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ORCID:
LB: 0009-0002-2074-814X

«I Don't Need Climate Change to Be an Ecologist»: Far-right Ecological Activism, or When Climate (Almost) Doesn't Matter

LISE BENOIST

Department of Human Geography, Uppsala University, Sweden
E-mail: lise.benoist@kultgeog.uu.se

Abstract. This article examines how far-right activists from groups within the French extra-parliamentary far right that have incorporated ecological issues into their agenda relate specifically to climate change. In doing so, it aims to further tackle the why and how of climate acceptance/denialism *within* far-right ecologism. The analysis of in-depth interviews reveals that, while climate change is widely acknowledged, the denial of its anthropogenic causes persists. However, the interviewed activists' disengagement from climate issues also stems from their perception of such issues as further entrenching a political and economic status quo they claim to oppose, as well as overshadowing other ecological issues fundamental to their ecologism. This results in an ecological activism where climate issues, when not entirely absent, are deemed redundant, and are therefore relativised rather than simply opposed. The findings reinforce the importance of the environment/climate division and the obsolescence of the denier/non-denier dichotomy, while providing additional perspectives on the articulations of these dimensions. The article concludes on the implications of these findings, as well as on how far-right ecologists see ecological issues as embedded in a broader «anthropological crisis» that they aim to mitigate, and which should be further investigated.

Keywords: far-right ecologism, far-right activism, climate denialism, France.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

«Is the right doomed to climate scepticism?» asked the title of a 2019 article in *Éléments* magazine, a major outlet of the *Nouvelle Droite*, heading a scathing critique of the presence of climate scepticism within the right. The authors condemned the conspiracy theories associated with global warming, deeming them worthy of a «bad James Bond scenario» and mocking those who confuse climate events with the weather. The article however caused an important backlash among the readership, much to one of the authors' regrets (interview with author 2024). In 2023, at the yearly colloquium of the catholic-identitarian Academia Christiana youth movement on the theme of ecology, while one presentation advocated the seriousness of the IPCC reports and warned on the consequences of anthropogenic global warming,

another dismissed a made-up emergency. Late 2025, the vice-editor-in-chief of *Éléments* urged his peers to surmount their climate scepticism to take ecological issues seriously in a segment on the conservative Radio Courtoisie. Comically, the radio host had to make sure listeners were not offended, reassuring them this was not meant as «an insult». Such examples illustrate the ambiguity of the French extra-parliamentary far right with regards to climate issues: while there is an apparent willingness to move beyond climate scepticism, such attempts seem like lonely islands in a sea of persistent opposition.

Notwithstanding, the French far right has noticeably foregrounded the theme of environmental protection in its political agenda. At the parliamentary level, the *Rassemblement National* has defended a patriotic and rural ecology (Benoist, Turner, and Bailey 2024; Bivar 2022; Boukala and Tountasaki 2019). At the metapolitical level, the *Nouvelle Droite* and its heirs have long developed an identitarian version of environmentalism linking identity preservation to environmental protection based on its fundamental concept of ethno-differentialism (François 2016), some of its thinkers later adopting sharper anti-consumerist and growth-critical positions (Carle 2017). Both sides have mobilised the key themes of localism and rootedness when addressing ecological issues (Benoist 2024; Carle 2023). This also applies to the more activist side of extra-parliamentary far-right milieu, which is the focus of this article.

This nationalist activist milieu is broadly composed of three main branches: national-revolutionary, i.e., neo-fascists known for their emphasis on social issues (see Lebourg 2010), the more than century-old monarchist counter-revolutionary movement (see Winock 2015) and identitarian (see Jacquet-Vaillant 2021). Across these traditions, French far-right activist groups have in recent years actively integrated the question of ‘ecology’ (*écologie*) to their activism, most often in articulation to anti-globalist, anti-consumerist and/or anti-capitalist slogans that have historically permeated the successive groups banned and restructured in the last decades (Lebourg 2010; Jacquet Vaillant 2021). This ‘far-right ecological activism’ has primarily taken the shape of conferences on related topics, from local lectures to national yearly colloquiums such as the one mentioned above, but also of communication campaigns, with the primary objective being the (intellectual) training of current and new activists. This educational component has gone hand in hand with activities of litter collection in green spaces or urban outskirts, boycotts, and small-scale vegetable gardening – similar to the far-right ecological activism performed in other European countries (e.g., Bulli 2019;

Hurd and Werther 2013; Lubarda 2023). Such developments testify of a willingness to include ecological issues in far-right activism, beyond political communication and strategic outreach alone.

