Torniaainen who was sentenced to jail after a street violence episode where a man later died from injuries he sustained during the episode (Rasekrikerne 2017).<sup>21</sup> The NRM call themselves ‘National Socialists’ and reject the word ‘Nazi’ as a derogative slur (Rasekrikerne 2017).

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<sup>20</sup> The Tyr-rune was also appropriated by the SS-division (Worley 2017).

<sup>21</sup> The NRM contests that the man died of injuries related to the violence episode, and claim he had pre-existing medical condition that caused his death (Rasekrikerne 2017).

The NRM consider miscegenation and multiculturalism to be criminal genocidal practices of treason against the Nordic people (Our Path 2016:46). The manifesto states that the Nordic nation shall be the home of the “Nordic race” or the “Nordic people”, also called “Nords”, in addition to “indigenous people from the so-called Western world” (Our path 2016:14). The concepts ‘White’, ‘Aryan’ or ‘Germanic’ are not mentioned in *Our Path*, but I understand these signifiers to be the same as the ‘Nordic race’ based on the NRM’s support of traditional Nazism.

There is no clear definition of a neo-Nazi organization, as the expressions and association with Nazism varies from group to group (Fangen 2001). However, employing symbols like the swastika, praising Hitler and heiling<sup>22</sup> are explicit references to Nazi ideology (Lammers 1995:102). Therefore, the concept of neo-Nazism may be used about groups or movements that draw on the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s German National Socialism (Lammers 1995:102). There is no question of whether the NRM is a neo-Nazi organization, as they draw on Nazi ideology, praise Adolf Hitler and embrace Nazi symbols.

### 3.2.2 Meanings

What continues to attract people to extreme ideologies like Nazism? The sociologist Theodor Adorno sought to explain the massive response to Nazism by an authoritarian personality type that is more liable to subordinate to others (1950). This view was criticized by for instance sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1989) who meant that the extent of Nazi sympathizers during WW2 has to be explained by broader societal structures. Political scientist Daniel Goldhagen argues that Nazism became popular among ‘ordinary Germans’ because of its mobbing character that casted Jews as scapegoats (1996). Racism masked the attacks on political opponents and dissidents in their own midst, which were the first ones to be sent to the concentration camps (Holter 2002:24). This scapegoating process gave “a policy of aggression its populist mask” (Holter 2002:27). Racism mobilized the masses in 1930s’ Germany.

Furthermore, social movement theory has offered valuable insights to thinking about mobilization and recruitment to extremist groups. Sociologist Albert Melucci argues that the social movements of today are defined by their ad-hoc support of one political issue instead of a holistic ideology (1989). Fangen means that neo-Nazi movements can be understood as a

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<sup>22</sup> Heiling refers to the Nazi and fascist gesture where one raises their right arm in salute.

postmodern social movement which concentrates on anti-immigration (2001:123). Moreover, extreme messages are conveyed more easily through social collectives and group dynamics (Dalal 2006, Fangen 2001). Psychoanalytic Farhad Dalal understands racism as a group phenomenon where “good people find themselves behaving badly because of being swept up by the group” (Dalal 2006:134). Hence, group identification seems to be a significant motivator for othering and racism. Tore Bjørgo has made significant contributions to the research on the extreme right in Scandinavia during the 1990s, revealing identity as a prime driving force over ideology (1997). Social isolation and outsider-ness leads to a search for community and belonging, making especially young people vulnerable to extreme right movements (Bjørgo 1997, Fangen 2001, Kimmel 2018).

White supremacists of the 1990s and today often idealize an ancient past, “the days of yore”, where a ‘natural’ hegemony secured male dominance (Kimmel 2013:264). Scandinavian movements often relate to Viking heritage as the definition of strong capable men (Kimmel 2018:111). Neo-Nazi construction of group identity may be understood as a neo-tribalist movement (Fangen 2001:126). Sociologist Michel Maffesoli means that neo-tribal communities arise in the modern society as a reaction to individualism’s incline (1996). As such, neo-Nazi ‘clans’ are constructed to affirm belonging and social collectivity against Others (Fangen 2001:126). In chapter 5, I will show how several of these meanings correspond with neo-Nazi sentiments of today.

### 3.2.3 A new context

There is a discussion of whether one should refer to modern Nazi movements like the NRM as ‘Nazism’ or ‘neo-Nazism’ (Emberland 1994:406). I distinguish between Nazism and neo-Nazism to acknowledge the original traditions and ideology, but also to emphasize the contemporary context that Nazism operates in. The information age of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a time of rapid digitalization and globalization where the national sovereignty is challenged by transnational politics, multi-national corporations and multi-lateral trade. Moreover, humanity is facing unmatched environmental challenges. The Earth is under pressure due to human extraction of resources, pollution, deforestation, toxic waste and climate change. Several species are endangered, much of the Earth’s permanent ice is melting, and the seas are filled with plastic. The impacts of what will be referred to as an environmental crisis are often amplified through an ever-available stream of information, and potential crisis tendencies are sometimes maximized by mass media’s battle for attention. I

will examine what role the global environmental crisis plays for contemporary fascist mobilization.

At the same time, ravaging conflicts in the Middle East and parts of Africa results in mass immigration to the western countries. This new context has made Muslims the ‘new Semites’ of Europe today (Kimmel 2018:40).<sup>23</sup> Jews are still the primary enemy, but for the neo-Nazis more on an abstract, conspiratorial level: Jews are believed to control the media, politicians and the ‘system’, set out to destroy the white race (Fangen 2001:183, Kimmel 2018:41). Escalating immigration from Muslim countries has made Arabs and Muslims visible in a way Jews are not (Kimmel 2018:41). Muslims are increasingly othered as bearers of culture and traditions deemed irreconcilable with western societies (Marranci 2004). This ‘villanization’ of Muslims is seen throughout the western world, amplified in far-right groups as the primary threat to western civilization (see for instance Marranci 2004).

The NRM’s mobilization during the latest couple years must be seen in connection with the separatist far-right wave washing over the western liberal democracies the last decade. Britain voted to pull out of the European Union in 2016, the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn holds Greek parliament seats and far-right forces have footholds in Austria, Hungary, Italy and Germany to mention a few. In North America, the Alt-right<sup>24</sup> and the seemingly ‘neutral’ Identitarian movement<sup>25</sup> gain increasing support and shape what is often referred to as the ‘New Right’, perhaps contributing to Donald Trump’s victory in the United States presidential election of 2016 (Nagle 2017). In Scandinavia, both the radical Finns Party (*Perussuomalaiset*) and the nativist Danish People’s Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*) have received increasing support. For the first time ever, the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*), with alleged neo-Nazi roots, achieved much support in the 2018 Swedish election. I argue that the increased presence of radical right forces in parliament and governmental positions may contribute to normalize and justify extreme right sentiments such as those represented by the NRM.

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<sup>23</sup> Kimmel refers to Germany, but I understand his analysis to be applicable to several parts of Europe, including the Nordic countries.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Alt-right’ is short for the Alternative right and is used to include a new wave of overtly white segregationists, nationalists and subcultures (Nagle 2017:12). They are ‘Alternative’ because the mainstream right is considered too moderate for them (Nagle 2017).

<sup>25</sup> The Identitarian movement is a pan-European and North-American loosely based group stemming from France, which idealizes ‘traditional western values’ and opposes mass-immigration and multiculturalism (The Economist 2016).

Many of these movements hold a contempt for ‘snooty elites’ that are out of touch with ‘the real people’, problematizing the left-leaning liberal democracies that rose to prominence in Western Europe after the Second World War (Nagle 2017, Hustvedt 2017). These regimes are by some extreme-right movements considered to commit treason against the people by facilitating immigration and in that sense ‘siding with the Others’, instead of the Nordic people (Buuren 2013). To characterize one’s opponents as traitors contributes to the legitimization of violence towards them (Bjørge 1997:304). The Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik’s primary target in his 2011 bomb attack and mass shooting was the Labor Party’s state representatives and its young recruits (Buuren 2013). He believed that ‘Islamification’ of Europe was facilitated by treasonous left leaning ‘cultural Marxist’ governments, and the idea that Europe is under siege by Muslims legitimized (for him) his extremely violent attack (Buuren 2013). The example of Breivik illustrates how the extreme right antagonizes the western liberal democracies.

The right-wing movements flourishing across Europe and North-America at present are mostly retreating from aggressive expressions and aim to normalize extreme messages through mainstreaming, political influence and online activism (Nagle 2017, Rogers 2014, Vieten and Poynting 2016). The idea is that radical messages reach a wider audience when the messenger acts and looks like a ‘normal’ person rather than an aggressive thug (Rogers 2014). The aforementioned ‘nippers’ provide an excellent example of this normalization as they avert the stigmatized skinhead image and dress independent of ideology (Rogers 2014).

The NRM’s interest in nature marks a difference between American and Nordic white supremacists (Kimmel 2003:614). Kimmel noted in 2003 that Scandinavian Aryans were strong supporters of environmentalism in contrast to the Americans, who instead support conservative efforts to discard environmental protection for job prospects (2003:614). Hence, environmentalist inclinations break with stereotypical assumptions of the extreme right as disinterested in caring for nature. This apparent incongruity is further exemplified by the young German men behind the Nazi vegan cooking show *Balaclava Küche* on YouTube (Forchtner and Tominc 2017). Here, two chatty, fast-paced show hosts, clad in facemasks and anti-immigration t-shirts, enthusiastically cook vegan dishes (Forchtner and Tominc 2017). The hosts explain their motivation as an effort to convey politics in a “fun, sympathetic and light” way, and claim that viral campaigns reach people more successfully than aggressive street rallying (Rogers 2014). The hosts assert that the left-wing is not “entitled to veganism” (Rogers 2014). Writer Angela Nagle argues that this new online right has managed to co-opt

the “1960s’ left styles of transgression and counterculture” (2017:57). They manage to use issues of class – such as globalization and anti-capitalism – in a racially loaded way. Furthermore, neo-Nazi movements in Europe have adopted styles and slogans traditionally associated with the radical left to attract young people (Rogers 2014, Forchtner and Tominc 2017:422). I will examine whether environmentalism simply is a strategic twist to make neo-Nazism more appealing.

### 3.2.4 Gendered identity

Sociologist Michael Kimmel holds that any analysis of the extreme right is insufficient without a gender perspective (2018:8). The masculinity-aspect of extreme right movements is so obvious that it has been left under-theorized, he claims (Kimmel 2018:2-3). Men are overrepresented as extreme right activists and neo-Nazi movements are often constructed in hyper-masculine terms (Kimmel 2018:3). There are of course several women affiliated with far-right extreme movements, but they are underrepresented as activists, and their presence is rather counterintuitive (Kimmel 2018:3).

Furthermore, Kimmel asserts that masculinity is a strong driving force in Nordic neo-Nazi movements, supported by research from the EXIT-centers<sup>26</sup> of Scandinavia (2018). In his 2007-article “Racism as Adolescent Male Rite of Passage: Ex-Nazis in Scandinavia”, he argues that Nordic neo-Nazism takes the form of a male rite of passage, and that male bonding is more important for young male involvement than racism and ideology. For example, one of Kimmel’s adolescent informants answered “Dunno, I’m white” when asked what it means to be Swedish (2007:205). The project of his informants seemed to be “restoration of masculinity, retrieval of masculine entitlement” (Kimmel 2007:207). I shall use gender as a lens to better understand the workings and appeal of neo-Nazism.

## 3.3 Gender and masculinities

Gender is a way in which social practice is ordered and is therefore relational (Connell 1995:71). Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, can therefore differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:836). Moreover, masculinities and femininities relate not

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<sup>26</sup> The EXIT organization helps neo-Nazis and other extremists to get out of the movements they adhere to (Kimmel 2018:7).

only to each other, but to social qualifiers like race, sexual orientation, class and age (Christensen and Jensen 2014). In this study I refer to the rather binary configuration of gender<sup>27</sup> to acknowledge the conventional value systems promoted by Nazism and neo-Nazism.

It is nearly impossible to theorize masculinities without touching on ‘hegemonic masculinity’. This term was developed by Australian researchers in 1985, reformulated by sociologist Raewyn W. Connell in 1995, and further developed by criminologist James W. Messerschmidt in 2016. The concept refers to a form of masculinity that legitimates unequal relations between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and different forms of masculinity (Messerschmidt 2016:10). The emphasis on *hegemony* specifies that the achievement of hegemonic masculinity is made through cultural influence and discursive persuasion rather than direct command and control, which invites consent and compliance from the subordinated groups (Messerschmidt 2016:34). Connell and Messerschmidt argues that gender relations are always arenas of tension, and any pattern of hegemonic masculinity is only legitimate to the extent that it provides a solution to these tensions (2005:832, 853). These efforts tend to stabilize patriarchal power or reconstitute it to fit new conditions (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:832, 853). Reactionary gender relations are beneficial to a pattern of hegemonic masculinity because they legitimize patriarchy (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is controversial due to its ambiguous potential, alleged essentialism and equation of masculinity with patriarchy (see Donaldson 1993, Collier 1998 and Holter 1997). In a comprehensive response to criticism, Connell and Messerschmidt explain that hegemonic masculinity is not a static, local entity, but an interaction between actors on a local, regional and global level (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:849). Therefore, a regional representation of masculinity, like the NRM’s Scandinavian white supremacism, may react to global and local challenges like the environmental crisis or global political instability. I use the concept to understand the *hierarchization* of masculinities in localized and regional contexts, like the contemporary Nordic societies. I also employ the notion of hegemonic masculinity to investigate how masculine dominance are envisioned and legitimized in neo-Nazi reality.

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<sup>27</sup> By binary configuration of gender, I here refer to an understanding of gender as only consisting of the dichotomous categories of men and women.

### 3.3.1 Male bonding

Masculinity studies argues that male bonding and homosociality – social bonding between men – organize men’s lives and structures social hierarchies (see for instance Bird 1996, Kimmel 1994, Sedgwick 1985). This thesis relies on the theoretical assumption that to prove and validate one’s manhood before other men is a central working of masculinity itself (Kimmel 2018:46). Historically, men have proved their manhood by being breadwinners and protecting the family and the homeland (Kimmel 2018:46). When these traditional roles are challenged, or taken away, new arenas for proving manhood are established (Kimmel 2018:46). I use theory on male bonding to understand how the NRM relates to a changing modern world, and how they prove their manhood.

### 3.3.2 Exclusion, othering and racism

Patterns of hegemonic masculinity develop largely by exclusion of other social expressions (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Othering rests on a dichotomous base of the Self versus the Other (Braidotti 2013:15). In a process of masculine self-construction, the Others are often criticized for not having *the right amount* of masculinity. The Other is either hyper-masculine; he has *too much* masculinity, or he is hypo-masculine, having *too little* masculinity (Kimmel 2018:142). It is only the Self, the Man in question, who possesses the right amount of masculinity (Kimmel 2018:142).

In his book *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, historian George Mosse explains how the western masculine ideal type was made through stereotypes (1996). The stereotypes originated in what Mosse calls ‘modern western societies’ based on Christianity and aristocracy from the 1800’s onwards. The negative types were marginalized groups like Jews, blacks and homosexuals, as well as women who did not conform to normative femininity (Mosse 1996:6, 12). These types were considered lazy, weak, ugly, effeminate, irrational, corporal and cunning (Mosse 1996:56-76). The positive masculine character was constructed in opposition to the negative stereotype, so he became able bodied, strong, rational, self-controlled and honest (Mosse 1996:6). The nationalism that grew in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century defined the positive type as strong of character, willing to contribute to the nation’s growth and development (Mosse 1996:7, 14). According to Mosse this ideal has changed minimally over the last century (1996:3-4).

Racism is a central process of exclusion. Psychoanalytic Farhad Dalal defines racism as a “dehumanizing process through which *an other* is transformed into *The Other*, from one of *us*

into one of *them*.” (Dalal 2006:158). Dehumanizing processes may include exoticizing, simplifying and infantilizing the Other (Said 1978, Hagtvet et al. 2014). In genocidal worldviews, dehumanizing is often done through biologicistic metaphors, like referring to humans as ‘vermin’ or ‘weeds’ (Kiernan 2014:29). Furthermore, the Other is often aligned with nature and referred to in both feminized and naturalized terms (Plumwood 1993:18). Since hegemonic masculinity is a theory not only of stratification but also of exclusion, it has strong ties to racism (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Holter 2004). Here, I do not wish to equate men and masculinity with racism, but to highlight the links between hegemonic masculinity and othering.

### 3.3.3 The Protector role

Nationalist masculinities may be shaped by the urge to protect the in-group from external threats. In his book *Masculinities in the Making* (2016), Messerschmidt introduces what he calls *protective hegemonic masculinity*, exerted by the former presidents of the USA, George W. Bush and Barack Obama in their respective wartime speeches. He shows how they perform a fatherly, heroic form of hegemonic masculinity that is legitimized by claiming to protect the nation and the victimized people of the world from hyper-masculine, evil villains (Messerschmidt 2016:172).

This villain-victim-hero-narrative is grounded in cultural images of stereotypes of the brutish male savage abusing the tormented, helpless female (Messerschmidt 2016:167). The nationalist culture<sup>28</sup> of the United States is structured around this image of the Other and constructs a formative self-perception that racial difference constitutes danger, requiring protection of the in-group (Messerschmidt 2016:167). Simultaneously, both presidents draw on a tough versus tender-approach in the exercise of protective hegemonic masculinity (Messerschmidt 2016:170). War and defense efforts proves a toughness, and willingness to shut down security threats, while contributions to local humanitarian aid constructs the presidents as tender hearted and warm (2016:170). The concept of protective hegemonic masculinity will show how a pattern of hegemonic masculinity excludes Others under the pretext of protecting the Nordic region.

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<sup>28</sup> I understand the United States nationalism to resemble the European nationalist culture in this sense, due to a shared colonial and imperial history.

