The trouble with eco-politics of localism: too close to the far right? Debates on ecology and globalization

Mi Park

Abstract

This article critically examines the intersection between the right-wing anti-globalization movement and the pro-local campaign in the Global North. It discusses ways in which the far-right movement justifies anti-immigration policies on the ground of cultural diversity, environmental protection and local autonomy. Comparatively examining the right-wing discourse and the ideas of progressive ecological groups, it discusses to what extent the right-wing eco-politics are different from or similar to pro-local platforms of progressive environmental groups in the North.

Introduction

Traditionally regarded as left-wing[1] or progressive, ideas such as cultural diversity, environmental protection, and local autonomy now feature prominently in the anti-immigration discourse of far-right political parties such as the British National Party (BNP) and the Austrian Freedom Party. As far-right political groups deploy seemingly progressive ideas to attract a broader populace, their justification for immigration control is made on the following grounds:

* Cultural diversity should be preserved.

* The environment must be protected.

* Localism is a desirable alternative to globalization.

Although not as a crude justification for immigration control, the three identical themes also frequently appear in the publications of many progressive groups such as Green parties and social justice oriented research institutes. This troubling overlap between the progressive social justice groups and the far-right groups urgently requires our attention and a critical examination of its implications for social justice movements.

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[1] I depict the positions of the right and the left on the political spectrum according to their stance on social justice and redistributive solidarity. The left emphasizes a positive right (access to resources to exercise full citizenship rights) and the need to reduce social inequality through redistribution of the wealth, while the right stresses a negative right (non-interference from the state and external forces) and individual freedom.

This paper examines a potentially exclusionary politics of eco-localism in the anti-globalization movements of the Global North with a focus on the ecological groups (see the table below for details of organizations studied in this paper)[2]. The primary research method used in this paper is discourse analysis. A discourse is a version of social reality that the discourse comes to constitute. With discourse analysis, I examine the ways in which dissenters construct a version of society and how different the competing versions are in relation to others, including the eco-movement version of the world. Additionally, qualitative content analysis (semiotics) has been conducted to examine website contents of the organizations and influential thinkers in the ecological and right-wing groups in the anti-globalization movements. Semiotics, a form of qualitative content analysis, investigates both denotative and connotative meanings that reside in texts. With semiotics content analysis, this paper identifies associational meanings behind certain themes and words. For instance, I examine whether the signifier "globalization" carries similar associational meanings such as the power of transnational corporations (TNCs) and the demise of state sovereignty among dissenters of globalization.

This article is organized as follows. Critically surveying the existent literature on localism and anti-globalization movements, it brings attention to a potentially perilous, exclusionary politics of eco-localism in anti-globalization movements. Using the ecological and the right-wing anti-globalization movements of the Global North as a case study, it examines the ways in which far-right political groups in the North use the above three interrelated ideas to justify an ethno-exclusionary and chauvinistic politics. The summary of the far-right politics is then compared and contrasted with the positions of the left-wing ecological groups. Pointing to problematic implications of localism for immigration and international trade, this paper stresses the need for developing a progressive political strategy that is clearly differentiated from right-wing populism.

Table 1. Far-right and ecological dissenters from globalization

Far-right Political Parties	The French National Front, the Austrian Freedom Party, the Swiss People's Party, the Danish People's Party, Italy's *Lega Nord*, the British National Party, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), the European New Right (ENR), the *National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands* (NPD), the Freedom Party (Holland), the Australians Against Further Immigration Party, Alternative Right (USA),

[2] This research excludes social democratic parties, communist or Marxist organizations since their political platforms do not predominantly feature eco-localization measures.

	the Nationalist Party of America
Anti-immigration Lobby Groups	The Carrying Capacity Network, the Coalition for United States Population Stabilization (CUSPS), the Alliance for Stabilizing America's Population (ASAP!), the Population- Environment Balance (BALANCE), Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS), Numbers USA, the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the Optimum Population Trust, Comprehensive US Sustainable Population (CUSP), Negative Population Growth, the Population Action International (PAI), the Population Reference Bureau, the Population Research Institute, the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), Zero Population Growth (ZPG)
Ecology groups and Green Parties	The Post Caron Institute (Richard Heinberg), the Sierra Club, Conservation Society, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Friends of the Earth (FoE), Earth First!, the Earth Resources Research (ERR), the Political Ecology Research Group (PERG), the Intermediate Technology Development Group (E.F. Schumacher), Appropriate Technology (AT-UK), the Foundation for Deep Ecology (Arne Naess, Doug Tompkins), the International Society for Ecology and Culture (Helena Norberg-Hodge), Green Party of England and Wales, Green Party of the United States of America, Green Party of Canada, Green Party of New Zealand
Localist think-tanks and research institutes	The International Forum on Globalization (Helena Norberg-Hodge, David Korten, Michael Shuman), the Global Trade Watch (Mike Dolan), the Public Citizen (Lori Wallach), the New Economics Foundation, the EF Schumacher Society, the Institute for Local Self Reliance, the UK Transition Town

A literature review

Scholars from various disciplines have examined various aspects of anti-neoliberal globalization movements (Bircham and Charlton 2001; Falk, 1999; Seoane and Taddei, 2002; della Porta 2005; Eschle, 2004; Patomaki and Teivainen, 2004; Ayres, 2004; Ancelovici, 2002). The existent literature, however, rarely touch on the intersection between globalization and the contemporary far-right movements, economic nationalism, and localism (Goodwin 2011; Capling 1997; Bar-On 2008; Hess 2008; Schuman 1998; Barry 2012). There is little published research on how

these phenomena (anti-globalization, nationalism, localism, the far-right movement) are inter-connected and might share some common diagnostic and prognostic frames of globalization.