However, while the focus on environmental and nature protection is apparent, how do climate issues in particular play out in the motivations behind these recent far-right activist mobilisations on *écologie*? This article aims to address this question through the analysis of interviews conducted with far-right activists concerned and involved with ecological issues. More specifically, it investigates the role of climate change in their ecological motivations by asking: are concerns over climate change present at all? If so, how are climate related issues perceived and why? The findings reveal an ambivalence towards both the phenomenon of climate change and the related mitigation policies. While the denial of anthropogenic causes persists, new justifications emerge showing how the disengagement of the interviewed far-right activists with climate issues equally stem from their perception that such issues further entrench the political and economic status-quo, as well as overshadow other (and broader) ecological issues in which their ecologism is grounded in. This results in an ecological activism seldom motivated – if at all – by concerns over climate change.

In discussing the above, the contribution of this article is threefold. First, it provides missing empirical data for the scholarship on non-party far-right engagement with environmental and climate issues which has overwhelmingly focused on political parties (e.g., Gruber 2024; Schwörer and Fernández-García 2024; Voss 2019; Weisskircher and Volk 2025), albeit notable exceptions (e.g., Brodtmann 2025; Bulli 2019; Jones 2023). Second, few studies are based on interviews with far-right actors themselves on this topic (exceptions include Lubarda 2023; Pietiläinen 2024), reflecting a wider lack of close-up insights into the micro level individual activists of far-right movements and hence their motivations (Blee and Creasap 2010; Boumaza and Campana 2007; Caiani 2023). Third, by scrutinising the why and how of climate scepticism *within* far-right ecological activism, the article further challenges a conceptual dichotomy between climate denialism and ecofascism that has often underpinned the field and overshadowed the examination of the fundamental environment/climate division that enables the *coexistence* of both climate sceptic *and* pro-environmental positions (following e.g., Forchtner and Kølvråa 2015; Forchtner and Olsen 2023; Hanson 2024; Lubarda and Forchtner 2023; Weisskircher and Diermeier 2025).

The next section outlines the conceptual framework. Then, a subsequent section provides details on the methodology before moving on to three empirical-analytical sections. The article concludes with a summary of the insights and their implications for future research.

2. FAR-RIGHT ECOLOGISM: BETWEEN DENIALISM AND ECOFASCISM

Most of the (far-)right is rather known for denying climate change and promoting anti-ecological policies while defending fossil capital (e.g., Allen et al. 2024; Malm and The Zetkin Collective 2021). Although this remains the dominant trend, there are far-right extremist actors, referred to as ecofascist, who see in climate and environmental threats a rationalisation for attacks on racialised populations, reviving neo-Malthusian fears and misanthropic ideas (Bhatia 2004; Macklin 2022; Moore and Roberts 2022). As shown by recent scholarship, a conceptual premise for the understanding of contemporary manifestations and mutations of far-right ecologism in context-specific realities requires examining how the two overlap rather than viewing them as either-or categories (see also Benoist, Turner and Bailey 2024).

First, far-right actors, electorally and beyond, have promoted their own vision of ecological politics, emphasising how 'blood and soil' organicism is not confined to far-right violent margins. Conflating (a pure) nature with (a pure) nation through imaginaries of romanticised rural landscapes inhabited by rooted local people threatened by a globalist ideology and the globalist elite implementing it (e.g. Benoist, Turner, and Bailey 2024; Forchtner 2019; Forchtner and Kølvrå 2015; Lubarda 2023; Ungureanu and Popartan 2024), environmental protection has served as another anti-immigration justification and the defence of national borders (Hultgren 2015; Pietiläinen 2024; Turner and Bailey 2021). Scholars have consequently elaborated on the ideological underpinnings of a broader ecofascist ideology structured around the regeneration of national greatness through the return to a supposed 'natural order' and the violent expulsion of unwanted racialised Others (Campion 2021; Moore and Roberts 2022), or suggested the more encompassing term of «far-right ecologism» (Lubarda 2023) as a framework to study the variety of far-right engagements with ecological issues, within which the empirical material is situated.