### 3.3.4 Gender and nature

To understand how the NRM relate to nature, we must first comprehend the relation between gender and nature. Anthropologists have found that in western societies, men and masculinity has largely been cast as cultural ‘civilizing’ agents, taming and protecting a nature associated with women and femininity (Ortner 1972, MacCormack and Strathern 1980). The Herderian cultural heritage presents an equally archaic view of the masculine as the protector of a virtuous feminine land from defilement (Fox 1987). Ecological feminist scholars have showed how this perceived feminine link to nature masks gendered oppression (see for instance Gaard 1993, Merchant 1989, and Plumwood 1993).

Cultural conceptions of the relationship between men and nature has not been theorized much in the field of men and masculinity studies, as it is typically femininity that has been associated with nature (Allister 2004:1). Schools of ecofeminism have to some extent dealt with the relationship between masculinity and the natural sphere but have mostly emphasized masculinity’s negative relation to nature in terms of masculinized exploitation and devaluation of nature (Allister 2004:1). English professor Mark Allister claims that messages about masculinity and nature conveyed in western are often societies paradoxical (2004:3). Through his investigations of the American culture, he found that society celebrates masculinity where nature is controlled or destroyed, but it also celebrates men who create and act out masculinity in and through nature (Allister 2004:5). He offers ethnographic example of this contradictive maneuvering by explaining how men have traditionally been identified with machines from guns to plow, bulldozers and jet-planes, and yet men have also been taught to venerate wilderness, which is usually hurt by those machines (Allister 2004:2). Allister draws on images of the stoic American cowboy in a desolate farmland and the hiker’s rough solitude to exemplify this male veneration of nature and further describes how managing to live self-sufficient in the wilderness is bound to ideas of masculinity (2004:4-6). I will discuss how different conceptualizations of gendered natures affects the NRM’s relation to nature.

American researchers discovered that there is a psychological link between eco-friendliness and perceptions of femininity (Brough et al. 2016:573). The study called “The green-feminine stereotype and its effect on sustainable consumption” demonstrated how men and women alike judged eco-friendly products and behaviors as more feminine than the conventional counterparts, for instance canvas bags as more feminine than plastic bags (Brough et al.

2016:570-71). This “green-feminine” stereotype links environmentalism to feminine social practice rather than masculine social practice.

There are however different conceptions of gendered natures. The nature associated with both femininity and typical leftist environmentalism is understood as nurturing, mild, passive and further constructed in feminine terms (Plumwood 1993:4, 20). Such a nature may be aligned with what Sociologist Klaus Eder would call a *vegetarian culture* in his typical explanations of how nature is ‘appropriated’ by culture through food consumption (Eder 1996:132-139). Here, nature is conceptualized as peaceful and idyllic, a nurturing mother of equality-oriented societies (Eder 1996:134). In contrast, nature can also be understood as wild, violent and competitive (Eder 1996:133-4, Plumwood 1993:20). Eder aligns such a nature with what he calls a *carnivorous culture* (1996). This wild nature becomes a physical attribute through sport and tough appearance – a wild and untamed sphere of conquest and recreation (Allister 2004:5). This idea of nature is constructed in masculinized terms, which also associates masculinity with nature, but in different ways than when nature is associated with femininity (Allister 2004:1-3, Plumwood 1993:20).

Furthermore, a tendency in social movements from the last half of the 1900s connected an underlying, virile ‘male essence’ to nature, relating it to sociobiology and Darwinism (Plumwood 1993:20). This version of nature is no longer viewed as reproductive, nurturing and caring, but rough, forceful, violent and sexual (Plumwood 1993:20). It corresponds with Eder’s carnivorous culture, centering on power, dominance and hierarchy (1996:133). Additionally, a carnivorous culture may be understood as masculinized because it touches on an association between meat-eating and masculinity (Forchter and Tominc 2017:432). Research on food and gender has established that violence and brutality of carnivorous practices contribute to construct and assert a masculine identity (Twigg 1983). Hence, nature can be culturally molded to fit a set of gendered assumptions. Nature has traditionally been associated with women and femininity, but men and masculinity are connected to nature through other cultural conceptualizations.

### 3.4 Environmentalism

Here, I will address general definitions and conceptions of environmentalism, as well as outline the relationship between environmentalism and gender, social progression and regression. Environmentalism is a broad philosophical and ideological social movement

concerned with protecting natural resources and ecosystems and acknowledging human impact on non-human spheres through activism and academic efforts (Brænd et al., 2018).

The activist side of environmentalism is associated with traditional leftist politics, usually liberal rather than conservative, and progressive rather than regressive (Biehl and Staudenmaier 2011:41). However, many contemporary environmentalists uphold that they are neither right- nor left-wing and are perhaps attempting to position environmentalism as independent of the traditional political scale (Biehl and Staudenmaier 2011:42). The traditional political left in modern western democracies have nonetheless been in the forefront of gender equality *and* environmental politics, connecting progression to environmental concerns (Connell 1995, Nawrotzki 2012). In a case study on Australian men by Connell, she found that the environmental movements “served as a midwife” to progressive gender politics (1995:141). Non-hierarchical organizational structure, equality ideals, solidarity, personal growth and connection to community and nature challenged structures of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995:141). Dominance was contested by the commitment to equality and participatory democracy, while competitive individualism was contested by collective ways of working (1995:128). As noted, environmental practices are cognitively connected to femininity rather than masculinity. The affinity to associate women and environmentalism may be partly due to an assumed coherence between environmentalism and gender progression.

Environmentalist ideologies do not necessarily lead to gender progression. Eco-philosopher Val Plumwood shows how gender regression is a latent outcome of some schools of environmental thought in her book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993). She criticizes deep ecology for ignoring human hierarchy as a reason for domination of nature, social ecology for missing out on the political relations between humans and non-humans and exposes sociobiologism and essentialism in some schools of ecological feminism (1993:7, 17). Consequently, she shows how ecological philosophy that does not include understandings of social distinctions breeds reactionary social relations, like gender inequality (1993). There are also biocentric chimes in certain schools of eco-philosophy which compromises humanist consideration in favor of the environment, exemplified by the deep ecology philosopher Arne Næss’ quote:

Because today's lifestyles in the richest countries of the world ensure gigantic waste per capita, compared with lifestyles in poor countries, immigration from poor to rich countries creates more

ecological stress. It is clear that the children of immigrants will adopt the fatal consumption patterns of the rich countries, thereby adding to the ecological crisis.

(Næss 1995:451-452)

Here, Næss presents immigration as an environmental hazard. His statement sheds light on how biocentric politics may have anti-humanist consequences and even motivate anti-immigration sentiments. These insights are valuable for further investigation of neo-Nazi environmentalism.

Is environmentalism motivated out of fear? The sociologist Frank Furedi understands modern environmentalism as a response to a fear of change:

What we today call ‘environmentalism’ is (...) based on a fear of change. It’s based upon a fear of the outcome of human action. And therefore, it’s not surprising that when you look at the more xenophobic right-wing movements in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including German fascism, it quite often had a very strong environmentalist dynamic to it.

(Against Nature 1997)<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps is it not only the fear of human action that drives Furedi’s concept of environmentalism, but also the fear of what will happen to the human species. What will happen to our children, to privileges of access to clean water and fresh air? I will use Furedi’s radical definition to search for connections between neo-Nazi environmentalism and aggrieved entitlement, which refers to the sense of not getting what one feels entitled to (Kimmel 2013).

Lastly, I acknowledge the persuasive power of acquiring legitimacy through nature. Environmentalist ideologies may be understood through political philosopher Antonio Gramsci’s theorizing of hegemony and the common sense (Gramsci, cited in Halberstam 2011:17). A hegemonic set of beliefs are persuasive precisely because they do not claim status as an ideology or in any way tries to win consent (Halberstam 2011:17). By not presenting itself as ideology, a hegemonic set of beliefs appears as ‘natural’ and self-evident (Halberstam

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<sup>29</sup> This documentary series has undergone criticism for misleading its interviewees and comparing environmentalist movements to Nazism (Monbiot 2008). I nonetheless draw on Furedi’s argument to experiment with understandings of environmentalism.

2011:17). Similarly, nature appears as an objective entity free of ideology or meaning (Biehl and Staudenmaier 2011:42). Biehl and Staudenmaier argue that environmentalism does not have inherent political value, and an ecological orientation alone is open to any social justification (2011:42). Hence, drawing on environmentalism and Nature offers a kind of legitimacy that is founded on what appears to be common sense, or even ‘natural’ in any given context.

## 3.5 The crisis

The premise of the environmental crisis was established in section 3.2.3. The crisis concept is also important in theories on masculinities and fascism. Theoretically, the crisis presupposes a coherent system of some kind that is disrupted or destroyed by crisis (Connell 1995:84). The notion of a crisis may be further understood through sociologist Émile Durkheim’s concept *anomie*. Anomie describes both a human state of dissatisfaction and alienation and a society under pressure which changes rapidly, characterized by some form of norm dissolution (1897). Hence, anomic tendencies bear similarities to the notion of crisis. Moreover, philosopher Giorgio Agamben argues that in supposed times of crisis, democratic institutions are questioned, and governments centralize their powers (2005). Such a state often develops a ‘führer-cult’; an idealization of a strong leader and turn towards authoritarianism (Agamben 2005:82-4). The Third Reich is an example of a ‘state of exception’, where the charismatic leader Hitler held extended powers as chancellor (Agamben 2005:2). In the next two sections, I present the crisis of masculinity and fascism’s notion of crisis.

### 3.5.1 A crisis of masculinity

There is an ongoing debate on whether there exists a crisis of masculinity or not. On the one hand, the idea is that men experience traditional masculine identity to be threatened in several arenas. For instance, boys are statistically more educationally disadvantaged than girls based on truancy and examination results, and men increasingly experience downward intergenerational mobility in the labor market (Clare 2001, McDowell 2000). On the other hand, masculinities scholar Stephen Whitehead argues that any weakness, criticism or failure directed at men does not necessarily lead to a crisis of masculinity, and that masculinities are multifaceted and fluid (2002). I will refer to the crisis as *perceived* to acknowledge its discursiveness: Although it might be experienced as genuine for some, it is not so for everyone.

Connell means that to understand the making of masculinities, we need to map the crisis tendencies of the established gender orders and examine how *change* transpires (1995:84). A crisis in gender order occurs when social structures and systems are disrupted (1995:84). Because masculinity is a configuration rather than a system, it follows that a potential crisis will disrupt the gender order as a whole (1995:84). A pattern of hegemonic masculinity will produce a crisis when the system it relies upon; its legitimacy, is challenged (Connell 1995:77, 84). The crisis might be triggered by marginalized groups gaining socio-economic power, privileges through politics or in the labor market (Connell 1995:81-86). For example, a protective hegemonic masculinity produces crisis by fabricating enemy images of the Others as dangerous. This ‘production’ sets off the efforts to stabilize or reconstitute patriarchal power (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:832, 853).

A masculine fear of social change may be explained through the concept of aggrieved entitlement developed by sociologist Michael Kimmel (2013). Aggrieved entitlement refers to a victimized feeling that comes from the belief that the benefits and privileges one thinks one is entitled to are lost, stolen or unjustly shared with someone else (Kimmel 2013:xiv). This feeling relates especially to masculinity, because historically, social control, privilege and domination has belonged to men (Kimmel 2013:xiv). The experience of losing this power makes a fertile soil for white power movements (Kimmel 2013). Fueled by the feeling of aggrieved entitlement, white supremacists from the American Midwest to the Swedish suburbia consider themselves victims of a politically correct society (Kimmel 2018:20). The fear of losing or having to share benefits and privilege with ‘the Others’, like women and minorities, may produce a (perceived) crisis, triggering efforts to reinstate traditional patriarchal order and control on an otherwise changing society.

Moreover, recent studies establish that men’s support for gender inequality rises when their masculine identity is threatened, even in gender equal societies like the Nordic countries (Adamska et al. 2016, Kryszewski et al. 2017). The sense of crisis is threatening to these men because it sets off feelings of aggrieved entitlement by threatening privileges (Kimmel 2013). A crisis which challenges masculine identity is emasculating. Therefore, male efforts to reclaim traditional masculine domains increase in times of crises.

### 3.5.2 Fascism’s crisis

As noted, fascism’s mythic core is the tale of a crisis-struck nation, downwardly spiraling towards decay and immorality. Fascism typically arises in a rapidly changing social world,

and several tendencies of change forms the crisis. For instance, support for authoritarian political solutions and exclusionary nationalism increases after a financial crisis (Smedrud 2018:19). The Panic of 1873<sup>30</sup> inspired a rise in European fascist in the 1880s, while the Great Depression after the First World War similarly paved the way for a fascist wave (Smedrud 2018:19). The recent popularity surge of the far-right may therefore be partially understood as an effect of the 2007 financial crisis (Smedrud 2018:19).

Mosse refers to the social changes that challenged the normative ideals of modern masculinity (Mosse 1996). According to Mosse, immorality and decadence were understood to emasculate society and the modern man. In a similar vein, fascist mobilization works as a response to the historical waves of women's liberation movement (Connell 1995:84). For instance, Nazism rose partly as a response to the women's liberation movement in the Weimar era. Likewise, patriarchal legitimacy and male dominance has been challenged continuously by women and sexual minorities over the past hundred years. During this past decade, fourth wave feminism<sup>31</sup> has influenced societies worldwide (Munro 2013). This 'digitalized' wave is concerned with sexual freedom, social media projects and strengthening sexual minorities', like transgender peoples' rights (Munro 2013). In chapter 5, I shall discuss whether a contemporary far right and fascist florescence is a response to feminism's vast influences.

Lastly, I understand the crisis in itself to be driven by sentiments like anger, fear, and loss. Kimmel points to that anger is a "hot emotion" which must be fed, for instance collectively by having the sense of injure or bereavement sustained (Kimmel 2013:36-7). Similarly, I understand the crisis to be an emotional process which is sustained by collective feelings of anxiety, anger and loss.

### 3.6 Chapter synopsis

This chapter presented several accounts that serves to contextualize contemporary Nordic neo-Nazism. The reviewed historical accounts underscore that neo-Nazism cannot be understood outside of its heritage. The NRM's growth must also be understood as a part of a new social and political context in which there is a rise in far-right engagement. Furthermore,

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<sup>30</sup> The Panic of 1873 was a financial crisis that affected Europe and North America (Sassoon 2012). It lasted from 1873 until 1879, and even longer in some European countries (Sassoon 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Feminism can be understood as divided into waves. The last decade (2008-2018) are by many referred to as the beginning of the fourth wave (Munro 2013).

I have shown how gender is understood as a driving force of fascism, traditional Nazism and contemporary right-wing extremism. This chapter highlighted the gendered associations of neo-Nazi environmentalism and its links to gender progression, but also nature rhetoric's potential for gender regression. Finally, I presented the crisis as an emotional process that is provoked by fear of change and loss of privilege. The next chapter presents the empirical material, while chapter 5 will discuss the empirical material up against the background and literature presented in the current chapter.

## 4. Empirical data

In this chapter, I present the explicit problems that the NRM are concerned with, while the underlying meanings of these are presented in chapter 5. The empirical data is organized into five sections. *Nice guys* figures as the first theme, where I present the mood, tone and image of the *Nordic Frontier*. The second theme, *Protectors*, shows how the NRM constructs its image as guardians of the North. The third theme is called *The Degenerate Society* and demonstrates how the hosts conceptualize their contemporary society. The fourth theme, *Nature and Environmental problems* deals with how the NRM relate to pressing ecological challenges like overpopulation and overconsumption and the suggested solutions to these. The fifth and last theme, *Women and femininity* explores how the NRM review gender and how they problematize femininity. Lastly follows a chapter synopsis in which I summarize the main points of this chapter.

### 4.1 Nice guys

Before listening to the podcasts, I expected harsh hate speech, palpable anger and vile language. My expectations were based on stereotypes of neo-Nazis that convey them as aggressive, uncontrollable and dangerous, as is often portrayed in the media, for instance through media reports on neo-Nazi violence and crimes. Therefore, it struck me how ‘courteous’ the three podcast hosts appeared – they sounded like *nice guys*, in stark contrast to the stereotype I had in mind. The mood in the studio was always serene, and the hosts appeared calm and in control. The main host Andreas had a particularly pleasant voice. They presented coherent arguments, spoke clearly and understandably and smoothed over racist speech by maintaining a light tone. Mike in particular entices the listener with thorough argumentation, persuasively emphasizing his points. At times, the mood was marked by a lingering seriousness, for instance when they discussed “extinction” of the Nordic people. Overall, however, the tone of the show is relaxed. Several internet commentators of the online versions miss “rage” and “emotion” and call the hosts “soft” and even “faggoty”. Commentators discuss whether the show is “low-energy” or not, comparing it to raging far-right shows from for instance the United States.<sup>32</sup> Apparently, I was not the only one to

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<sup>32</sup> The American conspiracy theorist Alex Jones is an example of a ‘high-energy’ right-wing radio host. Albeit not identifying as a neo-Nazi, he is a far-right sympathizer known for his intense and uncompromising style

expect a rougher tone from the *Nordic Frontier*. Moreover, there is little trace of aggressive white power music on the show. The hosts play a couple of (often Viking inspired) songs throughout the lengthily shows, and the opening vignette is a soothing harmonica tune.

The Nice guy-image is sustained somewhat throughout the podcast discussions. This representation was further upheld by the recurring wish to protect nature and animals from harm, as caring for the environment diverges from the stereotypical image of the neo-Nazi. In the *Rasekrigerne*-documentary, the Norwegian faction leader Haakon Forwald has this to say about sympathizers of the Nordic extreme right: "...instead of [violent actions] one should try to reach out with a positive message and make them change their way of life. Work for a good cause instead." (Rasekrigerne 2017, my translation).<sup>33</sup> Here, he constructs the NRM as a positive movement which can guide people who resort to far-right violence onto the right path of "working for a good cause", which I take to be sustaining the community of Nordic people.