As most scholars exclude the radical right as part of a broader anti-globalization movement, the existent literature on anti-globalization movements predominantly focus on left-leaning civil society groups. There are some exceptions to this trend. Hewison (2001 and 2010) shed new light on anti-globalization movements with his observation that anti-globalization movements are led by heterogeneous political groups including right-wing economic nationalists. Bonefeld also critically examines various perspectives of anti-globalization (e.g., Korten's localism and Panitch's 'progressive nationalism') and cautions potentially regressive implications of left-wing populism or localism as similar ideas are found in far-right groups in Europe (Bonefeld, 2006). In a similar vein, Wall (2003) discusses a problematic phenomenon where some Green critics of globalization draw on the philosophy of social credit and traditions of anti-Semitic populism that tend to equate globalization with the rule of global financial institutions. These critical scholars have paid attention to ways in which right wing anti-globalizers use similar populist discourses of progressive groups in the Global Justice Movement (GJM). In this context, as Zaslove put it, "Resistance to globalization must no longer be perceived as only the domain of 'democratic' social movements." (2008: 187).

Relating to the connection between rightwing populism and anti-globalization, some scholars have examined connection between ecology movements and far-right political parties (Olsen 1999; Biehl and Staudenmaier, 1995). Sferios (1988) discusses political tensions over the issue of immigration within the environmental movement in the United Sates and notes contentious interactions between anti-immigration lobby groups and the Sierra Club, an ecological organization in the USA. He finds that American anti-immigration lobby groups exploited tensions within the Sierra Club over internal disagreements on the framing population growth as the main ecological threat (Sferios, 1988). Neumayer (2006) cautions that many ideas of eco-fascism can be found in conservative ecology groups such as a US based anti-immigration lobby group, the Carrying Capacity Network (CCN), and a German ecology party, the *Ökologisch-Demokratische Partei* (ÖDP). In a similar vein, social ecologists[3] such as Murray Bookchin, Janet Biehl, and Peter Staudenmaier criticized deep ecology for sharing some ideas of eco-fascisms or fascist ecology.

Notwithstanding the previous work on the connection between right-wing populism and anti-globalization, and right wing ecology and far-right exclusionary politics, there has been little published work on a connection between eco-localism

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[3] Social ecology-inspired anarchists also support economic and political localization measures. See Bookchin's *Social Anarchism vs. Lifestyle Anarchism* (1995).

and right-wing economic nationalism. Pro-local scholars (Cato and Hiller 2011; Smith 2011; Starr and Adams 2003; Curtis, 2003; Stoker 2004; Seyfang and Smith 2007) tend to essentialize local communities as the network of trust and social harmony, and uncritically celebrate (assumed) ecological and political benefits of localism. Some scholars praise localist campaigns such as the Transition Town Movement as a progressive "social innovation" that deals with climate change (Cato and Hiller 2010: 874). Similarly, community centered eco-localization initiatives are positively portrayed as "green niches" (Seyfang and Smith 2007: 589)" with "sustainable innovation" (Seyfang and Smith 2007: 587). Recently, some scholars (Bonefeld, 2006; Albo, 2007; Hess 2008; Park 2013) have taken a critical approach to the predominantly pro-localist literature and explored the limits to eco-localism. Drawing on insights from the existent literature on anti-globalization, localism, ecology and the far-right movement, this paper investigates the intersection between cultural diversity, environment, and local autonomy in the anti-immigration discourse of far-right groups in the Global North. Critiquing a pro-local essentialism in the anti-globalization literature, it examines ways in which far-right groups adopt the concepts and ideas of progressive localist and ecology groups in order to further their regressive agenda.

Three frames of anti-immigration: cultural diversity, environmental protection, and localism

Anti-immigration lobby groups and far-right political parties in Europe and North America put forward three interrelated arguments in order to keep immigrants out. The first is to preserve cultural diversity. The second is to preserve environment. The third is to reclaim control over the local economy. On the surface, these objectives are similar (if not identical) to visions espoused by left-wing dissenters of globalization. In what follows, this paper explains details of the three salient frames in the anti-immigration discourse and discusses to what extent it is different from and or similar to the pro-immigration discourse of left-wing dissenters of globalization.

Cultural diversity

Today's far-right groups hide their racism behind the motto of the "right to difference" that was espoused, for example, by Alain de Benoist, the French ideologue of the New Right *(Nouvelle Droite)*. de Benoist argues that "all cultures have an inherent 'right to difference'" and that people should oppose "undifferentiation and uprooting" by defending "clear and strong [ethnic/cultural] identities" (Zaslove, 2008: 179). Thus, the French New Right or European New Right (ENR) supports "radical ethnic pluralism" that celebrates "particular cultures worldwide" (Bar-On, 2008: 328). To this end, the New Right demands restrictive

immigration policies to "protect" indigenous cultural communities in their homelands. Likewise, many ethno-exclusionary right-wing political parties in Europe try to frame their anti-immigration stance as a matter of cultural protection. Celebrating cultural diversity, they can justify the restrictive movement of people as a means to preserve ethnic or cultural diversity (Olsen, 2000: 76). For instance, as the British National Party (BNP) claims, "We accept that Britain always will have ethnic minorities and have no problem with this as long as they remain minorities and do not change nor seek to change the fundamental culture and identity of the indigenous peoples of the British Isles". (BNP, May 15, 2010)

To stop "the overwhelming and extinguishing of Britain and British identity under a tsunami of immigration" (BNP, May 15, 2010), BNP argues, a strict immigration control is necessary. In all cases, they claim that they are not racist since they don't believe in the doctrine of racial hierarchy. What they cherish is supposedly people's right to cultural difference (Auster, 1990). BNP reasons that each nation has the right to maintain its own identity without hating other cultures (BNP, May 15, 2010). Likewise, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)[4] calls for a stop to permanent immigration on the ground that British "traditional values" have been undermined (UKIP 28 November, 2011). Concerns about the erosion of national cultures and traditional values have been expressed by other right-wing parties across Europe. The Austrian Freedom Party, the French National Front, and the Italian *Lega Nord* all claim that globalization destroys local indigenous cultures and replace them with the Americanized, homogenous, consumerist culture (Zaslove, 2008).