Second, climate scepticism is evolving, as shown by traditionally climate-sceptic far-right actors moving away from outright denialism to «yes but» positions, partially acknowledging climate change and some

related policies (Caiani and Lubarda 2023; Forchtner and Lubarda 2023; Vihma, Reischl and Andersen 2021). Lubarda (2023) also finds partial climate acceptance in his interviews with far-right ecological activists of both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary groups in Hungary and Poland. Others furthermore emphasise the heterogeneity and volatility of pro/against positions in relation to renewable energy and climate change in general among far-right parties, often driven by strategic contextual choices rather than ideological coherence (Schwörer and Fernández-García 2024; Weisskircher and Volk 2025). Moreover, in their study of far-right contributions in the EU parliament, Forchtner and Lubarda (2023) do not only show that scepticism towards the reality of anthropogenic climate change is actually residual, but that the opposition lies in how climate issues are being addressed. Hanson (2024: 46) reaches a similar conclusion in her study of the Spanish Vox, whereby she finds that «discursive articulations of climate change are not actually about climate change», but about progressive global climate mitigation strategies.

Third, such a dichotomy appears all the more obsolete when climate scepticism in fact usually *co-exists* with pro-environmental stances on the far right. While the difference between *environmental* issues and *climate* issues has long been remarked (Farstad 2018), studies have demonstrated how far-right parties can simultaneously support local/national environmental protection whilst opposing transnational/global climate policies (Forchtner and Kølvrå 2015). Forchtner and Olsen (2023) call this a «double vision», whereby the perception of concrete environmental preservation is contrasted with abstract global climate change. This pitting of nature protection against climate mitigation has been particularly visible in conflicts over the implementation of renewable energy (e.g., Weisskircher and Diermeier 2025).

In other words, climate denialists might mobilise ecofascist tropes around the natural environment, and far-right ecologists can overlook climate issues altogether, as these are two connected yet fundamentally different topics with their respective connotations, symbolic weight and sometimes conflicting goals. Against this background, it is crucial to instead pay closer attention to the environment/climate articulations *in relation to* one another, as well as to examine the different forms this partial climate acceptance takes by looking deeper into the why and how behind the salience of climate scepticism in far-right ecologism (Forchtner and Lubarda 2023, Hanson 2024).

While research on climate scepticism has conceptually moved to broader discussions on climate *obstruction*

in order to include strategies of delay and inaction that likewise obstruct the

implementation of effective climate policies (e.g., Ekberg et al. 2022), I here specifically refer to Van Rensburg's (2015) threefold classification of climate scepticism to analytically grasp the aforementioned evolutions. This framework differentiates outright/literal denialism of the *evidence* of climate science (i.e., the trend, cause and impact of climate change) from *process* scepticism (i.e., the production of the data) and scepticism towards the policy *response* (i.e., global cooperation, efficacy). These three categories are not mutually exclusive and show the varied manifestations of doubt and/or rejection within climate denialism. Importantly, as emphasised by Forchtner and Lubarda (2023), both response and process scepticism can exist independently of evidence scepticism.

In the next section, I describe the methodology behind the subsequent analysis of the presence and role of climate issues in far-right extra-parliamentary ecology in France.

3. METHODOLOGY

The analysed data consists of in-depth semi-structured interviews (two hours on average) conducted with 34 activists from far-right extra-parliamentary groups in France between 2024 and 2026¹. The methodology is grounded in an ethnographic approach to interviewing (Trundle, Gardner, and Phillips 2024) and a standpoint of situated ethics of care and critical empathy (de Coning 2023; Obst 2024; Segers, Gelashvili, and Gagnon 2023). That is, I consider taking the respondents' claims seriously (Pasioka 2019) and at times climbing «empathy walls» (Hochschild 2018: 233) as preconditions for both achieving a deeper understanding of my participants' worldviews and accessing the field in the first place.

Respondents were initially recruited by directly contacting (via social media, email) extra-parliamentary far-right groups, identified through online monitoring, which have conducted some form of activism under the banner of *écologie* in the last years. I snowballed from there, most often thanks to participants not only providing further contacts but also vouching for me. Despite a handful of rejections or lack of response, I interviewed activists from some 15 different groups across France,

primarily based in medium-sized to large cities, even though some respondents lived in the countryside.

All activists have been given a pseudonym. To further protect their anonymity and avoid unnecessary platforming, I do not list nor associate them with the specific groups they are affiliated with. Yet, it is noteworthy that half of the respondents come from the national-revolutionary tradition, followed by monarchists and (catholic)-identitarian activists. Additionally, all respondents but four are men, and all but five were aged 35 or less, with one-third even aged 25 or less. Such demographics reflect a milieu of male-dominated youth groups. However, only one quarter were students at the time of the interview, with a majority being employed.