Furthermore, *Our Path* declares that the NRM suits "ordinary" people:

"In recent decades, the majority of people deciding to become active in Nordic nationalist movements have been angry young men. In the past few years - and the past few months in particular - it has become apparent that the interest in our ideas has widened to encompass a greater range of people, as more and more "ordinary" individuals are seeking us out."

(Our Path 2016:50)

This 'ordinary' and 'nice' image prompts the question: Is the NRM a more serious and ideologically driven organization than the hyper-masculine skinhead movements of the 1990s and early 2000s? I will return to this question in chapter 5. The next section demonstrates how the NRM establish themselves as protectors of the Nordic region.

## 4.2 Protectors

Throughout the podcast discussions, the manifesto and the documentary, the NRM present themselves as protectors of the white race as well as the Nordic non-human sphere. I expected that white women needed protection most of all, but women did not stand out as victims in the reviewed material. In *Rasekrigerne*, Forwald says that "our women are being raped on the

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(Gibbs 2018). Rush Limbaugh and Mike Savage are other examples of hardline right-wing radio hosts (Kimmel 2013:37-8).

<sup>33</sup> Rasekrigerne 2017, 00:47:20

streets”<sup>34</sup>, which is the only mention of such character in my material. On the contrary, women were othered as threats to the stability of the Nordic society because of potential ties to feminism, but also by virtue of being women. The threatening Others also included immigrants, Jews, liberals<sup>35</sup> and cultural Marxists. On the surface, however, immigrants seem to make up the most palpable threat to the NRM’s idea of the Nordic region.

In the podcast and the manifesto, the NRM promote a sense of urgency regarding the threats from immigrants, exemplified by this quote from the point 6 section *Biological Diversity*:

“The Nordic Resistance Movement takes invasions of foreign species that, through unnatural means, establish themselves in the Nordic nature very seriously, as this would threaten native populations, ecosystems and biological diversity.”

(Our Path 2016:31)

The “invasions of foreign species” refers to (mass) immigration of people from other regions. The Nordic nature’s ecosystems of both human and non-human kind require protection from immigrants, which are considered to be non-compatible with the Nordic environment. Below I present how the NRM establish themselves as protectors of the white race and of nature and animals.

#### 4.2.1 Protecting the white race

It is vital to protect the Nordic people for the NRM. A transnational white supremacist belief is that the white race is threatened by miscegenation and is near extinction (Perry 2004). The NRM endorses this idea, and the manifesto claims to grant asylum to “racial kinsmen from around the world who have been persecuted due to their race” (Our Path 2016:15). The Nordic nation shall be a reserve and home of the *white race*, the NRM holds, not only of the Nordic people.

The extinction convictions are especially poignant in the discussion of the Swedish CO2 emission study, where the argument is made that having less children is good for the environment (Radio Nordfront 2017c, Lund University 2017). “Let’s talk about nature,” says Mike. “How does a scientist recommend an organism to stop breeding? [...] That is insane.”

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<sup>34</sup> Rasekrigerne 2017, 00:48:06

<sup>35</sup> The NRM’s use of the term liberal was clarified in section 2.2.1. As noted, the term liberal conveys some of the same meaning as the term ‘cultural Marxists’, and I take it to mean urban people who support multiculturalism and non-traditional gender practices.

(Radio Nordfront (2017c, 00:17:35)).<sup>36</sup> He compares the message in the article to telling a dog to stop procreating because there is not enough dog food for the cubs. “They’re not telling us that, hey, six kids is a little excessive, could you maybe settle for four”, he says, and pauses. “They’re telling us to go extinct.” The grim last line is delivered with a compelling pathos. Furthermore, the manifesto blames multiculturalist society for committing genocide of the Nordic people (Our Path 2016:12). The NRM presents immigration, race mixing, and declining Nordic birth numbers as the practical reasons for the Nordic race’s demise.

#### 4.2.2 Protecting nature and animals

The show hosts also present themselves as protectors of the natural sphere and non-human animals.<sup>37</sup> “It is instinctual for the Aryan to care for animals if you compare to other cultures around the world”, says Andreas, and describes India as a chaotic, overpopulated place where the “sole entertainment is making new people”, and cats and dogs roam the streets because nobody takes care of them (Radio Nordfront 2017a, 01:58:00). “And we also see when these racial strangers come to Sweden, we have a lot of cases of animal torture for fun, like people cutting cats and playing baseball with, I don’t know, dog’s heads [...] They don’t feel the way we feel about animals.” Andreas concludes. Johan explains that “many foreigners don’t feel empathy towards animals”, which can be “extrapolated to humans, there’s less empathy towards humans”. The hosts agree, and Andreas blames this on a “tribal [...] group mentality” (02:03:17). The hosts assent that in Europe, the idea is that all dogs should be treated well, but in other parts of the world, they think that ‘only my dog should be treated well, not that of others’ (01:59:50). This way of thinking is “different from how we like to do things,” Mike concludes, alluding to the group mentality of the racialized Others.

The manifesto reads that ritual slaughter must be banned, and the hosts agree. This will make it “tricky for the foreign religions to be practiced”, says Andreas (Radio Nordfront 2017a, 01:57:47). Like domestic species, lab animals must also be protected from human abuse. Testing make up on animals is “the worst form of nihilism and capitalism ever”, says Mike. It is harder for the hosts to make up their minds on animal testing for medical purposes. “Someone has to suffer for medical advancement,” says Mike. “But who’s gonna test it? Is it

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<sup>36</sup> I add track numbers and episode references throughout chapter 4 to reference the podcast discussions. References will include episode and track number of the utterance in question to direct the following discussion, and additional numbers in case the synopsis does not follow a logical timeline.

<sup>37</sup> However, since the NRM do not discuss killing or exploitation of animals as being inherently bad, they advocate animal welfare, not animal rights. They never mention vegetarianism or veganism, unlike their vegan counterparts in Germany; Balaclava Küche, which were introduced in section 3.2.3.

gonna be a convicted criminal? [...] Or is it a rat? It's not easy." Here, a traditional biocentric Nazi view on human worth shines through, where humans and animals are equated. I will return to this in chapter 5 when I discuss how the NRM employs nature-rhetoric for its Self-construction.

The Right of Public Access is described in point 6. The hosts discuss the so called "berry picking menace", which refers to "Thai people getting imported"; picking forest berries for profit (Radio Nordfront 2017a, 02:28:43). "Like armies, they're ravaging the woods," says Andreas. "Gypsies" have stepped into the market too, they pick berries next to the highway. "Most Swedish people know not to do that", says Andreas. Mike agrees and refers to "the little man's law", which is an understanding that one may pick some berries on public land to sustain one's household. The Right of Public Access is "abused by this large-scale commercial operation by foreigners". The hosts here construct the NRM as suited protectors of the Nordic forests.

The hosts further denounce "sob stories" about Thai people who sold their houses in order to make it big in the Swedish berry business but who have had to return home empty-handed. Andreas comments dryly: "And we are supposed to cry about it – it never stops, this pitying the menace". "I want my land back", sighs Johan. "The Nordic man will be punished", says Andreas, implying that he will eventually be the one who has to pay for this 'defilement' somehow. The show hosts establish the Nordic nature as prone to deterioration in contact with immigrants.

This section presented how the NRM constructs themselves as protectors of the white race, animals and the Nordic nature. In chapter 5, I discuss how the NRM further constructs a protector persona by contrasting their own mentality, traditions and social practice with the Others.

### 4.3 The Degenerate society

The podcast hosts criticize western liberal democracies for being degenerate and decadent, festered with "unnatural" lifestyles and hedonism. Furthermore, they construct a divide between an urbanist, devious elite in power, and the 'real people', the latter including themselves. This section will examine how they view their contemporary society and what problems the current social order brings to the fore.

### 4.3.1 The Hunger Games

The podcast hosts' critique of the western liberal democracies materializes in recurrent references to the literary dystopian trilogy *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (2008-2010). The protagonists of the trilogy are righteous farmers in the outer districts who are oppressed and exploited by hedonistic, urban elites for whom life is nothing but pleasure and entertainment – but as underdogs, they rise to resist the tyranny at last (Collins 2008-2010). *The Hunger Games* were originally written for teens, but the movie adaption introduced the story to a wider audience. The recurrent references to a teen phenomenon by middle aged neo-Nazis are peculiar. I have found, however, that the parallel between *The Hunger Games* and the world-view of neo-Nazis serves as an original approach to discussing social differences between groups of people, and it uncovers the NRM's conceptions of power, nature, and what they refer to as the cultural Marxist society.

The following example demonstrates how they use *The Hunger Games* to criticize the cultural Marxist society. The show hosts discuss the experiment “The Behavioral sink”, where researchers created a utopia for six mice and let them breed without restriction (02:09:56). A year later the mice counted 2200 members and were racing towards extinction.<sup>38</sup> Mike says that the males were especially frantic in the overpopulation period and either became aggressive and “fighty”, or they started grooming themselves excessively; showing no interest in females. “A lot of that if true for humans, I find”, Mike says, and explains that people adopt unsustainable lifestyles in overpopulated areas. Johan is struck by the similarities to “the people in the big cities that call themselves metrosexuals” who go to have manicures. “I don't know if you have seen the movie Hunger Games”, he says. “It is [an example of] urbanization gone awry, everyone lives in these big, big cities, and how weird culture expressions develop that are very unnatural and... weird”, he chuckles, and points to how the tale is a “futuristic view of [...] where we maybe will end up”. Mike continues: “Yeah, the Hunger Games does speak to this, and it has this [...] mid-Roman empire connection with this super urban elite, and their weird hairstyle and clothes, and subcultures and obsession with entertainment and novelty, and then you have this peasant population who has to provide the resources for

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<sup>38</sup> This experiment, conducted by Professor J.B. Calhoun in the 1970s, was linked to human overpopulation and legitimated ideas that humans will eventually destroy themselves (Hock 2004). Many understood the study to convey that the best option was to flee to the country or the suburbs, where people had space and life was peaceful and natural (Hock 2004). The experiment was also understood to deal with human dysfunction of resource managing and space distribution (Hock 2004).

them.” Johan agrees: “Yeah, and all the nature is fenced off for the public, you can’t go there”. Mike sighs: “Yeah, it is frightening, I think a lot of people imagine our future to be similar to this. The liberal dream.” As shown in chapter 3, degeneracy and decadency are common themes of fascist and Nazi critique of society, and the NRM repeats this critique. Looks and behavior of the degenerate elites are described through *The Hunger Games*-parallel. The VICE documentary *Raised without gender* portrays a family where Mapa (a hyphenate of Mama and Papa), who is genderfluid<sup>39</sup>, lives with their partner and two children. It is implied in the hosts’ discussion that Mapa and their children are assigned male at birth, but all three family members answer to the Swedish gender-neutral pronoun ‘hen’<sup>40</sup> (Radio Nordfront 2017d, *Raised without gender* 2017). Johan refers to a scene where Mapa meets a couple “who dress their son as a girl”, and the parents were “hipsters kinda thing, urban kinda people”, and the boy’s mother looked “straight out of a megacity in the *Hunger Games* [...]”. Hipster kinda weird hairdo, all colors, clothes and... the divide we see in the society is just getting wider and deeper. I can’t relate to anything they’re saying or doing or thinking” (Radio Nordfront 2017d, 00:36:05). “You have to get with it, Johan, this is the new stuff,” Andreas says jokingly, and concludes: “It goes deep, this stuff. You have to entrench yourself into a lot of degeneracy”. These examples demonstrate how the NRM use *The Hunger Games* as a tool to problematize the modern day society, which they connect to urbanism, hedonism and non-traditional gender expressions and moral degeneracy.

#### 4.3.2 Urbanism, hedonism and individualism

The show hosts use the term “urbanite” to refer to people who live in bigger cities. The urbanite’s hedonism is a recurring theme in the podcast discussions, particularly those regarding environmentalism. In the following transcript, the hosts criticize the study that claims the top thing to reduce CO2 emissions is to not have children (Lund University 2017, Radio Nordfront 2017c). “Second place [...] is having no car”, Andreas continues, “that means not living in the countryside, so you can become one of these ‘metrosexuals’ (Radio Nordfront 2017c, 00:10:31). The word “metrosexuals” is singled out and said with disdain. Mike sarcastically adds: “An urban drone, living in a human beehive, under corporate feudalism... Sounds wonderful man!”. They criticize people for looking for happiness in

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<sup>39</sup> Genderfluid means to relate to, or to be a person whose gender identity is not fixed.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Hen’ is a Swedish and Norwegian gender-neutral pronoun.

entertainment and materialism, instead of having children and by that fulfilling their purpose in life.

The podcast hosts emphasize their perceived distance between themselves and these elites, personified by Mapa and their gender-fluid friends. “I don’t know where I live anymore, when I see stuff like this...”, says Johan summing up his feelings of VICE’s documentary *Raised without gender* (Radio Nordfront 2017c, 00:16:05). Mike, however, is convinced that the ‘real people’ know that something is wrong with the gender-fluid propaganda of VICE: “[...] people aren’t buying it,” he says, referring to the 5000 dislikes under the VICE video on YouTube. “They’re dumbfounded by stuff that gets pushed by the authorities. People don’t like it, but they have no will to power, they just crumble and accept it.” Here, the hosts establish the general people as weak and incapable of speaking up against the elites.

Mike claims that gender-fluid, trans and hipster people escape from social norms and from “what they are” (Radio Nordfront 2017d, 00:28:17). “But more generally with liberalism I think, is an escape from collective identity. They don’t wanna belong to a nation, or a race or even a sex, [...] and it is sort of a societal norm, it should all be free floating out there, pick and choose, switch a little bit depending on how you feel that day. This is where the kids are headed. The price to pay is depression and psyche meds, and probably a drastically shortened life span for some of them, cause sometimes this stuff ends with a bullet, sadly enough.<sup>41</sup> [...] It’s an escape from what you were born into, and it’s an escape from what society would expect you to be, and just out into some kind of void where you try to build your identity out of these loose concepts that you are fed by the TV or whatever.” I understand the hosts to problematize the downfall of collectivity in the western liberal democracies through the discussion of gender fluidity.

The call for collectivity is further demonstrated when the hosts discuss the individualist idea that one can be happy without children (Radio Nordfront 2017c). Mike argues that people only look for momentary happiness, which makes them lose all perspective of the “life that is natural to live”. He continues: “The proper way to look at life is like a journey. There are certain things, certain phases, you know, and there is a child-rearing phase of life” (00:25:50). The degenerate society is festered by urbanism, hedonism and materialism, and I understand the hosts’ solution appears to be to live outside overpopulated cities and get in touch with the

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<sup>41</sup> Here, Mike refers to the high suicide rate among trans-people.

“natural” way of life. Here, I understand the host to emphasize that ‘a natural life’ is one of collectivity instead of individualism.

This section showed how the hosts are preoccupied with the degeneracy of society, which for them manifests itself through individualism, hedonism, materialism, urbanism and gender fluidity. Like fascism’s New Man, the NRM man seems to see the need for resurrecting the morally corrupt and decadent society. I will return to the NRM’s similarities to fascism’s motives in chapter 5.

## 4.4 Nature and environmental problems

The NRM intend to establish themselves as a ‘Green Party’, and to “take back the environmental politics” from the leftists (Radio Nordfront 2017a, Nordfront Editorial Office 2017). In this section I present the explicit environmental problems that the NRM are concerned with. The hosts largely discuss overconsumption, overpopulation and urbanization, as well as anthropocentrism and a contemporary liberal detachment from the laws of Nature.

### 4.4.1 Overpopulation

The hosts debate global overpopulation and the state-funded emergency aid inspired by the CO<sub>2</sub>-study article (Radio Nordfront 2017c). Andreas alleges that before “the white man” came to Southern parts of Africa, women each had 16-19 pregnancies and only 4-5 healthy children, but the white man enabled them to carry out perhaps 12 of those 19 pregnancies (00:20:28). Mike says gravely that people in several African countries “can’t take care of themselves because that’s how they grew up, we have to keep feeding them now, and if we stop feeding them, a lot of people would say the problem is solved. But that’s a lot of suffering, people will die. They have grown outside their capacity to sustain themselves.”

This conversation exemplifies how the hosts connect overpopulation to questions of race.

Mike continues to make his point by referring to state-funded emergency aid: “This is a Talmudic weaponized technique that they use to affect moral paralysis on us.” He explains “a step by step process” of how the problem of “feeding Africa” sustains, and the workings of what he calls the moral paralysis: “First, women and children are dying in childbirth, and it’s horrible, and there are crocodile tears etcetera, and you go there and give them medicine, so they don’t die. And the result of this is of course that there are too many kids, and there’s not enough food, and there are more tears on TV, and we send food over there. And the food

enables this perpetuating cycle of population growth and starvation, and the gibs<sup>42</sup> have to keep on coming to feed these people, and they start coming over here, and you can't say no because it's terrible where they come from. So at every step of the way, whites are convinced that the preexisting conditions that caused the problem are just nature, we can't do anything about it. It's a fact, like the law of gravity. And you can only deal with the present rather than rewind. These people have a problematic behavior. We enabled it and that's why we're here now. We need to stop enabling it, and the moral paralysis keeps us from doing that, and we need to get out of it." "It's the white mans' burden once again", Johan concludes quietly. Mike continues: "When we complain about overpopulation in Africa, it is because their population is growing exponentially [...] We're just saying, hey, you need to slow it down over there – in case anyone thought there were any hypocrisy here." (00:18:44) Andreas says that "we have different priorities as a race and as a people, where we have this high investment parenting that we do up here in the Nordic countries and in Europe, compared to their just expanding by clan, basically just giving birth to more units, so they can become a bigger tribe, have more power – and that's how they then relate to each other as a powerful unit against another one." Mike's tirade illuminates how the NRM understands overpopulation as a critical environmental problem that can be solved by minimizing the "white man's" meddling with 'Africa'. Here I find that overpopulation is largely discussed in terms of race, to which I shall return to in chapter 5.