Some ecologists and far-right groups in Europe draw on the concept of bio-cultural diversity in order to provide an eco-scientific justification for their ethno-exclusionary politics. For instance, the Independent Ecologists of Germany (UÖD) holds that "each human community or culture is unique, because each is shaped and determined by the distinctive features of its particular ecosystem" (Olsen, 2000:75). Adopting the language of deep ecology, the White Aryan Resistance (a neo-Nazi group) argues that "within an ecosystem, the defense of native species from foreign intruders also applies to human beings and their societies" (Olsen, 2000:74). Likewise, treating "the indigenous British people" (BNP, May 15, 2010) as a discreet ethnic group, the BNP calls for the protection of the British ethnic group for the sanctity of biological and ethnic diversity.

In contrast to the far-right groups, left-wing ecology groups such as Green Parties emphasize immigrants' contributions to the cultural enrichment of society. When they call for immigration control on a cultural ground, they mean restrictions on migrant settlements in communities of disempowered ethnic minorities such as Australian aboriginal people (Green Party UK, 2009). In clear contrast to the BNP's

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[4] UKIP was founded in 1993. The BNP and UKIP adopt similar discourses on issues of immigration and national identity (Ford et.al, 2012).

British nationalism, the Green Party of England and Wales stresses that "Richer regions and communities do not have the right to use migration controls to protect their privileges from others" (Green Party UK, 2009). This position of the Green Party of England and Wales echoes Habermas' argument that former colonial power countries should compensate the Third World for the wrongs of colonialism by absorbing immigrants from the Global South. According to Habermas' cosmopolitan approach,[5] distributive justice must be global beyond national jurisdiction (Habermas, 1994). The European Greens' call for global social justice, however, falls short of addressing the tension between democratic sovereignty within nation states and the exercise of universal human rights beyond national jurisdictions. Except left-wing libertarian, eco-anarchists who argue for open borders, the mainstream environmental groups and green parties uphold the right of nation states to control migration. European Greens would rather emphasize the need for harmonization of immigration policies between states in order to ensure migration more safe and manageable.

Notwithstanding the limited scope of social justice concerning migration, the Green Party in the UK clearly rejects xenophobic anti-immigration policies. It opposes "all attempts to introduce a 'barrier round Europe' shutting out non-Europeans or giving them more restricted rights of movement within Europe than European Nationals." At the same time, the Green Party UK advocates measures to restrict the movement of rich people. As it put it, migration should be restricted in cases involving the prospective migrants who "have, on average, equal or greater economic power than the residents of the recipient area." (Green Party UK, 2009) It calls for a complete overhaul of the existing immigration system in many countries that give preferential treatments for people with resources and desirable skills. In contrast to the far-right groups of anti-globalization that call for a radical segregation of ethnic groups to preserve cultural diversity, the left-wing greens of anti-globalization advocate inclusion and solidarity instead. The European Green Party frequently criticizes surging nationalism and right-wing populism in the midst of the Euro-zone crisis and has recently organized an international conference to combat rampant racism and neo-fascism in some Balkan countries.

From the analysis above, it is clear that despite the proclaimed objective (i.e., cultural diversity) of the two opposing camps, the far-right and the left dissenters of globalization differ on their stance on immigration. The far-right groups use the cultural discourse to preserve privileges of white, while the progressive greens channel their efforts toward reducing inequality. This clear difference becomes somewhat less pronounced when ecological considerations come into play.

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[5] Habermas' cosmopolitan approach (Habermas, 2003), however, is confined to the framework of a federated state of Europe based on an ambiguous European identity.

Ecology and the carrying capacity of the earth

Today's anti-immigration lobby groups draw on the ideas of environmental Malthusians (Edward Goldsmith, Jonathon Porritt, Antoine Waechter, David Brower, Diana Hull, Norman Myers, and Paul Watson)[6] who consider human population growth as a major source of environmental degradation. According to environmental Malthusians, the relationship between population and resources is strained by increasing numbers of immigrants beyond "the carrying capacity of regions" (Bandarage, 2008). In order to build an ecologically sustainable society, they argue that we must first control our population by reducing birth rates and maintaining zero-net immigration.

Anti-immigration lobby groups that are eager to adopt this environmental Malthusian policy include: the Alliance for Stabilizing America's Population (ASAP!), Population- Environment Balance (BALANCE), Californians for Population Stabilization, Numbers USA, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, the Carrying Capacity Network (CCN), Optimum Population Trust, the Foundation for Deep Ecology. The Alliance for Stabilizing America's Population (ASAP!), a US coalition of over forty environmental and anti-immigration groups, argues that unsustainable population growth through immigration puts a great strain on the caring capacity of the USA. The Carrying Capacity Network (CCN) in the USA makes the same argument that a radical reduction of immigrants is absolutely necessary in order to ensure "economic sustainability and resource conservation" (CCN, 2 April, 2011: 1). With a pretence to preserve the caring capacity of the earth, BALANCE demands immediate deportation of all illegal immigrants and the denial of citizenship to children of illegal immigrants (Beale, 1997).