Importantly, while the theme of *écologie* is never the primary reason to become engaged on the far right, ecological concerns nonetheless play an important role in shaping the worldviews and motivations that lead to this specific activism. Lastly, while the term «activist» homogenises a variety of engagement and experience backgrounds, there is a 'leadership bias' in the data, with more than half of the respondents having some level of responsibility in their respective group, locally or nationally when applicable. While it is a result in itself, it is also because access to the field is mediated by such gatekeeping respondents. The collected data nonetheless enable a substantial examination of current far-right ecological activism as saturation was reached both in terms of interview content and potential (willing) interviewees.

The analysis of the interview material drew from the successive steps of thematic analysis (Ahmed et al. 2025; Braun and Clarke 2006). While the interviews addressed the role of ecological issues at large in the participants' past, present and future activist engagement, the present article focuses on aspects relating to climate issues. I proceeded by first isolating relevant excerpts in the transcripts which I then coded inductively. I then regrouped the numerous codes into six more coherent themes: overcoming denialism; the denial of denialism; partial acceptance; global technocracy; green capitalism; no need for climate change; beyond climate change. These themes form the three empirical subsections presented below and the concluding reflections.

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Mutated scepticism: Partial acceptance and the denial of denialism

This section shows how climate scepticism remains dominant among far-right activists who are nonetheless concerned with ecological issues, yet in a mutated form.

¹ Two interviews from 2022 were integrated into the analysis but these participants were interviewed again in 2024. The analysed material is part of a broader PhD data set including field observations at events and interviews with (intellectual) figures of the extra-parliamentary milieu, such as the ones referred to in the introduction.

Regularly, respondents communicate at the beginning of the interview their awareness of the dominance of climate-scepticism and overall anti-ecologism on the (far) right. This observation and willingness to change it appear as the point of departure for far-right ecologically oriented activism. A majority of respondents communicate at the beginning of the interviews their wish to overcome an overall anti-ecological «Pavlovian reflex» which consists of opposing all topics emanating from the left. Whether it is on the grounds of ecology being essentially a conservative and hence right-wing issue, or because they simply think it should not belong to any political side in particular, there is a shared understanding that, either way, as nationalists, they *should* care about ecological issues (see also Lubarda and Forchtnner 2023).

As Quentin and Antoine (_2024) separately mention, their political camp is rather known for people proudly driving 4x4s and eating meat just to provoke ecologists. Laura (_2024) was upset about such widespread views and consequently decided to push ecological issues, including climate, in the group she is active in. Personal experiences of climate change sometimes ground these motivations, such as for Anthony (_2024) who used to doubt whether climate change was real until he observed how the vegetation has changed: «We see the consequences, so we are forced to acknowledge [that it is caused by climate change]». Similarly, Jérémy (_2025) declares: «We see it, we live it, we know it. No one can say they don't notice it», echoing other observation-based acknowledgements of climate change by the activists interviewed by Lubarda (2023:100). As a result, Sébastien (_2024), like others trying to convince their peers about the importance of ecological issues, is pleased to see an «ideological shift» at work in the milieu:

...with people really tackling this topic head-on, even if there are some conspiracist remnants that are ideological dead ends [...] So, at some point, one also needs to have the humbleness to say: we are not scientists, maybe the researchers who have studied this topic for years have a bit more legitimacy than a Youtuber doing research in his underwear from his bedroom [laughs]².

Sébastien is at first sight correct about the «shift»: climate change as such is only doubted by two respondents, making outright denialism of the phenomenon indeed residual. However, the acceptance is only partial: acknowledging the phenomenon does not imply acknowledging its causes, nor does it mean that climate

change is a source of worry or motivation for the activists. Evidence scepticism (Van Rensburg 2015) towards the anthropogenic origin of climate change remains in fact striking, with almost two-thirds of the respondents either opposing or questioning the extent of human responsibility. They fall into two categories.

First, a minority only, undermines the specificity of the current situation by using typical arguments around 'climate has *always* changed'. Alongside, the harmfulness of CO₂ emissions is disputed, with a couple of respondents even considering that they are in fact beneficial to life on Earth (Pasek 2021). For example, Valentin (_2024) believes that «more CO₂ would be beneficial for nature» and thinks «that CO₂ has a very minor share, I mean *really* minor, I mean *insignificant* in global warming. And the share of human responsibility [in CO₂ emissions], let's not even talk about it.»