#### 4.4.2 Overconsumption

The hosts argue that leftist environmentalists are hypocrites because they support mass immigration while urging Nordic people to have less children. For the hosts, mass immigration results in overconsumption, which is not supportive of environmentalism (Radio Nordfront 2017c). "The argument is easy to pick apart", says Mike (00:15.13), and asserts that "they [leftists]" argue that it is the western *lifestyle* that produces large amounts of carbon dioxide per capita, not *white people* per se. By this, Mike means that it does not make sense to urge Nordic people to have less children. He continues: "Births are one way to raise the amounts of individuals living here, and thus the carbon dioxide production. Another one is the massive import of non-whites into the West, which is unnaturally adding an enormous amount of people who will consume all the things we do very quickly." From this, Mike concludes

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<sup>42</sup> A gib is an expression from gaming culture which refers to a piece of flesh resulting from total obliteration of a target and is here used as a euphemism for mindless people.

that mass immigration is worse for the climate than childbearing. “Mass immigration to the west makes people who were consuming fewer resources before they moved consume a lot more. This is the worst possible thing if you are an environmentalist.” To the NRM, environmentalism is only legitimate if it refuses mass immigration, because overconsumption is directly related to mass immigration.

The green leftist is subject to criticism for not meeting the NRM’s environmentalism standards. “These urbanites [...] try to buy all the green stuff they can and all the organic stuff, just living in the cities is a massive waste of resources” says Andreas and denounces them as mindless consumers (Radio Nordfront 2017a, 01:44:59). “The filthy hippies who live out in communes [...] have taken a step in the right direction”, says Mike, but further discredits urban liberals. The hosts praise the ‘real’ sustainable lifestyle in the countryside, claiming that the leftists are not capable of living like that. Environmentalism is to the leftists “a hipster life style – there’s no meat to it, it it’s just talk, an image to be cool”, says Johan. Andreas agrees: “Yeah, instead of going out into the country side and living a sustainable life with your family in the wild. They couldn’t do it, they couldn’t hack it.” “No”, Johan chuckle, “They would be dead so fast.” As the leftist is conceptualized by the hosts as dependent on materialism and consumerism, I understand that the leftist cannot be acknowledged as a ‘real’ environmentalist.

#### 4.4.3 Nature rhetoric

The hosts employ what I call nature rhetoric when they discuss difference among humans. The NRM refer to the Nordic race as an ‘endangered species’ that is threatened by the invasion of foreign species. They conflate the terms ‘race’ and ‘species’, and this merging is related to what they call *biological diversity*. According to the NRM, every species belongs in its original “surroundings” and should not be mixed with others because it will destroy the ecological balance (Our Path 2016:31). Multiculturalism is referred to as “the polar opposite of biological diversity” (Our Path 2016:31). After citing point 6’s *Biological Diversity*-section and its concluding call to “remove the foreign species that have, via unnatural means, established themselves in the Nordic nature”, Andreas says, “I think they [the authors of Our Path] are talking about repatriation here” (Radio Nordfront 2017a, 02:35:00). Mike answers lightly: “Oh sure, repatriate the monstrous slugs too. They have to go back.” The NRM compare humans and animals both rhetorically and ideologically, supported by use of nature-rhetoric and biologicistic metaphors.

The NRM's environmentalism takes the laws of Nature as a point of departure, which means that humans and animals are submitted to the same principles (Radio Nordfront 2017a). Johan asks if the hosts have talked about race-mixing with environmentalists (02:35:50). He once talked to an environmentalist about biodiversity, crossbreeding and the dangers of foreign animal species multiplying in the Nordic nature, and pointed out that they used the exact same language on humans and animals, but it "backfired". The environmentalist got angry and started yelling. Mike agrees that it is "right up their alley on an intellectual level, but the problem with these people is that they [are] anthropocentric. [...] They tend to believe that humans as a whole are bad, and there is no differentiation factor at all. There's no point in applying the principles of biological diversity to humans [for the leftist environmentalists]." Andreas agrees: "The propaganda has been too heavy." "National Socialism is fundamentally applying the principles of science to man," says Mike, quoting the Nazi George Lincoln Rockwell,<sup>43</sup> and concludes by addressing the leftist's inability to grasp that humans and animal are submitted to the same principles of biological diversity.

This section showed how the NRM discuss nature and environmental problems. They are concerned with overpopulation, overconsumption and anthropocentrism of the leftist environmentalists. In chapter 5 I examine what implicit claims that contribute to construct these problematizations.

## 4.5 Women and femininity

Women are not discussed much as objects of protection, but they play a significant ideological role for the NRM as allies. The hosts usually refer to allied women as 'them/they', and the movement as 'we/us'. Not all women are allies, some are agents of the degenerate society, concerned with feminism and cultural Marxism. Any kind of deviance from traditional, heteronormative gender roles is considered by the NRM to be degenerate, and feminism is understood to corrupt society's health (Our Path 2016:39).

### 4.5.1 Women are talked about, not too

The show hosts discuss family policy and the role women shall have in the NRM's order after citing point 7 and in relation to environmentalism (Radio Nordfront 2017a, b). The NRM will

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<sup>43</sup> George Lincoln Rockwell was an American post-war neo-Nazi and founder of the American Nazi Party in 1960.

encourage women to be stay-at-home-moms to change society's throw-away-mentality and limit overconsumption (Our Path 2016:38-9). "Instead of going to their jobs and producing and consuming, they [women] will help us create a sustainable future by repairing and maintaining things that we use rather than to throw away and buy new stuff", says Mike (Radio Nordfront 2017a, 01:41:05). Johan agrees; "In the traditional family the mother stays home, one less person that has to take a car and, you know, go there and waste energy for going to a job and be home instead and make food and [...] fix things."

The manifesto presents gender as a triviality in the workplace:

"No woman, for example, should be denied the opportunity to work as a firefighter, as no man should be denied the opportunity to work as a nurse; but if they were to be selected, then it must be because they are the one who is best suited for the job and who best meets the requirements

regardless of gender."

(Our Path 2016:38-9)

"I think my views might be more in the extreme on this topic", says Mike, after Andreas' reiteration of the above quote. "I think we should tell women no... As a matter of principle". He continues (Radio Nordfront 2017b, 02:01:53): "I understand perfectly well why the party program is written is this way, because, I mean, if a woman can do the job, she can do the job, that's a truism, but even so, uhm... I think we should just tell them no." He legitimizes this by drawing on Norse traditions where women held the domestic responsibility, and that this is the "natural way". Further, he argues that that the family would be more stable if the labor market was heavily male dominated. On the one hand, the NRM presents gender as a trivial factor in the labor market, while on the other hand, the hosts want to deny women certain jobs. I will discuss this inconsistency further in chapter 5.

The hosts criticize feminism and the dominating discourse of Scandinavian gender equality (Radio Nordfront 2017b): "In the Swedish system were all equal, so now they're always trying to equalize our parents' days and things like that and [say that], 'daddy can stay at home just as well'. No, he can't," says Andreas (02:07:50). "Biologically he cannot provide the same nurturing and the nice softness that the child need, it's impossible, even with cultural Marxism. You have got a stay-at-home wife", he says, directed at Johan "– does she feel suppressed at all?" Johan does not answer this directly but responds by criticizing feminism as a "mental syphilis" for women which offers contradictive ideals and make women "very unhappy". He continues: "They take on roles as managers that they didn't earn, [...] being quoted in as women, they're not really suited for the job. [...] I think they kinda know it so

they have to overcompensate for their lack of knowledge of that position they have taken so they create conflict, kinda have to play games [of being suited for the position in question].” He concludes by saying that he feels sorry for women who take on lives that are not their own, and finally says that his wife agrees with this. Here, Johan allows himself to speak on behalf of women.

Women are not present to explain their views in reviewed podcast material. However, the activist Paulina Forslund, a Swedish mother of eight, gives a face to the women of the NRM. During a 1<sup>st</sup> of May rally in Sweden, she spoke passionately about the need to enforce and elevate a strong women’s ideal to emphasize the natural, feminine powers to give birth and raise children (Sveriges Radio 2018).<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the 90-year old Swedish-German Nazi activist Vera Oredsson appears in *Rasekrigerne* (2017). She is an iconic figure in the Nordic neo-Nazi scene. A powerful and respectable activist, she emerges as a matriarch who blesses the newer generation. As such, she constructs a symbolic bridge between the Third Reich and Sweden – between traditional Nazism and neo-Nazism. These two women are the most prominent female activists within the NRM according to the reviewed material, and they univocally express satisfaction with neo-Nazism’s traditional view on gender. That women are talked about and not *too* in the podcasts does not preclude that women’s agency within the movement. I will further discuss the significance of women’s agency in chapter 5.

#### 4.5.2 Problematizing femininity

When discussing gender confusion, the hosts question the legitimacy of women in power, and how women contribute to sustain the gender-neutral discourse in Sweden (Radio Nordfront 2017d). “The people working there, they’re accepting anything that is coming from down the pipeline from above them”, says Johan, referring to the employees in the gender-neutral kindergartens (00:18:40). Mike continues: “Yeah, I mean they’re so authority-bound in these institutions, it’s like, full of women, and they often have a female boss, and there’s social shaming involved, because a lot of these people, they sort of feel an innate resistance to this stuff but the social shaming in the workplace is so effective since it’s such a female environment that those few crime thinkers think that ‘hey, maybe boys *are* predisposed to play with loud little tractors and machines and girls are more into dolls or whatever, you know, they’re forced to quit, or they’re bullied, or they’re just silenced, and forced to go along

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<sup>44</sup> May 1<sup>st</sup> is the workers' international campaign day, established to bring forth important issues for working classes.

with it.” The hosts here characterize feminine behavior based on the female presence in state institutions. I take the hosts to implicitly define the state institutions as a feminine environment, which I will return to in chapter 5.

During the discussion of *Raised without gender*, they ridicule Mapa for mixing gender expressions: “Dude has a ball cap on, and eye shadow, and [chuckles] a dress [...]. This thing is a tragedy from top to bottom, man,” says Mike, his tone cool and laid back (00:15:53). “Yeah,” Andreas adds, “And he’s got this creepy beard going on as well.” He later refers to Mapa’s friends: “You also had this feminized man following this, uhm, I wouldn’t say butch woman, but it is a trend for women to make themselves less attractive among these people. I don’t know why. They don’t want that kind of attention I guess, so they make weird hairdos and shave their heads and what not,” he concludes. Earlier in the discussion Andreas says: “Anything but the healthy normal – no, I don’t wanna say normal, because that can change as we see, but *natural* - there’s none of these natural elements, they’re like the plague when you mention them, so anything that’s degenerate, that’s what we’re gonna bring forth” (00:20:55). The hosts condemn deviance from traditional and what they consider to be *natural* gender norms.

At one point, Johan scoffs, referring to Mapa’s family’s focus on gender: “It’s all they talked about! All the time! They said we’re not gonna talk about it, but it’s all they’re talking about!” (00:26:04). “Yeah,” Andreas agrees; “It relates to the pride parade. It’s so empty, it’s so shallow, that their lives are surrounded, it’s all about their sexuality, who they’re gonna have sex with, basically bringing it to the streets.” The hosts then comment on what they experience as Mapa’s children’s confusion throughout the VICE-documentary with having to use the hen-pronouns.

After mocking Mapa’s appearance, Mike laconically comments, referring to their t-shirt: “Gotta have it on there because it’s women – it’s empowering” (00:15:53). Mapa’s t-shirt print is of a female “very mediocre metal band”. Mike is sarcastic, and I take him to criticize feminism and the female empowerment discourse of our day by referring to Mapa’s affiliation with a sub-par female band. His short remark is underlined by comments under the VICE video on a website, which reads that Mapa and their peers consistently promote femininity over masculinity. Mapa is criticized for performing as gender neutral but conveying to the children that to be a *woman* is better than being a man by enforcing femininity and not masculinity. Hence, the commenters mean that Mapa is subconsciously telling their boys that being a man is bad and asks whether masculinity is demoted in the ‘liberal discourse’. The

idea that women acquire too much social and state power echoes in research on cognitive conceptions about feminized and masculinized states (Hofstede 2001), to which I will return in chapter 5.

This section showed how women are talked about rather than to. Women and femininity are problematized through discussions of environmentalism, female empowerment, the labor market, the state system and gender fluidity, but gender is also presented as a trivial issue in the labor market. In chapter 5, I will discuss what lies behind the NRM's contradictory positioning on gender.

## 4.6 Chapter synopsis

This chapter aimed to present the explicit problems that the NRM is concerned with. The explicit problems are presented as environmental deterioration, neglect of the Nordic flora and fauna, extinction of the Nordic people, animal abuse, consumerism, overpopulation, urbanism, social degeneracy, individualism and moral decline. Women and femininity are also problematized in the sense that their presence in state institutions is disruptive. This chapter presented the frontstage performance where the NRM shared their official views and depict themselves how they wish to be conceived. I find that they wish to appear as strong, capable, authentic and reasonable nice guys. In the next chapter I examine the implicit meanings that underlines and buttresses this frontstage appearance.

## 5. Discussion

Chapter 4 introduced the NRM's explicit problems, which I presented under the following different categories: environmental deterioration, neglect of the Nordic flora and fauna, extinction of the Nordic people, animal abuse, consumerism, overpopulation, urbanism, social degeneracy, individualism, and moral decline. In this chapter, I argue that these themes are the frontstage, official expressions that correspond to several backstage concerns of the NRM. The backstage concerns are not publicly addressed, but nevertheless serve as impetus for the frontstage themes of discussion in the podcasts. These implicit problems, or backstage concerns, encompass immigration, racial difference, women's rights, sexual freedom and social change. The backstage concerns are developed through a rhetoric of emasculation: The Others are threatening the Nordic Man's privileges, while what is perceived as extensive crisis tendencies challenge the traditional social order. I also argue that the NRM are concerned with normalizing (neo-)Nazi ideology. In this chapter, I ask what underlying themes that support and construct the NRM's frontstage concerns.

First, I discuss the effects of the NRM's Nice guys-image. Second, I examine how the NRM's environmentalism and nature-rhetoric mask, and yet incorporate less popularly acceptable positions of the NRM, such as antagonism, sexism and racism. Third, I discuss whether the NRM problematize femininity as a threat to masculinity. Fourth, I address how the NRM construct a masculine ideal Self through the mechanisms of othering and 'crisising,' and how this Self maneuvers in the political waters of the Nordic countries. Fifth, I discuss the significance of neo-Nazi environmentalism in light of the literature in the field. Finally, I provide a chapter synopsis in which I summarize the main findings of this chapter.

### 5.1 Nice guys and normalization

The NRM's Nice guys-image has several implications for perceptions of masculinity, right-wing extremism, and environmentalism. A calm demeanor and interest in animals, nature and environmentalism disrupts the idea that the extreme right is hyper-masculine and aggressive. The Nice guys-image differentiates the NRM from the skinhead neo-Nazis of the 1990s as well as the extreme right in North America. A composed image also has a *normalizing* effect; it contributes to neutralize extreme ideology and discriminatory messages. By skirting around a stereotypic neo-Nazi role and appearing as nice guys, the hosts render themselves as

harmless, creating a personable image. As a medium, the podcast also contributes to normalize neo-Nazism because it lets the audience get to ‘know’ the hosts; it offers the possibility of listening in on personal discussions. As such, the podcast, as well as the manifesto, functions as the NRM’s frontstage: They present themselves as they wish to be conceived.

There are several indicators to suggest that the Nice guys-image is a strategic move to reach a wider audience. In chapter 3 I identified some of the newer far-right movements that have gained traction in Europe and the western countries over the last years, and their efforts to normalize far-right extremism. A common trait of these movements is how they seek to remove themselves from extreme right stereotypes to reach a wider audience (Rogers 2014, Nagle 2017, Vieten and Poynting 2016). The NRM may be one among several movements that aim to appear as ‘nice guys’ with this strategy in mind. The general portrayal of far-right extremists and Nazism as vile and vicious leads to ‘monstrosification’ of the groups in question, which differs from how people perceive more soft-spoken or ‘respectable’ fascists. As long as the language is cushioned, extreme right movements may be perceived as reasonable. I claim that the NRM’s construction of a Nice guy-image is in line with contemporary far-right efforts to mainstream right-wing extremism.

The NRM’s Nice guys-image does not, however, stand unchallenged. The *Rasekrigerne* documentary shows how the NRM leadership awards activist Torniaainen with a prize shortly after the aforementioned street violence episode in where a man died (Rasekrigerne 2017). The NRM’s representatives refuse the allegation that Torniaainen received a distinction for the violent act and claim instead that he received the award because he is a “good and active member” (Krekling et al. 2017, Rasekrigerne 2017). Torniaainen himself says that he is ready to die for National Socialism (Rasekrigerne 2017). The documentary also captures images of men with shaved heads, tattoos and cargo-pants fighting in a Viking duel in the NRM’s summer camp (Rasekrigerne 2017). Here, the NRM’s members look more like aggressive skinheads than nice guys. The self-presentation as Nice guys is not consistent, and the frontstage image is challenged by an aggressive backstage performance.

I find that the NRM’s Nice-guy image is enforced by the protector role’s alleged concern for the environment. Both traditional Nazis and the NRM appear as pious and positive in their reverence of nature and animals. This is in part because animal and environmental protection is associated with progressive and peaceful leftist movements, as well as femininity. The stereotypes drawn around environmentalism contributes to defuse far-right extreme messages.

To that end, I argue that the NRM's interest in environmentalism and animals disarms and normalizes neo-Nazism. In the next section I explain how the NRM employ nature to their benefit, and how animal welfare and environmentalism figures as a strategic ploy to hide racism and normalize hate speech.