Given the negative implication of environmental Malthusian philosophy for migration, it is not surprising to see that far-right parties selectively adopt some ideas from deep ecology. The British National Party (BNP), posing itself as Britain's

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[6] Many prominent ecologists are found in anti-immigration lobby groups. They include: Norman Myers, David Brower, Diana Hull, Paul Watson, Jonathon Porritt, Edward Goldsmith and Antoine Waechter. Norman Myers, former Sierra Club treasurer (1999-2000), is a patron of the Optimum Population Trust (an anti-immigration lobby group). David Brower (1912-2000) is a former member of the advisory board for Californians for Population Stabilization. Diana Hull, current president of Californians for Population Stabilization, serves on the advisory board of Numbers USA and Federation for American Immigration Reform. Paul Watson, a board member of the Sierra Club from 2003 until 2006, was a main leader of anti-immigration body, Sierrans United for US Population Stability (Baker, 2009). Jonathon Porritt (former Director of Friends of the Earth in Britain and a founding member of the Forum for a Sustainable Future) is a patron of Optimum Population Trust (OPT). Goldsmith was a founder of the Green Party UK and former chief editor of the journal *Ecologist*. Antoine Waechter founded the party *Mouvement Écologiste Indépendant* (Independent Ecology Movement) that opposes immigration (Mercier, 1994: 349).

"only true Green party" (BNP, December 5, 2010b), claims that overpopulation caused by immigration is responsible for a host of social and ecological problems[7]. The problems, according to BNP, range from "severe extra strain on the environment, traffic congestion, longer hospital waiting lists, lower educational standards, higher income taxes, lower wages, higher unemployment, […], a shortage of council homes" (BNP, May 15, 2010). Likewise, far-right parties such as the *National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands* (NPD) call for strict immigration limits on environmental grounds.

Some environmental Malthusian groups collaborate with progressive groups in the global justice movement. The Foundation for Deep Ecology (FDE) [8] is a case in point (Baker, 2009). Advocating a reduction to immigration and birth rates, FDE has financially sponsored NGOs such as the Caring Capacity Network (a US based anti-immigration lobby group) and the International Forum on Globalization (a progressive social justice think-tank). Identifying overpopulation as one of main contributing factors to environmental degradation, some ecologists and progressive groups on the left also argue for migration control. For instance, Rick Shea, a member of the Green Party of Canada, argues for immigration control on an ecological ground (although this is not the official position of the Green Party). He notes that "negative effects of an increasing population on Canada" include "quotas on access to parks, dwindling populations of a variety of species, more pressure on natural areas". His solution to lowering Canada's total ecological footprint is then a reduction of the number of immigrants to Canada (Shea, 2013). It should be noted that Green Parties around the world do not have a uniformed position on immigration. Disagreements over immigration policy among Green Party members are commonly seen. Some advocate immigration reduction on ecological grounds while others support the status quo or even an increase on humanitarian grounds.

Green parties propose to introduce the category of environmental refugees to immigration and refugee laws. Linking migration to global inequality, as the Green Party of the USA states, "There are many countries in the world where the economic policies and military actions of the U.S. government or U.S. based

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[7] Not all far-right parties are self-proclaimed "green" parties. For instance, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) is notoriously anti-environmentalist. As UKIP states, "Global warming is not proven - wind power is futile. Scrap all green taxes, wind turbine subsidies and adopt nuclear power to free us from dependence on fossil fuels and foreign oil and gas." (UKIP 28 November, 2011)

[8] Foundation for Deep Ecology (FDE) sponsored many ecology groups as follows: Public Citizen ($645,500.00 between 1991 – 2002), Rainforest Action Network ($464,080.00 between 1997 – 2001), Friends of the Earth ($182,000.00 between 1998 – 2001), Sierra Club ($160,000.00 between 1994 – 2001), SEED ($155,630.00 between 1997 – 2001), Council of Canadians ($58,500.00 between 1997 – 2001), Alliance for Global Justice ($30,000.00 between 1999 – 2001), Greenpeace ($15,000.00 between 1992 – 1992). FDE also sponsored an anti-immigration lobby group, the Caring Capacity Network (Baker, 2009).

corporations have caused extreme hardships. The peoples of these countries deserve special consideration if they wish to come to the U.S. to escape intolerable conditions created by our government or U.S. corporations" (Green Party of the US, 2012). The root causes of ecological crisis, according to many progressive ecological groups, lie in the systematic overproduction and over-consumption of the industrialized world as well as the unequal resource distribution (Smith, 2003). As long as resources are unevenly distributed among the global population, they argue, migration will continue. As the Green Party of England and Wales put it, "The existing economic order and colonialism have both been major causes of migration through direct and indirect violence, disruption of traditional economies, the use of migrants as cheap labour, uneven patterns of development and global division of labour" (Green Party of England and Wales, March 2009). Echoing this view, Public Citizen (a US based localisation think-thank) also holds that the root cause of immigration is neoliberal globalization that failed to provide sustainable livelihoods for Mexican workers (Public Citizen 2012).

This linking of migration to neoliberal globalization, however, is not alien to far-right political parties and anti-immigration ecology groups. Right-wing parties also lay the blame on neoliberal globalization as the root cause of migration. For instance, the French New Right argues, "Europe and the Third World are common partners in their struggle against global capitalism" (Spektorowski, 2003:59) because the development model of the World Bank and the IMF precipitates "economic refugees from Third World economies" (Zaslove, 2008: 173) and thus inevitably uprooting people from their natural cultural habitats. The French New Right claims that they are against neoliberal globalization that exploits cheap labour from the Third World countries while fostering unsustainable development as it leads to increasing mass production for metropolitan urban population. Opposing this, the New Right advocates cooperation between the Global South and the North to stop human migration (De Benoist and Champetier, 2000: 17).

As shown above, right wing political groups use ecological rhetoric similar to those of progressive groups of anti-globalization movements. This overlap, however, does not extend to the official policies and practices of green parties, except some minority positions within. In sharp contrast to the far-right groups that attack immigrants for ecological degradation, progressive green actors focus on the exploitative, growth oriented global economic order while stressing the need to help immigrants and refugees gain full citizenship rights. Notwithstanding this difference in immigration policy, both the right wing and Green Parties support immigration control at a national or regional level. The point of contention and disagreement between the two camps is their targets of social control. Using ecological rhetoric, the far-right groups seek to build walls around the developed countries against the influx of poor migrants, while the progressive greens focus on economic policies of developed countries.