Second, and a majority, acknowledge the specificity of contemporary global warming, but instead of outright rejecting human responsibility they rather question its *extent*. Many blame it on not being able to know for sure, despite the scientific consensus about it and their otherwise usual assertiveness on other topics. For example, Alexandre (_2024) explains: «I am incapable, with the knowledge I have, of settling the question. I therefore believe that the debate should remain open. [...] I have to admit that these are questions that are too technical and beyond my understanding». Similarly, Maxime states: «I don't have a definite opinion. [...] So, actually, I am incapable of saying... I have read many things about it, but I cannot be 100% convinced.»

This situation of partial acceptance whereby climate change is acknowledged but its causes are questioned is, according to Adrien (_2025), quite representative of the milieu: «I have the feeling that, around me, yeah, people are a bit like me: “yes, there is a global warming. What's the impact of humankind on it? I don't know”». An observation confirmed by Romain (_2024): «There is an undeniable global warming, but I think, and for my other comrades too, that human impact is not as significant as one would want us to believe.»

Yet, interestingly, such sceptical positions are perceived by the respondents themselves as *having overcome* denialism, resulting in an interesting denial of denialism. When asked about where he stands in relation to the climate question, Vincent (_2025) answers firmly: «Ah no no, I *do* believe in climate change, I am *not* a climate-denialist. I have been though», implying that it is not the case anymore. Still, he continues and downplays its anthropogenic nature: «But I can be a bit more nuanced on the importance... Humans have an impact, that is for sure. But the level of importance... [...] I can-

² A reference to a 2024 climate-denialist video from the well-known far-right Youtuber *Le Raptor*.

not assess it. It exists, but I don't really know to what extent.» Similarly, Mathieu (_2025) answers in a surprising twist:

Yes, of course, I am interested [in climate change]. And to me there is no debate. I mean, of course human activities have an impact on the climate. But... whether there is a global warming due to human activities... No, I don't think so. Or it is minimal.

Despite a few exceptions, the interviews reveal a partial acceptance grounded in a mutation *within* climate scepticism rather than a move away from it, as the acknowledgement of the phenomenon but not of its causes and impacts still falls under evidence scepticism (Van Rensburg 2015). Nevertheless, they show how climate change is not the repulsive topic that it used to be, and, as shown below, is viewed as yet another symptom of a much broader ecological crisis. But let us first turn to another argument that explains the disregard for climate-related issues: the equation of climate mitigation policies with furthering, rather than breaking with, a politico-economic status quo they claim to oppose.

4.2 Global technocracy and the hypocrisy of green capitalism

Two further themes coded from the interviews that help to understand the respondents' rejection and/or disengagement from climate change are that they view climate mitigation as a cornerstone of increasing technocratic decision-making as well as of the greening of capitalism. They are grouped here insofar as both relate to response scepticism (Van Rensburg 2015) fed by the perception of climate change as a convenient excuse for furthering a political and economic status-quo rejected by the activists. Benjamin (_2025) exemplifies this suspicion well as he declares:

Regarding climate change, it is rather what comes out of it that bothers me. It is a gateway to a discourse on adaptation to the [economic and political] system, which I think can precisely serve [its own] interests. This is why I don't take a stance on this issue. Is it anthropogenic? Is it natural? This question seems secondary compared to what the system can make of it... I always question why something is brought to the forefront.

According to Maxime (_2024) the fundamental problem lies in the necessary global dimension of climate governance:

global climate equals global answer, equals globalism, equals COP, so, actually, ecology disappears from the top and the people are kept at a distance. We create citizens assemblies to give them the impression that they participate... [But global warming] is a keystone for technocracy.

The rejection of climate governance based on its global and hence supranational character taking the power away from the people is not surprising coming from the far right, which commonly mobilises an anti-globalist rhetoric in the promotion and rejection of ecological policies alike (e.g., Forchtner and Kølvrå 2015; Lockwood 2018). This is visible in the interviews too, as respondents often display response scepticism, connected to process scepticism (Van Rensburg 2015) as it is grounded in distrust of (political) elites, who are furthermore perceived as illegitimately attempting to control people's everyday lives (e.g., use of car) while themselves living carbon-intensive lifestyles (e.g., international travels).