## 5.2 Employing nature

The NRM utilizes nature to promote ideology, to exclude Others, and in order to form a self-subject. In this section, I examine the mechanisms behind employing an environmentalist rhetoric and using the theme of nature to build legitimacy. The podcast discussions presented in chapter 4 center on the themes of overconsumption, overpopulation and urbanization, and demonstrated how the show hosts examine environmental concerns. Here, I discuss how the hosts infuse these themes with implied sexism, racism and anti-Semitism.

### 5.2.1 Biologism

The terms 'species' and 'race' are conflated throughout the NRM's discussions and seem to refer to the same stratification categories. In the manifesto quote mentioned in section 4.2 on biological diversity,<sup>45</sup> the phrasing "invasion of foreign species" awakes a disturbing sense of exigency, like the chime of a dystopian warning bell signaling the presence of the Others. "Invasion" signifies disarray, infiltration and conquest. The "Nordic nature" refers to both the non-human and the human sphere, which underscores the social-Darwinist idea that humans are submitted to the same laws of Nature as non-human species. Here, 'species' serves as a biologicistic metaphor which subjects humans to the inexorable laws of Nature. Furthermore, the hosts employ biologicistic metaphors to unwanted humans for instance when Mike uses "monstrous slugs" as a proxy for immigrants. Similarly, "imported" Thai people sound like a traded animal breed. Returning to the species terminology - if humans are not one species, one opens up for the possibility that there are humans that do not count as humans. The NRM's conflation of species and race exemplifies how they equalize nature with humans.

By employing Nature-rhetoric, the NRM align themselves with traditional Nazism. The laws of Nature that Nazism builds on are related to biocentrism, a position where human beings do not have any privileged existence on Earth above other beings. This is exemplified in the

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<sup>45</sup> The quote reads: "The Nordic Resistance Movement takes invasions of foreign species that, through unnatural means, establish themselves in the Nordic nature very seriously, as this would threaten native populations, ecosystems and biological diversity." (Our Path 2016:31)

show discussions on medical testing on laboratory animal rights versus a convicted criminal. Do they mean that a person convicted of a crime has no more rights than a lab rat – or should a lab rat have the same rights as any other person? This idea can be understood as an expression of the Nazi biocentric view that sees all living things as the same by eliminating human distinctiveness. In the lab-rat discussion, the hosts present the problem as concerning animal abuse, but are implicitly warranting inhuman treatment of human beings. There is however a contradiction here – both the NRM and the Nazis are implying that immigrants and slugs are unwanted creatures, but also that humans are equal to animals. I will return to this inconsistency in section 5.5.

The NRM holds that urbanization leads to overconsumption and overpopulation, and they use this point to legitimize their anti-immigration stance. Their logic is, however, inconsistent, unnuanced and draws on sociobiologism. Environmentalist author Fred Pearce asserts that urbanization decreases child birth rates because extra children are a burden rather than an asset in teeming urban metropolises (Pearce 2014). In other words, urbanization is an efficient means to curb population growth (Pearce 2014). Moreover, Pearce’s take on fertility counters the NRM’s ‘neutralized’ social Darwinian approach to foreign aid:

Thanks to the increasing eradication of childhood diseases, for the first time in human history most children now get to grow up. Even in Africa. When that happens, five or six children are unnecessary to create the next generation: two or three will do. And that is where Africa’s fertility is most likely headed. Just like most other countries.

(Pearce 2014)

Hence, child survival can be understood as “the new green”, to quote the renown demographer and statistician Hans Rösling (Global population growth, box by box 2010). He argues that child survival is the only thing that will stop overpopulation. The crux of the NRM’s logic is race separatism, which in practice will be prioritized before any form of nuance based on for instance Rösling’s demographic evidence. Therefore, the NRM benefits from insisting on a simplified version of environmentalism.

The NRM also claims that immigration is an environmental hazard because it leads to overconsumption. This argumentation parallels Arne Næss’ ideas which were presented in section 3.4. The ideas that the NRM promote about overconsumption also exist in eco-philosophy, and shows how anti-humanist visions can aspire from, or be associated to, eco-

philosophy. Since eco-philosophy is often understood as free of inherent political value (Biehl and Staudenmaier 2011:42), ideas of immigration as detrimental to the environment passes as a more legitimate anti-immigration concern than the more explicit racist messages communicated by the NRM (for instance their use of biologicistic metaphors). The NRM draws on nature rhetoric, fascist and Nazi traditions and eco-philosophy to fashion their ideological biologism.

### 5.2.2 Sexism

The show hosts' claim to limit overconsumption by encouraging women to stay at home can be understood as using environmentalism to enforce traditional gender roles. This assertion unmasks sexism as an implicit theme of the environmental discussion. Moreover, gender regressive argumentation is latent in some schools of ecological philosophy (Plumwood 1993). Plumwood argues that conceptions of gender in for instance deep-ecology and social ecology are related to social Darwinism by promoting biological reductionism (Plumwood 1993). Drawing on views from these schools of eco-philosophy promotes gender conservatism and reactionary gender norms (Plumwood 1993). Similarly, The NRM argue to keep women at home to protect the environment, which will constrict gender roles. Hence, this is an example of how green politics carry the potential to stall the development of gender equality at women's expense.

Having one adult at home would however free up time for environmentally responsible activities, like mending garment instead of purchasing new. The NRM can be understood to relate questions of women's roles to questions of individualism versus collectivism and claim that the individual must submit to the greater good, which in this case is to save the environment. This problem is exemplified in the dystopian scenario from Margaret Atwood's novel *A Handmaid's Tale*,<sup>46</sup> where a Christian fundamentalist group instate an ecologically totalitarian rule as response to a fertility crisis caused by toxic environment (Atwood 1987). Here, fertile, sexually promiscuous women are submitted to their 'biological destinies' of childbearing to ensure the continuation of the human species. 'Respectable' women were complicit in designing the system but excluded from further governmental rule and relegated to the domestic sphere.

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<sup>46</sup> Atwood's book was further popularized by the HBO TV series adaption in 2016 and 2017.

The Atwood-reference serves as an extreme example to show how inclination for gender regression can take place in green politics. It is, however, not so farfetched when we revisit the Nazi woman ideal, which encourages women to keep to the domestic sphere and emphasizes fertility as women's most valued trait. Is the NRM as keen to enforce this gender ideal as their ideological forefathers? The hosts' general talk about recycling, reusing and living in the countryside reverberates with German Nazi propaganda that encouraged women to live rural and raise big families. Both Nazis and the NRM delegates the responsibility of ecological sustainability within the domestic sphere to women. Therefore, sexist gender ideology emerges as an implicit theme of a critique of overconsumption and urbanism.

### 5.2.3 Religious influences

The NRM does not use Christianity to support their arguments toward a traditionalist society, nor do they attempt to legitimize a biblically ordained natural hierarchy of races and genders. This non-religiosity contrasts with the contemporary far-right movements in the United States, where their claims to power are often supported by Christian rhetoric (Kimmel 2013:243). On the contrary, the NRM repeats the Nazi pseudo-religious tone of nature worship. The NRM's empathy for living beings, survivalist abilities and understanding of Man's submission to the laws of Nature reflects their perceived special relation to Nature. For Hitler, Nature's divine force manifested itself in the Aryan race in a pseudo-religious manner and legitimized Aryan supremacy. He understood the Aryan blood as being enriched by divine, mystical forces of the Universe. The NRM reiterates the idea that the Nordic man has a special relation to Nature based on his racial heritage.

The NRM also emphasizes biocentrism and the laws of Nature's inevitable survivalist moral, which connects them to Nazi ideology. During a speech in *Rasekrigerne*, Simon Lindberg referred to the "divinity within you" as Nords.<sup>47</sup> Hence, the NRM's focus on nature and environmentalism may be explained as a continuation of Nazism's romanticist influences and religious undertones. The NRM develops this ideological heritage to a wider extent than the skinheads of the 1990s and their fellow partisans in Europe and the USA. Such celestial argumentation imbues both Nazism and the NRM's rhetoric, but it is contradictive, as biocentrism implies that all beings have equal worth. How then, may a "monstrous slug" or a Jew have less worth than any other being? I will return to the discussion of this inconsistency

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<sup>47</sup> As mentioned, the NRM use the term Nords to refer to Nordic people.

in section 5.5.

## 5.3 The problem of femininity

In chapter 4 I demonstrated how women and femininity was problematized through discussions on female behavior, feminism, female empowerment, feminized men and gender neutrality. The hosts indicate that employees in social institutions are opposed to gender neutrality doctrines like using the ‘hen’-pronouns, but they follow orders without critical thinking. Furthermore, they blame this lack of critical thinking on the employees’ involvement in a feminine environment. The hosts implicitly characterize women and femininity as something negative by claiming that submissiveness, moral weakness and gossiping is feminine behavior, which in turn permeates the state institutions. Furthermore, femininity is implicitly connected to weakness, which in social Darwinism leads to plain eradication according to the laws of Nature. However, they also characterize softness and nurturing as positive female qualities when they discuss gender equality and child care. In this section, I examine how women and femininity implicate the NRM’s worldview and construction of identity.

### 5.3.1 Vaginal state

The Nordic Frontier hosts express contradictive ideas of power and powerlessness when discussing women. Like *The Hunger Games*-underdogs, the NRM lacks institutional state power but they hold moral power and authority. Mike seems to believe that the system is *too feminized* when he says that there are too many women in the state institutions shaping the government and its policies. This idea is to some degree reflected in Geert Hofstede’s controversial cultural dimensions theory, where he associates nation states with feminine or masculine values based on the country’s levels of economic success, environmental protection policies, gender equality, welfare and health care accessibility (Hofstede 2001). In opposition to militarized, industrial states like Germany and the USA, Scandinavian countries are regarded as feminine because of their inclusive welfare policies, social security and relative demilitarization (Hofstede 2001). Mike’s damnation of femininity permeating the institutions corresponds to conceptions of the *Vaginal state* or *Nanny state*, which are terms used to criticize what is understood as overprotecting, emasculating state systems (Dagbladet 2012, Kimmel 2018:141). This criticism comes from people, often men, that are critical to feminism and/or the western liberal-left, markedly also in Scandinavia (Dagbladet 2012, Kimmel

2018:141). Even though Hofstede's theory is criticized for eurocentrism and sexism (see for instance Gilligan 1982), the theory contributes to explain why the NRM conceives the Scandinavian institutions as feminized.

The hosts question the female empowerment discourse of the western liberal democracies. As noted, this criticism reverberates in the comments sections of the online *Raised without gender*-versions, where society's alleged elevation of femininity and devaluing of masculinity is discussed. The same criticism is represented in the podcast discussion of aid programs and overpopulation, where the hosts argue that white people are trapped in a 'moral paralysis' that forces them to take care of Africans. This claim reflects a critique of liberal democracies that is often presented by the radical right: The liberal democracy state representatives are viewed as naïve and 'too soft' to deal with real problems (Mudde 2007:146-7). This 'softness' is connected to femininity and weakness, which in turn is reflected in the NRM's conceptualization of the moral paralysis as effectuated by a weak leadership – a feminized state. I argue that the NRM presents themselves as able to resolve this perceived emasculating impotence with efficient, strong and utterly *masculinized* leadership.

### 5.3.2 Peripheralizing women

Even though women and femininity are explicitly mentioned in the podcast and manifesto, they play a peripheral role in the ideal societal organization of the NRM. When the hosts mention allied women as someone who will "help them" build a sustainable future, they construct the NRM as a male union. The NRM create the idea of Self as a masculine ideal, while the NRM women, for them, are secondary contractors. When Johan attempts to answer whether his wife feels suppressed or not, he presents himself as a valid representative for a woman's voice. By making a woman's voice in this matter superfluous, he contributes to construct the NRM as a masculine brotherhood. This dynamic resembles the German Freikorps soldiers' construction of women as absent figures in the periphery of a masculine reality. Peripheralizing women seem to be a recurring theme in Nazism and neo-Nazism alike.

The implicit construction of a (neo-)Nazi male union also corresponds with Kimmel's findings that women played a small role in the activities of the neo-Nazi groups (2007:207). In Fangen's fieldwork, the young male informants presented both positive and negative views on allied women. Some appreciated a defusing female influence on the aggressive skinhead scene, some respected the 'straight' girls as long as they followed a masculine normative code of discipline and toughness, while others regarded women as untrustworthy sidekicks who

disaggregated the male community (Fangen 2001:283). The reviewed empirical material does not reveal any moral code for female activists, but the podcast hosts seem to advocate a motherly, traditional feminine ideal to a higher degree than the informants of Kimmel and Fangen. Women's muted agency alludes to the ongoing backstage process of constructing the NRM as a male union.

### 5.3.3 Feminized men

Feminized men also represent threats to the social order. Homosexuality is not explicitly discussed in the podcasts, the subject is mostly brought up through discussions of trans-people and non-gendering. The manifesto heavily criticizes the "homosexual lobby" and present homosexuality, like feminism, as a tool to destroy the "so-called "hetero-norm"" (Our path 2016:39). Genderfluid people like Mapa and their friends are linked to degeneracy and dangerous social morals. When Andreas refers to Mapa's friend couple as the "feminized man" and the "butch woman", he exposes his views on blurred gender expressions: Men should not be feminine, and women should not be masculine. They blame metrosexuality and deviant gender expressions on "unnatural lifestyles", caused by urbanization and overpopulation, referring to the mice experiment where the males would rather groom themselves than find females. I understand the hosts to believe that men are responsible for upholding normative masculinity and for contributing to the binary gender relationship, which the hosts find the feminized man unable to do.

### 5.3.4 Gender equality?

This section demonstrates how the NRM conveys ambiguous views on gender equality. I have not found any women's organizations within the NRM, like there were under the NSDAP. There are, however, several female far-right activists who discuss women's position in online articles, and some call for tighter female communities within the male dominated far-right movements (Nordfront Editorial Office 2015). Nevertheless, the NRM expresses ambivalence towards what roles women should have. When the manifesto and the hosts shift between positive and negative attitudes towards women in the labor force, they draw on a modern Nordic 'cupcake feminism' discourse that emphasizes women's right to *choose* to stay home, raise children and tend to domestic activities (see Breen 2014). This modernization of traditional ideals has become more attractive to some Nordic women over the course of the last decade (Breen 2014) and can be appropriated to fit the modern neo-Nazi woman. As such, neo-Nazis draw on a discourse of elevating what they take to be feminine values and 'natural'

femininity, in contrast to feminist gender equality movements that seek to level women with men in terms of for instance social status and labor wages.

In the manifesto excerpt on gender and labor, the NRM emerges as progressive when they claim that the best suited person will be selected for any job regardless of gender. But rather than enforcing gender freedom in the labor market, I argue that this is a stab at the Nordic societies' quota systems.<sup>48</sup> They present their argument as if gender is not a basis of discrimination, but by eradicating gender as a factor in hiring processes, the NRM does not acknowledge structural gender discrimination, nor the need to secure equal representation of women and men in for instance board rooms. However contradictory, Mike urges his listeners to “tell women no” – he would not allow women to become firefighters. The NRM's version of gender equality seems to be one of complementarianism, where men and women have different, but complimentary roles in all aspects of life. This version upholds a gender ideology that correspond to both Nazi Germany and the NRM's official stance: Separate, but equal. Although this view promotes gender complementarity, I understand it to endorse an ideology where men and women should keep to their separate spheres; men to the public, and women to the domestic. Even though the NRM may come off as progressive by minimizing the role of gender in the labor market, I understand the underlying motive to be restriction of non-traditional gender expressions. The NRM conveys different meanings on the explicit level than on the implicit level.

The far-right activist Paulina Forslund rejects feminism but aims to elevate the status of traditional femininity to strengthen women's position in the Nordic countries (Sveriges Radio 2018). The same tendency is seen in Nazi propaganda that sought to elevate motherhood and 'natural femininity'. This serves two purposes for both the 1930s' Nazis and for the NRM: First, it attracts voters by channeling contemporary opinions on traditional ideals, like emphasizing women's right to *choose* to stay home, and is therefore strategically effective. Second, this 'elevation' of women's status enhances femininity and women's position – but only in a specific way that is tied to a patriarchal system of belief. This rhetoric camouflages potential misogyny by claiming to elevate femininity. I find that it remains unclear whether women should be equal to Man or be his subordinate. Questions of strategic progressionism versus ideological traditionalism seems to lie behind the NRM's ambiguous version of

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<sup>48</sup> Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland have implemented or gender quotas to promote equal representation of the genders in company board rooms (Huse, Seierstad and Seres 2015).

‘gender equality’.

## 5.4 Masculine self-construction

In this section, I discuss the creation of the NRM’s masculine Self by examining how processes of gendering become apparent. First, I discuss how othering and crisising contribute to the construction of the Self. Then I relate the background literature presented in chapter 3 to the empirical material from chapter 4 in order to discuss what factors that contribute to shape the masculinity of the NRM, and to analyze the constructed NRM Self.

### 5.4.1 Othering

At this point, we must identify the NRM’s significant Others and the concomitant processes that contribute to the masculine subject formation. There are three main groups of Others. First, what the NRM refers to as *Racial Strangers*, which consists of immigrants and Jews, in addition to all non-Aryan people. The second group consists of *Liberals*, represented by a ruling cultural Marxist elite and leftist environmentalists. *Women* constitute the third group and are represented by what I call ‘Degenerate women’ and ‘Natural women’. In this section, I examine how the NRM constructs the Others. This othering process constitutes the foundation of the NRM’s masculine Self-construction, which I further discuss in section 5.4.3.