Localism

As shown above, anti-neoliberal economic globalization is said to be linked to the growing transnational migration. On the flip side of the same coin, localism then appears to mitigate the problem of migration. In this context, it is not surprising to see that many anti-immigration lobby groups and far-right parties use the discourse of localism to justify anti-immigrant, nationalist agenda. Localism (or localization used here interchangeably) here refers to economic and political measures to prioritize a local place as the site for production, consumption, employment, cultural identity and political governance. Localism has two dimensions, economic localization and political localization. Economic localization is often accompanied by measures to reduce the scales of economy and political localism seeks to devolve decision making power back to local communities, towns and cities.

It should be stressed that localism is not necessarily a right-wing political campaign. In many cases, the opposite case is true. Localisation is advocated by left-wing libertarians (eco-socialists/eco-anarchists/eco-feminists), social justice advocacy groups, Green Parties and environmental think-tanks such as the Institute for Local Self Reliance, the Post Carbon Institute, the International Forum on Globalization (IFG), the Friends of the Earth, the Transition Movement, and the Worldwide Fund for Nature. Critiquing the export-oriented global economy, the IFG envisages an alternative society based on a "non-global, powered-down, pro-local" economy (Mander, 2007:11). This goal can be achieved, IFG argues, if we adopt an economic model geared toward local production (using local resources) for local consumption (local markets). Some eco-fundamentalists criticize not only neoliberal capitalism but also all variants of industrialism including green Keynesianism and State socialism.

For instance, Sakar[9], an eco-socialist, believes that to build a better world, people must adopt a "*limits to growth paradigm*" that stresses "the limitedness of natural resources" (2011: 179). He asserts that in order to avoid ecological crisis, our current economies must contract to a point where preindustrial, labour intensive, subsistence economies replace the current system of production and distribution (Sakar, 1999). Similarly, Bahro (a founder of the German Green Party) advocated a complete withdrawal from the world market (Bahro, 1986: 18) as a desirable economic alternative. Bahro argued that eco-communes should have a "mode of simple, non-expanded reproduction of their material basis" enough for the reproduction of basic necessities of daily life (Bahro, 1986: 14). Notwithstanding internal disagreements with regard to the degree of localization or

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[9] Eco-fundamentalists dogmatically reject any green growth potential of eco-technology. For instance, brushing off the potential gains of existing eco-technologies, Sakar fails to tackle arguments from eco-modernizers such as Hawken and Lovins (1999).

deglobalization[10], almost all localizers agree on some immediate measures of localization. Pro-local action can range from buying from local shops (including farmers' markets and local food co-ops instead of shopping at transnational food and retail outlets such as Wal-Mart) to the use of local gardens (Moore, 2010). It also includes the use of community banks, local currencies and alternative non-monetary forms of economic exchange such as Local Exchange and Trading Systems (LETS) in which people use community tokens instead of the official state currency for all types of service exchange[11].

A major benefit of localism is argued to be ecological. Local production for local consumption is said to require less transportation and thus less greenhouse gas emissions (Curtis, 2003: 94). Food localism is a case in point. Emphasizing ecological benefits of localism, food localist organizations such as Beyond Factory Farming, a national organization in Canada, seek to minimize food mileages. Opposing neoliberal globalisation that fosters export-oriented growth, localisers call for import substitute strategies, self-reliance, and meeting local needs as a priority (North, 2010: 587). Another benefit of localism is arguably to foster social networks of mutual care ("social capital") and to preserve unique local cultures. In this regard, Richard Heinberg, board secretary of the Post Carbon Institute, argues that "Local economic organization tends to yield art, music, stories, and literature that reflect the ecological uniqueness of place—and local culture in turn binds together individuals, families, and communities, fostering a sense of responsibility to care for one another and for the land" (Heinberg, November 17, 2011).

Localism is also advocated by many as a means to regain popular control over local resources and local economies. Critiquing "the loss of local control associated with neoliberal globalisation" (North, 2010: 587), localizers argue that economies must be "locally or communally-owned and controlled" through institutions like worker-owned and run co-operatives (North, 2010: 591). Additionally, localizers argue that the state should implement a mandatory "site-here-to-sell here" policy (Cavanagh and Mander, 2004: 83) or "performance requirements" rules that force foreign companies to use locally produced goods and employ local workers (Hines, 2000:131). International trade is to be reduced to only those items unavailable in locals including "some cash crops and minerals" (Hines, 2000: 242).

Despite the best intention of social activists, economic localism has problematic implications for global social justice. First, by prioritizing jobs and exports of one's

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[10] Their main disagreement is over the scale of localization such the scale of economic production and consumption, the use of technology appropriate to a desirable scale of economy, and the form of political governance appropriate to a new economy.

[11] Examples of the Local Exchange and Trading System (LETS) include the Bobbins and the Beacons in the UK as well as the Auckland Green Dollars, New Zealand. The Auckland Green Dollars was argued to be the largest LETS (with about 2000 members) in the world. See North (2005) and Barry and Proops (2000) for details of LETS.

own local communities or nation (all done in the name of eco-localism), wealthy countries may selectively limit imports and immigration in a manner to benefit their own business communities against others. In other words, economic localism in the wealthy part of the globe may function as disguised trade protectionism of the North. Especially in the climate of economic insecurity, anti-trade and anti-immigration policy suggestions gain ground among people as trade liberalization (via off-shore outsourcing) is perceived to put downward pressure on local wages and to take away local employments. Against such a backdrop, nationalist demands such as 'British jobs for British workers' or "buy American made" become popular as they appeal to the populace by making a patriotic prioritization of employment for local citizens.