Yet, global climate governance is not only denounced for infringing on national sovereignty, but also because it would, to many interviewed activists, in fact further aggravate the situation by not addressing the root cause of ecological degradation. To Guillaume (_2024), it is globalisation, which has brought the very problems it is now trying to solve:

Ecological issues come from globalisation, for the most part, and so now we say: "there are these problems, so we need more globalisation, we need a global system to handle that"... To me, because the problem comes from globalisation, it is completely absurd to say that we need more globalisation to end the problem of globalisation.

For Baptiste (_2025), it is the «techno-capitalist system and the myth of infinite growth» that ought to be tackled. Until then, he will consider the political and economic elites' ambition to fight global warming as «hypocrites» with false «solutions». Similarly, Jonathan (_2026) considers not fundamentally challenging «hyper-liberal capitalist modernity» as «bailing out water out of a sinking boat instead of fixing the holes». It is a similar justification that underpins common declarations that contrast the limited carbon impact of individual citizens with that of global trade, albeit often tied to a relativisation of national responsibility.

Others likewise associate climate mitigation-related policies with means to perpetuate the current economic system deemed destructive. This criticism for example takes the shape of attacks on market-based mechanisms such as carbon-compensation schemes. This specific target has also been noted by Forchtner and Lubarda

(2023) at the EU level, but also by Hurd and Werther (2013) who saw how far-right ecological activism in Germany addressed the problem of the commodification of nature. To Alexandre (_2024), these are mere ways to «recycle capitalism». Guillaume (_2024), Hugo (_2022) and Lucas (_2022), separately but similarly denounce how they allow a nonsensical equivalence between units of nature, such as trees that can be cut somewhere and replanted somewhere else. To Guillaume (_2024), this is facilitated by an abstract conception of nature which, as also explained by Lucas (_2022), results in «trying to count things that cannot be counted. Nature is not a stock of CO₂... [and it] cannot be represented administratively in tables with numbers». Moreover, to Sébastien (_2024), carbon accounting more broadly can be misleading, pointing to how France's carbon footprint can appear satisfying while it might only be the result of the delocalisation of industries and hence of outsourcing production and the emissions that come with it.

While Marie (_2025) is suspicious of climate change having created «a new and very profitable market», Maxime (_2024) summarises:

capitalism, under the green banner of global warming, continues to advance... Everything must generate profits. And so, when there is a wasteland, you have to build a wind turbine... Behind [wind turbines] there is however an industry running on oil [...] Seeing how much global warming profits capitalism, I tell myself, there is something suspicious there [...] And so, warmism doesn't provide a basis to oppose capitalism. On the contrary: it gives a green stamp to capitalism.

Climate mitigation is therefore associated with greenwashing, as many respondents deplore and mock the contradictions of a *green* capitalism, deemed a hypocrisy. This includes ridiculing attempts at global climate governance, pointing to the powerlessness of successive COPs notably due to their permeability to the lobbying of multinational companies.

This section has shown how many respondents see climate mitigation politics as furthering existing politico-economic problems rather than solutions to them. This view, a form of response scepticism (Van Rensburg 2015), illustrates how the interviewed activists' disregard for climate issues is indeed connected to a rejection of what is done under the banner of climate change mitigation (Forchtner and Lubarda 2023; Hanson 2024). Let us now move on to how the disengagement with climate change is also fed by the perception that it overshadows other, equally or more important ecological issues, at times making climate issues redundant altogether.

4.3 *Beyond climate change: more environment, less (or no need for) climate*

The first two sections have discussed how evidence and response scepticism (Van Rensburg 2015) permeate the interviewed activists' perception of climate change and related policies. In this last empirical section, I examine two other recurring themes that highlight an equally important facet explaining why the interviewed far-right activists do not give climate change the focus of their ecological concerns and activism. On the one hand, the respondents consider climate issues to be reductionist and diverting attention from much more diverse ecological issues that ought to be addressed. On the other hand, many declare that they simply not «need» climate issues to be ecologists. In that sense, the activists' ecologism is not only directed *against* current climate mitigation policies but also presented as going *beyond* climate issues.

A dimension that already emerges in the previous section is the criticism of climate-centrism as many respondents complain about a perceived dominance of climate issues within ecological issues.