#### 5.4.1.1 The Racial Stranger

The hosts discuss the Racial Strangers mostly as “foreign species”, and as a “mass” of immigrants “pouring” into the Nordic countries. The Racial Stranger’s ethnic identity is seldom mentioned explicitly in the podcasts, with the exception of Thai and Gypsy people in the berry business and Indians and Africans in the overpopulation-discussion. Nazism’s primary villain, the Jew, is still a threat to the NRM, but mostly referred to in conspiratorial terms; such as the state effectuating “a Talmudic weaponized technique” to exert a moral paralysis on the Nordic People. The Jew is also implicitly referred to through the NRM’s wish to ostracize “foreign religions”. As for contemporary extreme right movements, the Muslim represents a ‘new villain’, but is, like the Jew, seldom explicitly mentioned in the material used in this thesis. To turn individuals into ‘*masses*’ of people is a dehumanizing mechanism in itself because it removes individual human worth.

The hosts' discussion on overpopulation and moral paralysis exemplifies how they manage to neutralize racist speech and downplay ideas of discrimination. Overpopulation's link to racism becomes obvious when Mike argues to ignore hunger catastrophes in Africa, and let people die because the Earth does not need more human beings. They blame "the white man" for meddling in African people's lives and thereby seek to legitimize their argument by encouraging African independence from colonialism. Further, they compare Nordic "high investment parenting" to African "expansion by clan", and explain this contrast in birth numbers as a result of "different race priorities". This perceived *difference* between Nords and Africans comes from what is thought of as their different connection to Nature, and is not presented as a negative per se. Even though this difference is based in sociobiological ideas of race, it is presented as a difference without hierarchy, which is supposed to make the difference legitimate. Hence, the Racial Stranger is explicitly constructed in neutral terms in the NRM discussions.

The Racial Stranger's excessive population numbers leave the Racial Stranger poor self-control. Lacking self-control is a typical Othered quality for construction of modern masculinity (Mosse 1996). When Andreas says that the Indians' "sole entertainment is making new people", he refers to a stereotype of the Racial Stranger that holds that they have an uncontrollable sex drive, which makes the Other procreate without acknowledging the environmental consequences. The hosts infantilize and exoticize the Other, who, according to their presentation, mindlessly follows his corporeal instincts like an underdeveloped human. According to the hosts, the Racial Stranger has little or no respect for Nordic nature, which is apparent in what they refer to as the "berry picking menace's" treatment of the forests. The *Racial Stranger* is presented as a foreign species outside its 'habitat', that lacks the necessary means to understand the Nordic flora and fauna. To that end, the Racial Stranger lacks empathy for both animals and humans and may torture animals for fun. The hosts explicitly promote animal welfare when they call for a ban on ritual slaughter. This call, however, has two implicit consequences: It demonizes Muslims and Jews as lacking empathy for animals, *and* it obstructs them from practicing their lifestyles in the North.

The hosts link the lack of empathy to a tribal mentality. Tribalism has certain colonial and racist connotations, associating with barbarism of the Other (Said 1978). Here, the hosts use of the term 'tribal mentality' serves to separate Aryan people from non-Aryans, elevating the former to a cultivated sphere, leaving the Other to uncouth savagery. The idea that non-Aryans cannot feel empathy or control themselves is a part of a racist ideology because it

transforms *an* other to *the* Other (Dalal 2006). The Racial Stranger is Othered due to his link to tribalism.

The NRM's projection of the Racial Stranger is similar to the villain in Messerschmidt's presidential protector narrative of the villain-victim-hero (2016). Messerschmidt understands the USA's nationalist culture to harbor the idea that racial difference constitutes danger, which resonates with the NRM's construction of the Other. For far-right extremists, racial difference is dangerous because it threatens the perceived purity of the white race. Linking the Racial Stranger to racist stereotypes of a savage Other allots him – he is also portrayed as a man – *too much* masculinity. This hyper-masculinity and makes him dangerous. An overly active sex drive founded in a tribal mentality makes him uncontrollable, run by primal urges. However contradictory, he also has *too little* masculinity. As we have seen, the NRM commends the ability to connect with Nature and animals. Poor empathy, and a non-existing understanding of the Nordic nature construct the Racial Stranger as weak, helpless and cowardly. His hypo-masculinity would never allow him to “survive in the wild”. Because the Racial Stranger is constructed as both hyper- and hypo-masculine masculine, he is not considered to be ‘a real man’ by the NRM. This contradictory construction repeats itself in the construction of the Liberal.

#### 5.4.1.2 The Liberal

The Liberal, also referred to as the Leftist, is either part of the global conspiratorial *Hunger Games*-like elite, an anti-fascist activist, or is what we might call a ‘follower’; an everyday person subdued by consumerism.<sup>49</sup> These representations sometimes conflate, but the negative stereotype in the hosts' discussions is mostly drawn up around the example of Mapa and Mapa's gender-fluid friends, other left-leaning liberal environmentalists and people the hosts meet in everyday life.

The Liberal is heavily associated with degeneracy. Far from a healthy, natural lifestyle in the countryside, he<sup>50</sup> basks in hedonism and lets himself pacify by mass entertainment, momentary pleasures and materialism. He is a ‘fake environmentalist’ because he is dependent on consumerism and a keen supporter of mass-immigration. The Liberal is also Othered as sexually deviant and immoral. Urbanism leads him into perverse lifestyles

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<sup>49</sup> Neither the hosts nor NRM make any distinction between different types of liberals. I nonetheless employ such a divide as an effort to understand the NRM's othering processes.

<sup>50</sup> As this is part of masculine subject construction, I will refer to the *Liberal* as ‘he’.

including such things as homosexuality, metrosexuality, gender dysphoria and further moral decay. His lifestyle is unnatural because it removes focus from the NRM's purpose of life, which is to procreate and thereby continue the white race. The Liberal is concerned with individualism rather than collectivism and prioritizes his own pleasure over the survival of his people.

Like the Racial Stranger, the Liberal is characterized by poor self-control. First, because he succumbs to the hedonism of urban life. By giving in to external stimulations, he loses control of himself. Second, because he displays strong emotions like anger in discussions with the NRM, for instance when the hosts discuss race mixing with leftist environmentalists. He is unreasonable and illogical because he does not accept that humans are subject to the laws of Nature.

Furthermore, the Liberal is discredited as filthy, even if he has "taken a step in the right direction" by living rurally. Similarly, the skinheads of the 1990s referred to the anti-fascist activists as dirty and unkempt (Fangen 2001:79). According to Theweleit, German Freikorps soldiers antagonized communists through metaphors of dirt and liquidity, for instance as a "red flood" of "mire", "pulp" and "slime" (1987). This image of purity and purging repeats itself throughout the different Nazi generations. Not only must the land be purified of Racial Strangers according to NRM's ideology, but also of political opponents.

The Liberal displays too much masculinity when he yells at the NRM's representatives. Such irrationality and impulsivity construct him as a hyper-masculine aggressor without self-control. More often, however, the Liberal exerts too little masculinity. He is constructed in feminizing terms; he is too weak to cope with Nature and would certainly die in the wild. His inclination to hedonism and immorality makes him feeble and thus unable to resist pressure from the elites. Additionally, mixing gender expressions makes him effeminate and removes him from traditional masculine ideals of strong and hardy men. The Liberal does not fulfil the NRM's criteria of masculinity.

Finally, the Liberal lacks connection and understanding of Nature. The show hosts criticize the Liberal for anthropocentrism. The Liberal does not acknowledge that humans must submit to the same hierarchical laws of Nature as non-human beings. A lacking connection with nature results in the Liberals' inability to 'live wild' and act out true environmentalism. "They would be dead so fast", Johan snickers, implicitly establishing the Liberal as estranged from the natural sphere. The NRM others the Liberal as less of a man because he does not understand and connect with Nature like the NRM does.

#### 5.4.1.3 Women: Natural versus Degenerate

The NRM constructs a divide between what I call the Natural woman and the Degenerate woman. The Natural woman is the NRM man's ally who will help him build a sustainable future, raise his children, mend his shirt and accordingly fulfill the expected female roles. These roles refer to sociobiological ideas of natural activities for the women of the NRM. The Natural woman is most appreciated in the domestic sphere, tending to the household and the family, but is free to take on work as long as it suits her biology. In that respect, she embodies qualities similar to the ideal Nazi woman. She performs normative femininity in terms of adhering to traditional gender roles and is usually attractive in contrast to *The Hunger Games*-inspired hipsters.

The Natural woman does not have a face, voice or representation in the NRM's manifesto or podcast discussions – she is a muted, content figure lingering in the domestic sphere. Similar to the Freikorps soldiers' White Nurse, she is a disembodied figure with little agency in a male-defined movement. Vera Oredsson's performance in *Rasekrigerne* is an exception, as she demonstrates agency in embracing her activist role. There is, however, a saint-like glow to her, reflected in the NRM audience when she tells of Nazi Germany's glory days. Oredsson's presence as a symbolically laden persona may be understood as an echo of the maternal, virtuous White Nurse herself.

The Degenerate woman is the liberal feminist of the corrupt society who deviates from 'natural', traditional feminine norms of looks and behavior. She wittingly makes herself unattractive by mixing gender expressions, for example by shaving her head. Much like the Liberal, she ignores the purpose of life by pursuing a career and delaying or giving up having children. As feminism is a "mental syphilis", she is deluded and unhappy.

The divide between the Natural and the Degenerate woman can be understood as a version of the Madonna/Whore-complex. In this perspective, the NRM builds on the Nazi tendency of classifying women based on sexual availability. The young Norwegian skinheads of the 1990s categorized affiliated women as respectable 'straight' girls versus the sexually available 'mattresses', or 'whores' (Fangen 2001:284). The NRM's division lacks this explicit sexual tone but acknowledges the dangers of unmoored female sexuality. The Degenerate woman has qualities in common with the communist Red Woman that represented chaos, danger and overflowing sexuality. Moreover, the Degenerate woman is hazardous because she ignores her biological duties and prioritizes career and entertainment over having children. As such, she is a severe threat to the NRM's vision of a flourishing Nordic nation.

Feminized men like Mapa, homosexuals and metrosexuals are equally disturbing to the NRM. These men are both hypo- and hyper-masculine: vain, deviant, soft, and so preoccupied with sexuality that they cannot speak of anything else. The fear and antagonism directed towards feminized men reveals that the problem is femininity, rather than women. Therefore, I find that femininity is a threat to the NRM's masculinity.

## 5.4.2 Crising

This section discusses the crisis tendencies that the NRM draws on, and how these come together to shape a masculine Self. First, I discuss how the NRM implicitly draws on fascism's crisis tendencies, second; the environmental crisis, third; a crisis in the gender order and finally a crisis of identity.

### 5.4.2.1 The NRM's fascist crisis

"I don't know where I live anymore when I see stuff like this...", Johan says exasperated, summing up his feelings of the *Raised without gender*-documentary (00:16:08). Here, he reflects Griffin's Fascist man at the breaking point of history, where the established order is imperiled, and he must act before the world unravels (1995:3). The fascist's condemnation of his society as "a morally bankrupt state system" with "decadent culture" (Griffin 1995:3) coalesce with the NRM's characteristics of the Nordic liberal democracies, reflected in *The Hunger Games*-inspired antagonism towards the elites. The podcast hosts present themselves as virtuous, sober heroes living a life in connection with nature, obstructed by an immoral, metropolitan elite of vain villains. The ruling powers enable a downward spiral of morals, traditions and ethics, pushing hedonism, materialism and braindead entertainment onto the people to distract them from reality. Like the fascists, the NRM wants to return to the glorified pure national community that they believe once was.

Fascism's mythic core is the crisis of a nation. The NRM's crisis is situated in a Nordic community rather than in a nation state. The perceived societal problems – mass immigration, environmental challenges, the degenerate society, and the changing gender order – are components of a wider crisis, which signals the entrance of a new order. Its outcome will be catastrophic for the NRM, and constitutes the ultimate, looming crisis: Extinction of the Nordic people. Is the NRM's mythic core the perceived crisis of extinction of the white race? I will investigate this idea in section 5.4.3.

#### 5.4.2.2 The environmental crisis

The fear of extinction is legitimized by connecting it to a very real environmental crisis. As seen in chapter 3, environmentalism may be interpreted as a response to a fear of change and to high crisis tendencies of society. The environmental crisis becomes an existential crisis – not just for the white race, but for the human race. Because of the sentiments of this crisis, I hold that politics and ideologies that appropriate environmentalism can be used to legitimize control of land, women's work and bodies, immigration and resources. Environmentalism reaches all political specters (Biehl and Staudenmaier 2011:42). Drawing on Gramsci's understanding of common-sense ideologies (cited in Halberstam 2011:17), I argue that employing nature-rhetoric to promote one's agenda is useful because it appeals to common sense and is persuasive partly because it does not at first seem like ideology. As such, nature-rhetoric offers a universal, non-discussable Truth, so eternal and grand that it automatically ridicules those who debate it. Therefore, the appeal to nature-rhetoric masks and enforces (neo)-Nazi ideology.

Even though environmentalist themes serve to promote and mask discriminatory ideology, it is not a tactic used solely for strategic reasons by the NRM. The palpable consequences of climate change are probably as distressing to members of the NRM as to people in general. Since the crisis is driven by fear, the environmental crisis might be emphasized by the feeling that the modern-day society is drifting further away from Nature, misled by industrialization and technology. This critique is primarily reflected in the disapproval of the Liberal's debility and disconnectedness and the Racial Stranger's ignorance. For the NRM, the environmental crisis is (partly) to blame on the Others.

#### 5.4.2.3 Crisis in the gender order

Women are held accountable for several crisis tendencies of society. As seen in the discussion on overconsumption, women are responsible for defusing the environmental crisis by staying at home and performing household tasks. Overconsumption comes off as a genuine environmentalist concern of the NRM because its links to segregation and racism are less obvious. Moreover, the sexist implications of the overconsumption-discussion are well masked because measures to resolve the environmental crisis are taken to justify any means.

Traditional gender roles do not only protect the environment for the NRM, but also the white race. Because any deviance from traditional, heteronormative gender roles is deteriorative to society's health, the Degenerate woman is a threat to the white race as a whole. By

compromising traditional family life for work, she compromises her responsibilities of continuing the white race. Therefore, gender constitutes a major ideological point for the NRM: Traditional roles must be effectuated to make sure women prioritize having (white) children and keep a healthy family. Moreover, this is an example of how men's support for gender inequality rises in times of crises, even in more gender equal societies (Adamska et al. 2016). I hold that negative social change and loss of privileges experienced as crises of society which threatens traditional masculine identity. Hence, emasculation can be avoided, and manhood can be proven through a stronger assertion of traditional gender roles. The NRM's fear of change is counter measured by confirming masculine power.

A crisis in the gender order contributed to incite Nazism after the Weimar era of women's increased freedom. Are we seeing the same tendency today? The NRM and the fascist resurgence in Europe and the USA can be understood as a response to the new waves of feminism. The last decade's heightened public focus on gender fluidity is a likely reason for a perceived crisis of the gender order. Such a crisis might be fueled by aggrieved entitlement; the fear of losing benefits and privilege. This feeling of aggrieved entitlement is echoed in the show hosts' discussion of feminized state institutions. The feminized state is imbued with gender fluidity, feminism and quota systems, and is as such a crystallized image of historical male power slipping through the hands of Nordic men. The white man's wish to reclaim the state reflects a simultaneous effort to reclaim manhood (Kimmel 2013:264). Hence, a crisis in the gender order contributes to trigger fascist resurgence.

#### 5.4.2.4 Crisis of identity: Longing for belonging

The show hosts' discussion of individualism and the liberal escape from a collective identity point to crisis tendencies in the social order. "It's an escape from what society would expect you to be", says Mike, referring to individualism. This form of argumentation is reminiscent of the authoritarian and totalitarian structure of Nazism, where the nation's collectivity is prioritized over the individual, and the individual should conform to the state. What the NRM calls a "powerful government" (*Our Path* 2016:21) will prevent deterioration of a collective spirit.

The call for a stronger collective consciousness also reflects a nostalgic longing for an ancient Nordic past. Their idealization of the strong traditional man alludes to the veneration of a Viking legacy of strong warrior masculinity. Channeling Viking heritage contributes to the construction of the NRM as representatives of a new strong Nordic brotherhood in response to

a dissolving social order. The call for collectivity also highlights similarities between the NRM and the Others. The NRM's wish for tighter communities and collectivism over individualism may as such be read as a nostalgic envy of immigrants' (often) strong ethnic identity and kinship ties (Fangen 2001:122, 242). The NRM's critique of the perceived Other's tribalism does not only reveal the inherent antagonism in their ideology, but also the longing for a sense of belonging to a powerful ethnic community. The Other's collective tribalism is what makes him both appealing *and* repelling.

Individualism is by the NRM considered as a threat because it encourages Man to choose what is best for him, not his community. As such, individualism endangers the continuation of the white race. A crisis of identity and belonging is therefore not only a response to a changing social order, but also to a fear of extinction. This fear of change is the raw sentiment of Johan's utterance: He does not know where he lives anymore – what is the world coming to?

### 5.4.3 NRM's masculine Self

Who is the ideal NRM man? In other words, is it by now possible to outline a Nordic neo-Nazi hegemonic masculinity? Following the logics of exclusion, a starting point for masculine self-construction was established by examining the NRM man's significant Others. While the hosts explicitly reject the Other's qualities, they implicitly define what it means to be a real Man. While the process of othering defines criteria for acceptable masculinity, the gendering process mostly happens *outside* of speech, as an implicit and underlying process.

The NRM man's opponents are often described in feminizing and naturalizing terms: They are weak, passive and irrational, but also impulsive, uncontrollable, and uncivilized, which constructs the NRM man as strong, rational, moral, composed and civilized. Furthermore, the NRM man is calm and has self-control, while his opposites lack control of their tempers, minds, urges and bodies. Consequently, his willpower grounds him and connects him to the meaning of life; to live by Nature's laws and procreate.