With this obvious nationalist appeal of localism, it is not surprising to see that supporters of localism also include conservative right-wing parties and organizations in Europe and North America (Dentice, 2011). Similar to progressive localizers, right-wing localists also blame transnational corporations (but not the free market and capitalism per se) and neoliberal globalization for undermining local economies and popular sovereignty. As an alternative to globalization, they also advocate social policies oriented toward empowering the local. For instance, the National Front (France) and the Freedom Party (Austria) claim that globalization is "an elitist project precipitated by the actions of banks, large financial interests, and multinationals" (Zaslove, 2008) and that it is responsible for the decline of economies in Europe. A fascist organization, the Vanguard News Network, defends localism as it diagnoses that European "economic problems stem from internationalist baloney, e.g., cheap imports, EU mandates, WTO (World Trade Organization) rules, global financial trickery" (Vanguard News Network, 2011).

Similarly, blaming transnational corporation for economic exploitation, the British National Party (BNP), a far-right wing political party in Britain, calls for the protection of the local economy by ensuring local ownership (British ownership), the use of local resources (British workers instead of foreign workers), and the reduction of foreign imports (BNP, December 5, 2010a). The BNP also suggests tax measures to penalize off-shore outsourcing companies (BNP, December 5, 2010a) and to give incentives to big supermarkets that "supply more local and seasonal produce" (BNP, December 5, 2010b). The French National Front proposes "national and popular ownership" (Zaslove, 2008: 175) while the *Lega Nord*, a right-wing populist party in Italy, advocates an establishment of trade barriers "to protect domestic industries from global markets" and to "protect Italian products from markets in China and India" (Zaslove, 2008: 175). The *Lega Nord* demands that "locals, Italians (or Europeans) should be given work over immigrants" (Zaslove, 2008: 177) and that "foreigners must only be given work that citizens of each community clearly do not want" (Zaslove, 2008: 180). Blaming immigrants for domestic job loss, CCN (an anti-immigration lobby group) claims that

"American workers suffer \$133 billion in wage losses resulting from immigrant competition" (CCN, 2011b: 1) and that "mass immigration results in the displacement of almost 2 million U.S. workers from their jobs annually" (CCN, 2011c:1).

As mentioned, political decentralization is arguably to strengthen popular control over the political decision-making processes. However, it should be noted that right-wing libertarians and conservative groups also advocate devolution as they oppose any redistributive justice through government taxations. The idea of dismantling a welfare state and decentralizing political power resonates well with most right-wing groups. As the prominent ecologist, Goldsmith, argued even four decades ago, "Among those activities which must be radically decentralised is welfare. At the moment the State, by usurping those responsibilities that should be fulfilled at the communal and family levels, is contributing to their disintegration by rendering them largely redundant". (Goldsmith, 1973) Echoing this right-wing libertarian argument but framing it as giving more power to local communities, the BNP asserts, "Power should be devolved to the lowest level possible so that local communities can make decisions which affect them' " (BNP, May 12, 2010).

Right-wing libertarians reject a strong welfare state and instead advocate the cultivation of new cooperative forms of labour (De Benoist and Champetier, 2000: 17). For instance, the *Lega Nord* supports social policies "with as little state involvement as possible and with as low a rate of taxation as possible" (Spektorowski, 2003:63). The *Lega Nord* also advocates a 'diffuse economy' of pre-industrial social environment in which people are either "self-employed or employed in small-sized firms (like artisans and shopkeepers living in medium-sized towns)" (ibid.: 63). It considers the "diffuse economy" as an "alternative both to traditional big business capitalism and to an underground economy of cheap immigrant labor" (ibid.:63). Likewise, opposing a centralized welfare state and "hypercompetitive market-oriented economies", de Benoist proposes that society should strengthen "a third sector (partnerships, mutual societies, and cooperatives) as well as autonomous organizations of mutual aid based on shared responsibility, voluntary membership, and non-profit organizations" (de Benoist and Champetier, 2000: 18).

A decentralized structure of political governance may undermine national or state efforts to provide some minimum support for marginalized social groups. Thus, it is not surprising to see that BNP sees political opportunities in the Localism Bill[12] of 2011 in the UK. A BNP Councillor James North argues that the localism bill "offers an unprecedented opportunity to impact upon society in favour of the

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[12] The bill includes measures to allow councils to terminate the right to a council house for life and to decide who is eligible for housing supports. The bill also allows people to hold local referendums on any local issues (BBC, 13 December 2010).

indigenous population" (i.e., white English according to BNP's definition) (BNP, no date). BNP leaders consider using the new power that local councils have, such as calling for a referendum on any local issue or deciding who gets into social housing, to their advantage. For instance, BNP proposes to use the bill to stop culturally accommodating practices such as serving halal meat in schools (BNP, no date). Like BNP, UKIP advocates greater use of referenda and decentralisation (UKIP 2010).

Not surprisingly, this libertarian principle of political localism (devolution) is a rallying cry for many conservatives. The Republican Liberty Caucus, whose aim is to advance the principles of minimal government within the Republic Party, advocates localism (Canfield, 2011). Emphasising "local independence", the platform of the Tea Party movement in the USA states, "The strength and resilience of a grassroots movement is the ability of citizens at the local level to determine their own platforms, agendas and priorities free of an overriding central leadership" (Tea Party, no date). The Alternative Right, a White-Supremacist organization in the USA, advocates localism as a necessary starting point for disseminating "radical traditionalism". As it put it, "It is where we stand the best chance of winning a battle. A tribe is easier to convert than a metropolis. A return to independent small towns that exist outside the polluting streams of multicultural slogans and pernicious bureaucratic interventions is the only foreseeable opportunity to make our ideas matter" (Casey, 2010).