For instance, Guillaume (_2024) thinks that «an ecologism fixed solely on the question of global warming can be dangerous», as, following his example on the carbon compensation schemes, he concludes that «[it] doesn't prevent the destruction of nature». In doing so, he points to the potential harmfulness of carbon reductionism, in light of conflicts that can arise between environmental protection and climate mitigation (Weiskircher and Deirmeier 2025). This dimension is also present when other respondents denounce soil and biodiversity damage caused by wind turbines for example. Or in the case of Hugo (_2022), who says that, while having «no doubt that global warming is happening [...] there is no point saying we'll try to reduce by 0,5 degrees if, at the same time, we approve the concretisation of coasts», implying that the focus on mitigating global warming as such might eclipse what he perceives as equally important issues such as soil artificialisation and landscape degradation.

Respondents indeed explain wanting to address other ecological issues, considered overshadowed and overlooked by this perceived predominance of climate issues in the public debate. In fact, it is sometimes an aspect that contributes to suspicion, such as in the case of Théo (_2024), who explains being cautious as he «avoid[s] playing in the narrative of elites who make everything about global warming as if it was the only ecological problem that exists». Thomas (_2024) likewise considers that if climate change is «one dimension of the problem, it is far from being the only one. Sometimes we focus on

this and forget all the other dimensions of the ecological problem [while] there are many more.» A similar criticism about the reduction of ecological issues to climate change is also present in Forchtner and Olsen's analysis of a German metapolitical outlet (2023: 230) and among Lubarda's activist interviewees (2023: 103).

One of these left out dimensions, according to the participants, is the matter of environmental pollution, which appears to be a central source of ecological worry for many. Pierre (_2024) expresses such concerns as he states: «it is not *only* about CO2. It is about the pollution of rivers, of landscapes, the industrialisation, the concretisation...» It is in this vein that Nicolas (_2024) prefers to talk about «ecological disruption» rather than «global warming» in order to better encompass and hence provide a more accurate description of the current situation:

because it targets both global warming [with] climate change, rising water levels ... but it also targets everything related to pollution which will negatively impact our quality of life. So, air pollution, water pollution, light pollution, everything connected to endocrine-disruptors, oestrogen in water... Many issues like these. And it enables one to convey that there is indeed a disruption of an ecosystem, an ecological disruption precisely, a disturbance of this ecosystem, rather than [just] warmism.

This terrain of pollution is deemed by the interviewed activists to have been left aside by more mainstream climate-focused ecologism and therefore aim to occupy it, in what some even conceive as a left/right division of labour on ecological issues. This focus on environmental pollution over climate issues is often analysed by scholars, and justified by the far-right itself, by the tangibility argument (Forchtner and Kølvråa 2015; Forchtner and Olsen 2023). Here too, respondents legitimise their focus on local/national ecological problems because they are «concrete» and therefore more engaging than an abstract call to «save the planet». The tangibility of local actions is in turn many times presented as an antidote to a feeling of powerlessness in front of global climate issues. To some, it is even a matter of being pragmatic. For example, Nicolas (_2025) focuses on fighting environmental pollution and on climate change adaptation since he believes that «a global policy to reduce carbon emissions and cut production – a precondition to fighting global warming – will never happen».

Yet, beyond the tangibility element and in line with the respondent's understanding of ecological issues as much broader than climate change alone, another important argument explains the disengagement with climate issues: the interviews reveal how climate change

is in fact considered by many respondents as a redundant element in their ecologism.

When I ask Maxime (_2022) and Guillaume (_2024) who both separately declare to show «little interest» in the topic why is it the case, they respectively reply: «It's because I don't need climate change to exist to preach ecology and degrowth», and «I don't need... Basically, even if global warming didn't exist, I would still be an ecologist. I still wouldn't want forests to be destroyed to build supermarkets instead... It is not decisive in my ecologism.» Such declarations highlight how disinterest can be explained by the activists' perception that they have «many other good reasons to be ecologists» *already* (Thomas_2024).

Respondents indeed emphasise how their knowledge about detrimental human impacts on the environment both exceeds and precedes climate issues. As Florian (_2024) expresses it:

yes, ok, [global warming] seems to be true, but... it just seems to be a corollary of the thesis that we have an impact on the environment... even if I were to get the certainty that global warming is indeed real or not, well, it would actually change [silence] nothing about what I believe. It would only simply confirm that humans have an impact on [the environment], it would be an example [of that] with climate change you know, and it would tell us that we obviously need to be careful, which we already knew.

In sharper words, Alexandre (_2024) similarly asserts a sentiment of redundancy:

It is clear that we've destroyed the environment and that [...] half of the things we eat are totally artificial etc., that this harms our health [...] so, yes, at some point, we are not going to debate for a thousand years about how many degrees the Earth is going to warm.