Drawing on qualities like rationalism, strength and self-control, the NRM type is similar to the masculine ideals that shaped a nationalist Europe from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and onwards. Like fascism's New Man, the ideal NRM man is vigorous, self-disciplined and almost clairvoyant, because he sees through the corrupt elites and apprehend the wide crisis tendencies of his society. He perceives what "the people" do not, and thereby acknowledges his decisive

position in a critical time. This clairvoyance gives the NRM man the moral authority to take control, to lead the people and to protect them from degeneracy.

The NRM reflects fascism's deep nationalism that was shaped by the masculinized, authoritarian ideology that promoted the nation state. The epitome of manhood seems to be the brave soldier, which activist Torniainen reflects when he is "ready to die" for the cause. But the NRM man must also make sure to continue his white legacy. This can be read as a repetition of the traditional Nazi ideal which emphasized a split between the Patriarch and the Soldier mentioned in chapter 3. Just like the Nazis had to balance the masculine tasks of keeping a family and the Freikorps soldier lifestyle, protecting the Aryan North and starting a family seems to be the two most important tasks for the NRM man.

#### 5.4.3.1 Male union

Fascism's and Nazism's masculinized qualities contribute to explain how the NRM emerges as a male union. True to tradition, the Man symbolizes the movement, and vice versa: Just like the New Man shaped fascism, the masculine Self shapes the NRM as a movement. Hence, the masculine Self is not only manifested in a positive stereotype through exclusion of the negative Other, but also through the movement itself.

As women are largely peripheralized, the Nordic *brotherhood* is the target audience of the NRM. Furthermore, by peripheralizing and othering women as helpers and muted domestic figures, the movement implicitly establishes itself as a male union. The NRM's appeal is first and foremost directed towards the Nordic *men*. This is also apparent when examining the gendering processes. I found that the gendering of women is *explicit*, but *narrow*, while the gendering of men is *implicit* and *wide*. By this, I mean that the gendering of women are more conspicuous than the gendering of men. The NRM's underlying agenda is to construct themselves as men, to prove manhood and reclaim masculine authority in the Nordic countries. As such, I find that homosocial tendencies of Nazism and neo-Nazism repeats itself in the NRM.

I further claim that reclaiming masculine authority, reinstating traditional gender roles and peripheralizing women is symptomatic of the hegemonic masculine effort to reconstitute patriarchal power to fit the contemporary social conditions. As explained in chapter 3, Kimmel holds that new arenas for proving manhood emerges when traditional roles are challenged (Kimmel 2018:46). Environmentalist concerns may be understood as new social conditions that the hegemonic masculinity can operate within, and therefore neo-Nazi

environmentalism emerges as a new arena for proving manhood and asserting hegemonic masculinity.

Moreover, the construction of a *white* male union is effectuated by the workings of hegemonic masculinity. The racism of the NRM is based on the divide between ethnic groups that is mainly constituted by men. Since according to them Aryans represents the ‘biologically best men’, they should rule. Hence, (neo-)Nazism and hegemonic masculinity constitute one another. This can be seen from the fact that for the most part (neo-)Nazi brotherhood are not only male, but significantly also white. I argue that the NRM emerges as a white, male union by drawing on structures of fascism and Nazism.

#### 5.4.3.2 Wild nature, wild man

In Nazism, the Aryan is compared to a blood-thirsty predator. This violent metaphor raises the question of what conceptualization of nature the NRM associates itself with. Researchers Forchter and Tominc (2017) analyzes the aforementioned neo-Nazi cooking duo Balaclava Küche’s veganism as a contradictory practice based on Klaus Eder’s conceptualization of vegetarian culture as peaceful and non-violent. Neo-Nazi environmentalist practice aligns itself with a wild carnivorous sociobiological understanding of Nature, rather than a peaceful, nurturing and motherly understanding of Nature (Forchter and Tominc 2017:436). On a symbolic level, I find that the NRM must appropriate a vegetarian culture so it loses its feminine connotations. This hypermasculine ‘vegetarian nature-culture’ is forged through Nazism’s sociobiological links to a masculinized Nature. However, both Balaclava Küche’s and the NRM’s practice seems contradictory because the practices draw on typical vegetarian, nature-culture practices associated with femininity, while the underlying structure is composed by a carnivorous, masculinized logic.

The masculine NRM Self relies on the cultural conception of a forceful nature of competition. I argue that this nature serves as a backdrop for the Self’s exertion of masculine deeds and that it is a crucial measuring tool for the correct amount of masculinity. Nature is used to both denigrate the Other and celebrate the Self. The Other is often described in naturalizing terms, but the Self also uses nature to build character. Moreover, the othering of the Liberal as unable to ‘live wild’ in nature or effectuate true environmentalism constructs nature as a rough sphere where the strongest survive. Here, gender emerges as an underlying symbolism where nature’s qualities transfers to the NRM man. His ability to live in harmony with nature constructs him as tough, strong, hardy and independent.

#### 5.4.3.3 Protective hegemonic masculinity

The NRM's protector role can be understood through Messerschmidt's villain-victim-hero-narrative. The NRM man performs a heroic form of hegemonic masculinity that is legitimized by claiming to protect the nation and the people not only from hyper-masculine villains, but from crises in the moral order, gender order, ecological sphere and from extinction. The NRM's protective hegemonic masculinity is supported by the conflicting representation as Nice guys versus the image we may call the Thug. This contradictory image constructs the NRM as capable of being tough *and* tender, like the US' presidents, at the same time. The NRM man's toughness lies in his resolution, and an undaunted will to defend his people and his community from external threats. When Forwald says that the NRM wants to reach out to people with a "positive message", and work for a "good cause", he creates an image of the nice neo-Nazi guy who simply wishes the best for his community. His 'tenderness', or niceness, is mirrored in his connection to Nature and his natural empathy for animals and wish to protect them from pain and constructs the NRM man as warm and conscientious. I find that these simultaneous images support the protective hegemonic masculinity because it legitimizes hard-hitting messages, like wanting to isolate the Nordic region, while at the same time neutralizing this conduct by caring for the natural sphere. Hence, exerting a protective hegemonic masculinity that draws on a tough versus tender-approach legitimizes the NRM man's claim to power in the Nordic region.

I however posit that the NRM's claim to empathy is more about procuring authority by establishing themselves as righteous guardians of morals than animal welfare itself. By appropriating empathy, gender emerges as an invisible field where reclaiming masculine authority is the underlying agenda. Establishing the NRM man as a protector constitutes him as a capable Man, and while gender is not explicitly addressed, I found that gendered connotations runs as an undercurrent throughout these discussions. This is an example of a wide and implicit gendering process, where masculinity is present, but mentioned.

The protective hegemonic masculinity and the crises interact in a circular relationship, enabling each other. The protective hegemonic masculinity *produces* crisis tendencies by contributing to construct enemy images of the Others as dangerous. In turn, the crises destabilize the social order, which triggers a protective hegemonic masculinity. The environmental crisis generates a protective hegemonic masculinity because the Nordic man sees himself as a guardian of 'his' flora and fauna. Appealing to fear legitimates its

hegemony, and racial difference is the prime signifier of danger. The Racial Stranger neatly fits the role as a hyper-masculine menacing villain mobilizing the NRM's heroic protection.

However, *the State* is also cast as a villain. The State represents a third party that mediates between the Others and the NRM. While immigrants are “pouring in”, corrupting the Nordic habitat and culture, the State simply stands by and does nothing. The NRM conceptualizes the State as feminine and weak, which logically would construct it as an easy match for the masculine, strong Self. However, the State is deeply emasculating because it has the ultimate governing power to which the NRM must submit. Power must be regained *from* the State. Hence, the NRM proves their manhood by asserting themselves as strong, natural men in control, able to defend the Nordic people and defy the State. The shields and helmets that the NRM use in street rallies are a direct demonstration of power and an explicit challenge to governmental military monopoly (Skybakmoen 2018). Furthermore, they seek to destabilize democratic institutions like the media and academia by casting the State as untrustworthy (Opheim 2018). The NRM reclaim their manhood through protective hegemonic masculinity – they are the only ones who can truly defend the North, and they will do this by reclaiming the State.

Who, or what, is the victim in the NRM's narrative? As noted, my expectation that women were victimized and required protection from the NRM men in general proved wrong. Yet, the characterization of feminism as a mental illness which makes women unhappy reflects a *fatherly* protective hegemonic masculinity: While confirming male power, it also aims to save women from despair. Hence, the NRM sees itself as protecting women by guiding them towards the ‘natural’ life of traditional gender roles. Othering of women and femininity is nevertheless used to buttress a protective hegemonic masculinity. Feminism proposes a social change that is deeply threatening and establishes crisis tendencies in the traditional order. Rather than representing the victim, women and femininity symbolizes a threat.

Besides the potential victim role of women, there are three primary victim positions: ‘The People’, ‘The White Race’ and ‘The White Man’. First, ‘the People’ are victimized in the NRM's worldview, as they also are for the USA's presidents. To the NRM, the People neither grasp what the clairvoyant NRM man sees, nor have the required strength to stand up for themselves. Nevertheless, I found that this conception is built on a contradictory gendered understanding. The People are *masculinized* as an invincible opposition to the snooty political elites, and as strong when they see through ‘gender fluidity-propaganda’ and dislike videos on

YouTube. At the same time, they are *feminized* as vulnerable prey to villainous Racial Strangers, globalist elites and feminist influences, and as weak when they fail to confront these powers. The People partly fill the victim role for the NRM's protective hegemonic masculine Self.

Second, the White Race is a victimized object for the NRM. The Nordic people functions as a proxy for 'the White Race', connecting the NRM to transnational white supremacist efforts to preserve white-ness. The NRM's solutions to problems of immigration, decadence and feminism are aiming towards the same goal; to protect the white race. Following Bacchi, the proposed solutions reveal the problems that are implied (2012). By examining contemporary crisis tendencies and the NRM's suggested solutions to these, the most pressing problem seems to be the extinction of white people. Their ideology and politics are structured around this crux, constructing the NRM's mythic core as the crisis of extinction. By claiming that the Nordic People face extinction, the White Race fills the role of a victim to the NRM.

Third, the White Man is a victim. He feels marginalized and emasculated by a multicultural, feminizing, politically correct society which challenges traditional white, male hegemony. Not only whiteness, but also masculinity, is threatened. The feeling of aggrieved entitlement equals victimhood, because the White Man has lost benefits and privilege to the Others. Significantly, the NRM, like other white supremacist movements, masculinizes the commonly 'feminine' trope of victimhood, encouraging protection of threatened manhood (Kimmel 2013:40). Additionally, the White Man is victim to the State. To the NRM, the State does not represent the White Man's interests, it is rather aiming to eradicate him all together. This subverting of the *truth* that the NRM man knows so well, coupled with the power imbalance between government and citizen casts the White Man as a victim to the treacherous State.

The German Freikorps soldiers combated the degenerate flood of pollution with erecting towering buildings, mountains, troops and stalwart men (Theweleit 1987:402). The flood contained everything that would dissolve a man, and the best deterrent was an unflinching insistence on powerful masculine assertion (Theweleit 1987:402). The NRM's anxiety of societal decay is also formulated in gendered terms, albeit more implicitly. A powerful militarization of the Nordic countries would put an end to the weak vaginal state system. In this sense, the Nordic society must be protected by femininity itself, which by its unmoored and feeble qualities are not suited for governing. This militarization can be understood as a masculine cleansing effort aiming to expunge feminine, liberal and multicultural influence

similar to the Freikorps' soldiers defense against pollution. The logic I understand NRM to draw on here is that traditional masculine rearmament salvages society.

Paralleling fascism's masculine hysteria, which was introduced by Holter (2002) in chapter 3, the NRM's extreme antagonization of the state as traitors of the people can be understood as what I call 'treason hysteria'. Treason hysteria refers to the feeling of political betrayal that the NRM understands the state to perform by betraying the Nordic community and offering its loyalties to foreign powers. To counter the state's negligence, the NRM takes on the mission to protect the Nordic people. For the mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik, the feeling of treason hysteria legitimized his brutal attack on the multicultural society's governing seat (Buuren 2013). Here, the Racial Stranger takes the form of a scapegoat, while the liberal advocate of multiculturalism is the *real* enemy because the Liberal commits treason against the Nordic people. While racism mobilized the German masses in the 1930s, anti-Semitism – especially directed towards Muslims in the contemporary historical context – may incite serious public antagonism towards the state. The NRM promotes capital punishment for “particularly ruthless and severe crimes” but does not specify if treason qualifies as such (Our Path 2016:49). That the idea of treachery is so prevalent in the NRM's rhetoric should be taken as a serious token of warning against the liberal democracy, because we have seen, through for instance Breivik's mass murder, how treason hysteria legitimizes violent means for the extreme right.

I argue that by drawing on treason hysteria and challenging democratic institutions, the NRM seeks to destabilize the Nordic liberal democracies. As noted however, the NRM aims to work within political structures to gain influence and grow as a movement (Rasekrigerne 2017). The philosopher Karl Popper's paradox of tolerance explains why intolerance cannot be tolerated in a democracy: “If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.” (Popper 1945:225). Popper's paradox highlights that the NRM's steady movement towards parliamentary institutions should be taken as a serious threat to the Nordic democracies. Tolerating the intolerant jeopardizes democracy, exemplified by how the NSDAP rose to power in 1930s' Germany. The Nazis slowly managed to attract supporters through political maneuvering. The NRM's positioning as a victim to a treacherous state contributes to threaten the state's legitimacy, as well as to support the NRM's protector role by proposing the NRM as the righteous Nordic leaders.

In sum, I argue that the NRM legitimizes a contemporary protective hegemonic masculinity by providing solutions to crisis tendencies of society and *stabilizing* white patriarchal power by drawing on sociobiology, nature rhetoric, traditional values and treason hysteria. It can also be said to *reconstitute* patriarchal power by drawing on a seemingly progressive environmentalist rhetoric.

#### 5.4.3.4 The Twofaced Self

We have seen how the Others have either too much, or too little masculinity. The NRM man, then, has the just right amount of masculinity. What does ‘the right amount’ entail? His predecessors appeared as hyper-masculine. The skinheads displayed a thuggish and aggressive appearance to intimidate opponents, while the Nazi image of the predatory Aryan conveyed violence, danger and dominance. Simultaneously, the NSDAP toned down their aggressive rhetoric to appeal to ‘ordinary’ people. While letting the harassment of the SA continue, the NSDAP publicly denied any violent affiliation. Likewise, the leaders of the NRM appear as nice guys all the while supporting activist attacks on opponents. Is violent behavior legitimated in the eyes of the NRM because the (neo)-Nazi man is *in control* of his hypermasculinity? If so, it serves to emphasize his resilience and ‘natural’ legitimacy to power. Significantly, I find that the hyper-masculine tendencies that the NRM use to problematize the masculinity of the Other pass as the *just the right* amount for the NRM man. Moreover, this simultaneous dynamic is made possible by what I call the Twofaced Self. The reviewed material points towards two main positions that are performed by the NRM man: The Nice Guy and the Thug, both constructed through problematized Others and threatening crises. However, this self-representation is both contradictory and complex. The NRM man is simultaneously a victim to the Nanny state and the Others, *and* a hero: He resists the tyrannical elites by standing up for himself; a stout savior and protector of the Nordic region. Like *The Hunger Games*-underdogs, the NRM are strong and morally righteous because they represent ‘the real people’, despite being oppressed by the elites. The complexities of these positions may be understood through Goffman’s interactive dramatization of frontstage and backstage performance (1992). The NRM’s *frontstage* persona is a positive type of strong, efficient leadership, an empathic ‘normal’, nice guy. His *backstage* performance reflects the Thug, a survivalist aggressor who approves of violence. This backstage performance is what I understand to be the hidden presentation of the Self that he wishes to reserve for the affiliated insiders.

However, the Self does not have to take on either one of these roles. The NRM man's strength lies in his ability to adapt his expression according to his opponent. Hence, which expression he presents depends on the expected public evaluation. The concepts of 'roles' and 'types' presuppose that the actor always adheres to the performance in question. While good for generalizing and categorizing behavior, these concepts do not necessarily account for the interaction between the different performances. The dialectics of symbolic interactionism facilitates the possibility of interchanging seamlessly between several expressions without the humiliation that follows of exposing oneself outside the role. Therefore, the symbolic universe constructed by the NRM allows the Self to move seamlessly between positions in the same performance.

The NRM's fluctuation between images as Nice guys versus violent Thugs becomes clearer when understood as a continuum of their ideological predecessors' twofaced tendencies. In chapter 3 I discussed how 'cleaning up' the Nazi image and adapting to different audiences was a success factor for the NSDAP. The twofaced quality is a repetition of Nazism's inconsistencies. As for the Nazis, contradictions and inconsistencies serves as a source of strength for the NRM because changeability lets the NRM's ideology represent a wide range of ideas and interest. The NRM forge a frontstage appearance that presents them as guardians of traditional morals, order and safety, which in turn masks what happens backstage. This fluid presentation differs from Goffman's frontstage/backstage model. In the NRM (as well as the Nazi) reality, I find that expressions which appear as contradictive are imparted without shame. In other words, the lines between frontstage and backstage behavior are blurred. Rather than provoking social sanctions and humiliation, a fallacious performance is a slick trick that allows the NRM Self to communicate with different audiences simultaneously.

The NRM's twofaced presentation can be puzzling to their audience because they play two parts at the same time. This ambiguity works in the NRM man's favor, and the question of gender equality serves as an example. The NRM expresses equivocal opinions on whether women should be permitted to work or not. While the manifesto reads that the most qualified person should get the job regardless of gender, the hosts lean towards traditional gender roles. This is a symptom of a twofaced performance. The NRM signals different meanings to entice both the traditionalist and the progressionist by drawing on the discourse of women's right to *choose*. This twofaced ambiguity is also conveyed through environmentalism because it serves to uphold a Nice guy-image on the frontstage. The far-right affiliate will recognize the implicit racism, while the environmentalist will approve of the green politics.