As shown above, localism can turn out to be a regressive strategy, "as pursuing local control is not the same as pursuing social justice" (Pendras 2002: 823). Regulation at the local scale can also present "a new barrier to progressive development" (2002: 825) since without conscious efforts to make social justice a top priority, as Pendras put it, "the local scale can easily become a platform for insular, exclusionary practices, rather than an accessible arena in which to build effective social justice strategies" (2002: 830). Furthermore, in the absence of social justice activism, the local can be the arena where xenophobic groups proliferate and thrive. As discussed above, ecology, cultural diversity, and localism may mean different things to different people. Political localism, contrary to the wishes of some left-wing groups, can undermine the ability of the state to redistribute resources to benefit economically marginalized and poor regions.

Converging on economic nationalism?

As discussed, Green parties and progressive pro-local groups support economic localization in the name of "green economics" (also labelled as "local economics" or "community economics"). However, economic measures of localism, despite best intentions of Greens and progressive groups, may function as a Trojan horse for trade protectionist policies of the rich countries. The logic of economic localization, when applied to all areas of goods and services in the Global North, may serve to

justify policies of anti-immigration (by hiring local people instead of foreigners) and trade protectionism (by buying 'local' goods instead of imported ones). Some current trade disputes between nations as well as some anti-free trade movements clearly show this ambiguous nature of localism. Equating imports with exporting jobs, the Green Party of New Zealand led the "Buy Kiwi Made" campaign as a means to keep domestic jobs (NZ Greens 28 October, 2005). As the Green Party of NZ put it, "buying locally helps keep New Zealanders in jobs and supports our economy" (Green Party of New Zealand, no date). Likewise, Canadian and American eco-localist groups also support the "Buy American" or "Buy Canadian" campaigns.

A recent controversy over the sale of New Zealand farms to a Chinese company also underscores this problematic intersection between economic localism and economic nationalism. The Labour Party, Greens, and some right wing nationalists such as the New Zealand First Party, led the "New Zealand Not for Sale" campaign to oppose Chinese purchase of New Zealand farms. Although the campaign can be regarded as part of the growing movements against land-grabbing practices of transnational agro-corporations in some parts of the globe, this particular opposition has been criticized for fanning Sinophobic nationalism. The Green Party of NZ also opposed a business contract with Huawei, a Chinese corporation, on the ground that the company has a close tie with "the authoritarian Chinese government" that "kills and imprisons Tibetans" (Hughes, 2012). Opposing trade liberalization with China, the Green Party further argues that the manufacturing sector of New Zealand will be hollowed out and that China with its large trade surplus money will take over New Zealand firms. Some political analysts argue that in the absence of similar campaigns against Australian and American firms, the two major sources of foreign direct investment (FDI) in NZ, such a high profile public campaign against Chinese FDI is suspected of being motivated by sinophobic economic nationalism (Moore, 2012).

Against the backdrop of economic troubles in the Euro-zone area and the United States, trade sanctions such as anti-dumping measures are often called upon by the governments of the developed countries against their economic rivals. Both right-wing conservatives and progressive environmental groups in the Global North uncritically support selective trade barriers either on a "humanitarian" ground or on the ground of "national security". The Green Party of New Zealand, for instance, has joined such a China-bashing anti-trade campaign. Quoting China's poor human rights record, Greens oppose trade liberalization with China (Green Party of New Zealnd, 2008). They suggest that trade sanctions against countries with poor human rights records are necessary in order to prevent the global race to the bottom. Surely, to be consistent with linking trade with human rights, they should also oppose trade with colonial settler countries (the USA, Canada, and Australia) and most Asia Pacific countries on humanitarian grounds.

After all, the US government is responsible for violation of human rights on a massive scale, through illegal military occupations of countries in the Middle East and the continuing inhumane treatment of prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp. Despite the official apology for Canada' s policy of cultural genocide against indigenous peoples through forced residential schooling, Canada, together with the USA and Australia, undermine efforts for empowering aboriginals by opposing the United Nation's resolution on the rights of indigenous peoples. While making vociferous condemnations of China's occupation of Tibet and suppression of rights of ethnic minorities in China, those same human rights campaigners hardly ever question similar human rights violations in other trade partners from the developed countries. For instance, Japan, despite Okinawans' aspiration for national liberation, continues to occupy Okinawa, a Japanese colony since the late 19 century. Additionally, Japan can be also criticized for its continuous discrimination against Koreans in Japan. The point here is that progressive groups of global social justice should be mindful about real (nationalist) political motives behind such a "humanitarian" imperialist discourse.

Other environmentalists add 'social security' to the list of reasons for immigration control. Meyerson, a member of the Sierra Club[13], argues that "unregulated movement of people poses serious security risks" (Meyerson, 2004: 65) and that "in the absence of any immigration restrictions, it is estimated that several million people would migrate to the United States each year" (Meyerson, 2004: 64). This position is not fundamentally different from the view of economic nationalists who prioritize national citizens' access to employment and public services. Economic nationalists would argue that "immigration should be controlled to deliver the best possible economic, social and welfare conditions for citizens," if not, "uncontrolled immigration poses a threat to public order and social stability" (Balabanova and Balch, 2010: 384). As in the case with the 'humanitarian' sanction approach, progressive greens should be mindful about a potential association between national security and economic nationalism.