This last empirical section has focused on how the interviewed far-right activists situate their ecologism as going beyond climate issues. This leads us to concluding reflections on the role of climate issues in far-right ecologism and far-right activism more broadly, and the implications for future research.

5. CONCLUSION: NOT A CLIMATE BUT AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL CRISIS

This article has examined how climate issues are perceived by activists concerned with ecological issues from extra-parliamentary far-right groups in France. The analysis of in-depth interviews has highlighted the multifaceted and ambivalent ways in which far-right activists

relate to climate change, beyond mere rejection or instrumentalisation. While grounded in a willingness to overcome climate scepticism and develop their own ecological politics, the outcome remains closer to an overlooking and relativisation of climate issues altogether.

The findings, revolving around three dimensions, show that despite an overwhelming acknowledgement of the reality of the phenomenon of climate change, scepticism towards its anthropogenic origin remains dominant. Furthermore, the opposition to climate mitigation policies is tied to a criticism of technocratic governance and the greening of capitalism. Both amount to evidence and response scepticism, connected to an underlying but less dominant process scepticism (Van Rensburg 2015). Beyond scepticism, a third dimension concerns the perceived redundancy of climate change for their ecologism, as far-right ecologists focus on other ecological issues deemed overlooked and overshadowed by climate issues.

The analysis therefore indicates that accepting the reality of climate change, rather than being a main driver, seems to function as 'just another reason' integrated into concerns over other ecological issues, which only comes to reinforce and legitimise existing adjacent ecological beliefs and advocacy. Consequently, there is little doubt that ecological engagement on the far right is not primarily channelled through concerns over global warming. Far-right ecologically motivated activism therefore results in an ecologism where climate change (almost) does not matter.

Importantly, the findings reveal that while climate issues are relativised as part of other/broader ecological issues, these very ecological issues are themselves understood as problems caused by the political and economic underpinnings of liberal capitalist modernity. This is what leads activists like Nicolas (2024) to root «ecological disruption» in a wider «anthropological disruption». Indeed, ecological issues on the far right are seen through the prism of an anthropological decline that funnels environmental and cultural pollution alike (Benoist forthcoming) and ultimately opposes a narrative of a broader «anthropological crisis» rather than a «climate crisis».

This leaves us with important implications for future research on the articulations of ecology and climate in the (anti-)ecological politics of the far right, but also for studies on the far right more broadly. First, as confirmed by this empirical case, climate scepticism can be an integral part of far-right ecologism. This further highlights the decreasing relevance of the denier/non-denier division (Dannemann 2023) while reinforcing the need to conceptually integrate the differentiation between environmental issues and climate issues that underpins the

«double vision» of the far right (Forchtner and Olsen 2023). Moreover, it calls to pay further attention to how real or imagined conflicts between nature protection and climate mitigation can be mobilised by the far right electorally and beyond, and the broader ramifications of such 'beyond climate ecologism' for climate obstruction (Eckberg et al., 2022; Weisskircher and Deirmeier 2025).

Second, this 'decoupling' of anthropogenic climate change from ecological issues, while nonetheless acknowledging some of the threats posed by global warming, enables a narrative of climate *adaptation* that sidelines engagement with climate mitigation and its foundations (e.g. global CO₂ emissions). Indeed, the recognition of climate-related threats but not their anthropogenic causes helps explain how denial and pro-environmental stances can coexist, and illustrates how moving from outright denial may lead directly to nationalist and securitised adaptation discourses. This in turn further points to how climate-changed futures are likely to be organised around a racialised inclusion/exclusion antagonism (Dannemann 2023; Malm and the Zetkin Collective 2021; Moore and Roberts 2022; Pietiläinen 2025), and the need to study far-right appeals to localism and ecologically resilient communities as manifestations of it (Benoist 2024; Varco 2023).

Third, as the findings corroborate how the far right tends to oppose what is done in the name of climate change rather than the phenomenon itself (Forchtner and Lubarda 2023; Hanson 2024), they also reveal how the inherent contradictions of 'green' capitalism can further fuel scepticism towards climate mitigation more broadly, while reinforcing an extra-parliamentary far right which already mobilises a criticism of economic growth and anti-capitalist narratives in relation to ecological issues (Benoist 2024; Forchtner and Olsen 2024; Forchtner and Gruber 2024). Further research should continue to account for and delve deeper into the wider societal critique within which far-right ecologism is situated, in order to understand the appeal of an «anthropological crisis» framing.

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