The hosts' conversation on overpopulation offers another example of the twofaced dynamic. In section 5.4.1.1 I discussed how the NRM links their critique of overpopulation to colonialism. The show hosts argued that the west must stop meddling with regions like Africa so that people there can control their own lives. On the surface, this argument is designed to be accessible to everyone, even to people concerned with social justice, because it rejects white colonialism. The implicit meaning of their argument is however that the Nordic countries should refuse to aid poverty or hunger-stricken people in other parts of the world. While the explicit meaning may be mistaken for a progressive, anti-colonial idea, the implicit meaning is related to separatism, isolation and racism. This example shows how the twofaced dynamic contributes to disguise far-right extremism.

Furthermore, the twofaced position echoes the fascist New Man; perhaps even the supreme Übermensch himself as described in chapter 3. Mastering the art of communicating with different audiences at the same time makes the Self untouchable. Not only this maneuvering potential, but also fulfilling the masculine criteria legitimizes his dominance. His ability to solve the crises constructs him as the only one capable of salvaging the North, and the exact amount of masculinity makes him right for the job. As such, the NRM reflects fascism's tradition of exalting the strong leader as well as Nazism's belief in the transcendent Führer, or the Übermensch.

The twofaced Self is part of a wider set of efforts to adapt to diverse audiences. I understand the NRM to mask and spread racist messages through several different means of communication, exemplified by the conflicting Nice guy- and Thug-image. Far-right extremism that skirts around society's 'extremism radar' is more dangerous than the explicit version because its measures to normalize discrimination are disguised (Aftenposten 2018, Vieten and Poynting 2016:535-6). The NRM's implicit 'expansion' of racist messages is made possible because of the absorbing quality of Nazi ideology. A *multifaced* Self would be a more accurate description of how the extreme right appropriates several ways of maneuvering publicly. However, the reviewed material points to two main faces. This twofaced performance – the ability to switch between an ordinary Nice guy and an aggressive, uncompromising Thug – is what I understand to constitute the contemporary Nordic neo-Nazi hegemonic masculinity.

## 5.5 Neo-Nazi environmentalism: Implications

In the introduction, I asked what neo-Nazi environmentalism is, and how it is gendered. The last part of this chapter will address my findings regarding the NRM's environmentalism. I identify four meanings worth discussing and finally address the six ways neo-Nazi environmentalism is gendered. I find that environmentalism is a concern for Neo-Nazis only in so far as it supports and popularizes the backstage mission of the NRM.

First, neo-Nazi environmentalism may be understood as a strategic undertaking of popular issues in a crisis-struck time to attract young people and motivate the masses. This complies with efforts to mainstream extreme messages and ideologies seen both in the Germany of the 1930s and in today's far-right co-optation of leftist agendas. If we examine this performance through symbolic interactionism, the NRM *enters* the Other's environmentalist role by employing 'ordinary' and respectable symbols like animal welfare and outdoorsy clothing to skirt around the public extremism-radar.

Nevertheless, understanding the New Right as generally hijacking leftist agenda is too simple. Angela Nagle argues that the rise of the New Right is no evidence of political conservatism's return, nor conservatism's typical condemnation of 1960's anti-moral transgression (2017:39). The rise of the New Right rather reflects the hegemony of the principle free counterculture's transgression and irreverence for its own sake (Nagle 2017:67). Following Nagle's argument, I find that it is not the leftist agenda or everyday clothing per se that has become the style of the New Right, it is the *transgressive counterculture* that has been associated with the left. However, environmentalism as a strategic political practice contributes to normalize Nazi ideology and mask the implications of discrimination that are underlying.

Additionally, I understand the NRM as first and foremost fighting for the white race: They are Race Warriors. White supremacy is a core theme of Nazism, and as we have seen, its twofaced quality of absorbing countercultures enables the masking of racism. If the NRM is anything like their forefathers, the Race War triumphs all regards, including environmentalism. In chapter 3, I presented the inconsistencies in the Nazi practice – on the one hand, the Nazis venerated nature and implemented environmental conservation acts, while they on the other hand burned down vast areas of natural resources to debilitate their opponents. Similarly, with the NRM, I see the possibility of what they say and what they stand for being different things. For instance, the NRM's representation of overpopulation is

neatly tailored to fit the Nazi narrative of separatism and sociobiology, while they would dismiss alternative views as a manifestation of what the hosts call moral paralysis. As such, I find that environmentalism works as a strategic ploy to diverge attention away from what the NRM thinks and wants backstage.

Second, neo-Nazi environmentalism is a perpetuation of Nazi Nature-ideology. The NRM's environmentalism harks back to a heritage of Völkisch nature mysticism and the utopian quest for a pure rural community. Understanding neo-Nazi environmentalism as an expression of a fundamental component of Nazism may help explain why people are drawn to this ideology. The *positive appeal* of environmentalism, community and purity can contribute to Nazism's resurgence today (Frøland 2017). Utopian ideas of a prosperous countryside, clean nature and national virtue may envelope Nazism in a shear of glory to some, representing an ideology aiming to unite and save the people and the family.

The Nazi ideological heritage of biologism also shapes neo-Nazi environmentalism. The NRM's tendency to align humans with the non-human sphere as slugs or as unable to feel empathy is part of a dehumanizing process that establishes some as more human than others. In that sense, Aryan supremacy legitimizes itself based on claiming to *be more human* than its counterpart. That this 'ultra-humanity', or 'Übermensch-ness' is associated with Nature's divinity is just another expression of Nazism's contradictions. If Nazism followed through on its biocentric views, then all beings would have the same inherent value, and no humans would be more human than others. Recognizing this inconsistency exemplifies how acknowledging the significance of Nazi nature-ideology facilitates a broader understanding of neo-Nazism. Furthermore, acknowledging neo-Nazism's inherent relation to Nazi nature-ideology questions Fangen's claim that neo-Nazism is an ad-hoc movement concentrating on anti-immigration. By seeing the NRM's 'green neo-Nazism' as a continuation of their predecessors' Nature ideology, I argue that the NRM's environmentalism can be understood as part of a holistic worldview.

Third, (neo-)Nazi environmentalism is an expression of anti-cosmopolitanism – an idealization of the purged rural country side. As seen in chapter 3, the Nazis saw a genuine German völk spirit as intertwined with the rural countryside. Furthermore, the NRM anchor themselves as inheritors of the original national virtue, legitimized by an inherent connection to nature, but also by claiming to speak for the 'real people' living outside the degenerate metropolises. Since the rural land is understood as the repository of national virtue,

antagonizing urbanism constructs the NRM as true representatives of 'The People'. The opposition between the elites and the 'real people' illustrates the class aspect of the NRM's rhetoric. Mixing socialism's anti-elitism with race politics makes for an explosive concoction which is fortified by an anti-cosmopolitan environmentalism.

Fourth, environmentalism emerges as an expression of aggrieved entitlement. It represents an effort to preserve the familiar world from disruption and to protect privileges and benefits in a globe that is growing smaller and more polluted by the minute. Western liberal democracies and liberal capitalism have historically depended on an unsustainable exploitation of the Earth's resources and thereby facilitated a consumptive and lavish lifestyle (Shearman 2007). Over the following years, the pressure on eco-systems and natural resources is likely to increase in an intensified global environmental crisis. Not only does the burden of change fall on big actors like multinational companies, but also on regular consumers. The only way out of the environmental crisis seems to be a drastic restructuring of western lifestyles, a weaning off of the digitalized goods, services, consumption, housing and entertainment that an increasing portion of the world's population has gotten used to (Beeson 2010, Shearman 2007). Furthermore, political scientist Mark Beeson suggests that "the prospects for an authoritarian response become more likely as the material base of existence becomes less capable of sustaining life, let alone 'the good life' upon which the legitimacy of democratic regimes hinges" (2010:283). Chapter 3 showed how Frank Furedi understood environmentalism to be an expression of fear of change (Against Nature 1997). Drawing on Furedi and Beeson, I see how environmentalism may be a response to the fear of losing 'the good life'. This fear can in turn make people susceptible to far-right sentiments because they want to protect what is experienced as 'theirs', for instance land, resources and privileges. In this sense, neo-Nazi environmentalism can be explained as an expression of the fear of a changing world where white, male privileges are threatened.

Lastly, I address on the normalizing aspect of neo-Nazi environmentalism. I find it misleading to understand strategic concerns as the 'real' motivation behind the NRM's neo-Nazi environmentalism, because, as this section has shown, neo-Nazi environmentalism is complex and has several different meanings apart from being a tactic. I however argue that neo-Nazi environmentalism has the *effect* of normalizing neo-Nazism. This goes regardless of whether neo-Nazi environmentalism is consciously used as a political strategy for the NRM or not. The progressive and feminine associations that environmentalism carry with it contribute to normalize the NRM as a legitimate political organization and defuse the Nazi ideology.

### 5.5.1 Gendered neo-Nazi environmentalism

The NRM's masculine identity is communicated through their environmentalist practices. The gendering of these practices is an implicit process which is part of neo-Nazi environmentalism's underlying structure. In the following, I summarize the six ways in which I understand neo-Nazi environmentalism to relate to gender.

First, neo-Nazi environmentalism may be understood as gendered in the sense that it reflects a masculine aggrieved entitlement. Fear of change and threatened white male control in the North mobilizes environmental efforts to reclaim what is 'theirs' by heritage and historical right.

Second, the NRM's environmentalism disassociates with a leftist 'feminine' environmentalism by aligning nature with masculine qualities like rationale, strength, courage and protection, and with a sociobiological, predacious culture. Furthermore, the NRM masculinizes empathy to connect themselves with nature and animals, and to build a masculine fatherly character, refuting the conception that empathy is a feminine trait.

Third, this masculinizing process is informed by othering and crisising, which are both constitutional themes of a hegemonic masculinity. The NRM's protective hegemonic masculinity fortifies itself through nature-rhetoric and by drawing on sociobiology and environmentalism.

Fourth, promoting gender regression through environmentalist themes confirms male power. Environmentalism masks sexism, partly because the potential for reactionary gender relations is already there, and partly because Nature presents itself as irrefutable Truth. Camouflaging gender regressive politics as a means to save the planet contributes to downplay chauvinism because environmentalism can be understood as important enough to trump all other regards.

Fifth, neo-Nazi environmentalism emerges as a *new arena* for proving manhood in a time where traditional gender roles are challenged. Connecting masculinity to different types of environmental and natural practices contributes to create an original outlet for masculine assertion. While the Nazis also drew on nature to assert masculine hegemony, the contemporary ecological challenges and the post Second World War development of environmental philosophy has created new language and practices for natural preservation, and by that, a new possible arena for masculine assertion.

Finally, the NRM anchors themselves as *Men of the rural country*. The countryside's authenticity reflects onto them like fascism and the New Man represented each other. As the rural countryside holds the national virtue, so do they. By using nature and environmentalist rhetoric for subject-formation, neo-Nazi environmentalism becomes a masculine response to social and ecological change.

## 5.6 Chapter synopsis

From analyzing the NRM's backstage concerns, I found that the common thread of the presented themes is how the NRM seeks reclaim power *as men*. Through posing as nice guys and aiming to normalize neo-Nazism, they claim legitimacy to power in the Nordic countries. By drawing on nature ideology and environmentalist rhetoric, they reassert neo-Nazi environmentalism as a masculine practice. The NRM also problematize femininity as a threat to masculinity, and this threat must be defused by reasserting traditional gender roles. Through othering and crisising, the NRM constructs a masculine Self which seamlessly adapts its performance to different audiences at the same time.

The backstage mission of the NRM is first and foremost related to questions of race and masculine assertion. Environmentalism appears as a frontstage concern in the sense that it is only promoted and legitimized if it supports and popularizes the backstage mission of the NRM. Hence, environmentalism plays a supporting role of the NRM as a movement. Earlier, I argued that nature-ideology is a foundational piece of Nazi ideology. I further claim that neo-Nazi environmentalism is an *expression* of that heritage which serves to support the NRM's development of strategy, ideology and construction of identity.

## 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to examine the intersection of gender, far-right extremism and environmentalism. More specifically, I questioned how gender affects the NRM's construction of identity, what meanings neo-Nazi environmentalism were given, how neo-Nazi environmentalism relates to masculinity, and finally how the NRM relates to their fascist and Nazi heritage. I found that masculinity has an underlying, but important significance as an organizing principle for the NRM's right-wing resistance. The gendering of women and femininity is however more conspicuous than that of men and masculinity. While the NRM overtly gender women by linking femininity to certain perceived feminine behaviors and qualities, strong notions of masculinity lie beneath the construction of the NRM, which results in the overly male presence in the movement and a peripheralization of women. Masculinity as an idea or concept is seldom directly addressed in the NRM discourse, but lingers allusively right below the surface, exemplified by the links between hegemonic masculinity and neo-Nazism, where the NRM constitutes itself as a white, male brotherhood through excluding Others. Masculinity as an underlying theme is also visible through the rhetoric of aggrieved entitlement – the NRM shall reclaim power as *real Men* of the country. As such, I have found that the NRM masculinizes environmentalism and that neo-Nazi environmentalism serves as a new arena for proving manhood.

My finding of masculinity as a driving force of the NRM is complicated by the movement's prominent focus on ideology. While the aggressive skinhead image of the 1990s made hyper-masculinity an explicit analytic eye-catcher, the NRM's keen interest in their version of Nazi ideology inspires the conclusion that building a masculine identity is less important today than before. The ideological focus might be due to the higher average age of the NRM member. As much earlier research was undertaken among youths, connection and community were more important recruitment factors than ideology. Awareness of the troubled background of neo-Nazi youths upheld the notion that neo-Nazis were damaged people looking for a sense of belonging. While the youngsters forged a tough frontstage, the backstage almost univocally revealed how frustrated and lonely they were. Adolescents struggling to carve out their place in the world are easier to both get in and out of extremist movements, because ideology is seldom the crux. In contrast to Kimmel's young informant, a Nordic Frontier show host would never say "Dunno, I'm white" when asked what it means to be Swedish. I believe that

the NRM man, as analyzed in this study, would never offer such a bland response because he has a strong ideological commitment.

I have found that the NRM aims to normalize Nazism through different means. As we have seen, neo-Nazi environmentalism may be understood as a normalizing strategy which masks racism and sexism, but I argue that it is more complex than that. Neo-Nazi environmentalism also relates to the Nazi nature-ideological heritage, and it serves as a way to exercise and prove manhood. The NRM's ideological persistence implicates the mainstream perception of what it means to be a neo-Nazi. The skinhead type was, and still is, socially stigmatized. The NRM alters this stereotypical image by tuning down aggression and concentrating on ideology, which has the effect of normalizing neo-Nazism and reducing the appearance of extremism. Moreover, since the NRM's self-representation is contradictory and inconsistent, several neo-Nazi personas exist: There is space not only for the aggressive skinhead, but also the nice environmentalist, the formal politician and the rural farmer. What I have identified as the twofaced hegemonic masculinity of the NRM makes it possible to inhabit these roles all at once. I claim that together with the legitimacy that the NRM achieve by claiming to speak for 'the real people', the normalizing mechanism has the effect of making neo-Nazism accessible for the everyday Man. Furthermore, the NRM tries to de-stigmatize Nazism by neutralizing discrimination and ingratiate themselves with 'ordinary' people. These normalizing efforts should be understood as clear warning signs. The NRM's slow, but steady infiltration of public space contributes to a political culture where democratic and moral boundaries are moved step by step, incited by the right-wing surge in the western liberal democracies. Therefore, I hold that the NRM's normalizing of neo-Nazism must not be trivialized and ignored by the rest of society.

However, as author Mark Twain is reputed to have said: "History does not repeat itself, but it often rhymes" (Adams 2017). While Nazism is still heavily stigmatized in Scandinavia, that might change given the right socio-political conditions. In that case, I believe that the implications of the environmental crisis will play a significant role. What is at stake is not only the Earth, nature, animals and resources, but also the human species itself. The NRM's anxiety of the white race's demise reflects perhaps a fear of human termination itself. Because crises often lead to authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, the question remains to be whether or not a truly sustainable environmentalism is conceivable in a democracy such as ours. These are important quires that has been discussed by for instance the aforementioned Mark Beeson (2010). If there is one question that the environmentalism of the NRM brings to the fore, it is

whether the drastic change of mind and praxis is possible in a liberal market-based democracy, which is itself responsible for climate change? Perhaps is it only a form of eco-authoritarianism that will be to deal with the crisis of climate change by imposing strict rules of consumption and lifestyle. If so, that is what may save the human species.

All this to say that however unlikely a neo-Nazi coup of the Nordic region is, it must be recognized that the NRM holds a significant rhetorical advantage by appropriating environmentalism. Mixed with a masculinized rhetoric of aggrieved entitlement, ethnocentrism, racism and fear, the NRM's concoction is a highly potent one. This dangerous rhetoric is likely to attract support in the right circumstances. In the years to come, I am guessing that we will see increasing tendencies toward environmentally motivated authoritarianism. Given environmentalism's possibility of appearing as legitimate because it appears as 'common sense', such ideologies might blossom in a time of crises in spite of the potential anti-humanist politics, because nothing is as important as the struggle to save the human species. Or is it?

As a concluding comment, I wish to direct attention to the possibilities of neo-Nazi environmentalism and pose a last question for reflection. The findings of this study point to an alternative introduction to neo-Nazism that is different from the 'angry white man' point of entry. Is environmentalism a way in to neo-Nazism, and could it increase their popularity and influence in society? I believe that things are not as straightforward as that. The opposite may also be true. The Finnish former neo-Nazi Esa Henrik Holappa exited the Finnish branch of the NRM in 2012 (Aune et al. 2016). Today he is an active member of the Finnish Green Party and has left his neo-Nazi days behind (Myllymäki 2017). As the green aspects of neo-Nazism appealed to him, there are surely others who harbor the same sentiments. If environmentalism is a way in, there might be some good in knowing that it might also be a way out.

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