Relating to eco-localization, progressive environmentalists propose to build a green economy. At the national policy level, Greens and trade unions in OECD countries seek to pressure their governments to implement policies geared toward a sustainable development. The emergence of Blue-Green alliances is a case in point. Spring Alliance in Europe, the Apollo Alliance (the USA), the Blue Green Alliance (the USA), the Green Economy Network (Canada), and the Blue Green Canada are notable examples of the labour-environment coalition. They press for two major policy changes: public investment in the green economy and a fair trade, a global

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[13] Ecological groups such as the Sierra Club have internal disagreements over immigration control. Currently, it holds a "neutral" stand on immigration (Meyerson, 2004). A chronological list of Sierra Club resolutions related to population policy from 1965 through 2003 can be found at http://www.sierraclub.org/policy/conservation/population.asp. (cited in Meyerson, 2004)

framework that can ethically and ecologically regulate a global capitalist economy (Park, 2013). For a fair trade, they propose that all trade agreements should include labour and environmental standards in the form of enforceable social clauses (van Roozendaal, 2009; Krueger 1998; Blair 2008). In actual practices, however, these measures are either rarely enforced (Blair 2008) or used very selectively, against economic rivals for geo-political reasons. Developed countries put up trade barriers to developing countries by selectively using labor or environmental standards as a geo-economic and geo-political tool to discipline them (Krueger 1998). Against this backdrop, it should be noted that many trade unions and civil society groups in the global South oppose the proposal for linking trade with labour and environmental standards (Park, forthcoming). As Bonefeld reminds us, "The global economy, whether governed 'justly' or 'unjustly', does not represent universal human values but particular domestic class interests." (2006: 54).

As demonstrated throughout the paper, eco-localism in practice is often indistinguishable from economic nationalism of the Global North. What are the implications for progressive social justice movements? I argue that the ambiguity of localism stems from their flawed analysis of globalization and that they should revise their foci on localism. Dissenters of globalization across the broader political spectrum tend to frame globalization as predominantly the power of transnational corporations and banks while perceiving the locality as the victim of globalization as well as the primary site for resistance to globalization. As in the case of the far-right anti-globalizers, the left-wing green dissenters of globalization also frame globalization as the corporate power that undermines "the public interest" and local communities. Just like the right-wing counterpart, by embracing the myth of innocent, harmonious local community of small commodity producers and small farmers, the left-green actors also propose "the localisation of the world economy" as a key strategy against globalization (Bonefeld, 2006: 40). This localisation perspective is, to borrow Bonefeld's words, reactionary and "creepy" (2006: 40). As he put it,

> (The) rejection of border-jumping capitalism that ruins local economies presumes that local disharmonies are merely imported from outside, uprooting the organic self of communal enterprise and its livelihood. (Their) myth of the organic society belongs to those same neo-nationalist conceptions of anti-globalisation that gained electoral success in Austria (Haider), France (Le Pen) and Italy (Fini), to name but a few. (2006: 43-44)

As shown above, despite differences in immigration policies and actual practices, both the far-right and the left ecology movements share the same diagnostic (globalization as the root cause of ecological and economic crises) and prognostic frames (localization). As a result, progressive localism is very likely to be

manipulated by domestic capital interests and the nation-state that seeks to enhance national competitiveness in the world markets and to perpetuate inequality in the international relations. As Bonefeld succinctly put it,

> the critique of globalisation fails if it is merely a critique of speculative capital and that is, a critique for productive accumulation. The critique of speculation has to be a critique of the capitalist form of social reproduction. Without such a critique of capital, the critique of speculation is reactionary. It summons the idea of finance and banks and speculators as mere merchants of greed. In the past, such views underpinned modern anti-Semitism and its idea of a community of blood and soil. The fact that Nazism espoused 'industry' and rejected what it saw as vampire-like finance, should be sufficient to highlight the rotten character of such a critique of globalisation. (Bonefeld, 2006: 55).

In short, the critique of globalization should go beyond the critique of merely some aspects (speculative and transnational) of capitalism but touch directly on disharmonious exploitative relations of capital and labor in local economies that exist not outside or against the world market but rather function as an integral part of international division of labor *within* the world market. Green activists claim that the main enemy is "the 'way of life' addicted to capitalist consumer culture" (Barry, 2012: 113). Notwithstanding their criticisms of consumerist capitalism, environmentalists are less concerned about foreseeable consequences of "eco-localist" practices of the North and adverse impacts on the South by inadvertently legitimating domestic capital interests in their own countries.

Conclusion

This paper examined three salient themes (cultural diversity, ecology and local autonomy) in the anti-immigration discourse of far-right political parties and civil society groups in the North. What is salient in the chauvinistic discourse of the far right is that they adopt the mantle of environmentalism and popular democracy. In this context, this paper sought to investigate whether the chauvinistic agendas of right-wing groups are indeed similar to those of progressive ecological groups. It found that despite similar concepts, their objectives are fundamentally different. At the same time, however, it also found some troubling signs pointing to a potential conversion of the two forces on policies of economic and political localism.

Challenging the prevailing assumption in the anti-globalization literature that local centered, eco-friendly alternatives are inherently progressive, this paper discussed problematic implications of eco-localism for international trade, development, and global justice. The fact that the far-right groups jump on the bandwagon of localization campaign in the global North shows that seemingly progressive eco-

localism is almost indistinguishable from economic nationalism of industrialized countries. This problematic conversion of localist ideas urgently requires progressive Greens to pay attention to limits to ecological and social justice solutions based on a localist strategy. Territorial power, especially stressing the local, should not be automatically viewed as a progressive alternative to neoliberal globalization. As Pendras put it, "no strategy is in itself 'progressive' or 'socially just' " (Pendras 2002: 830) especially when we fail to consider its impact on peoples and societies in other parts of the world. The role of critical scholars is then to question real implications of localist policies for peoples and countries whose relations and capabilities are unequally shaped by uneven access to power and resources.

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About the author

Mi Park is the author of *Democracy and Social Change: A History of Student Movements in South Korea* (2009) and the co-author of *Student Activism in Asia: Between Protest and Powerlessness* (edited by M. Weiss and E. Aspinall, 2012). Her works on social movements, international political economy and contentious politics in Asia have appeared in international journals such as *Globalizations, Critical Sociology, Korea Journal* and the *Asia Europe Journal*. She is currently a guest professor at Reutlingen University in Germany. She can be reached at mipark AT alumni.lse.ac.uk