

# *The Ideological Framework of the French Nouvelle Droite and the Contemporary Finnish Far Right*

## *Differentialism and Anti-egalitarianism in Xenophobic Discourse*

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### Abstract

This article deals with the xenophobic discourse of contemporary Finnish anti-immigrationists, namely the anti-immigration faction of the Perussuomalaiset party and its 'metapolitical' background organisation - Suomen Sisu. It focuses on two main themes - differentialism and anti-egalitarianism - as they have been conceptualised by the French Nouvelle Droite (ND) and the European New Right. Because these themes have been used to serve a variety of anti-immigration movements and parties within Europe, the article examines whether the selective reception of differentialism and anti-egalitarianism have a part to play in the xenophobic discourse within Finnish politics as well. The Finnish anti-immigrationists share some rhetorical strategies with the ND and use these selectively and in a modified form. It also shows the Finnish faction's aim to be part of a European nationalist and communitarian conservatism to legitimise their own otherwise harshly expressed anti-immigration views.

Keywords: far right, New Right, immigration, xenophobia

This article deals with the political party in Finland known as *Perussuomalaiset* (PS)<sup>1</sup> and the specific faction within it which is known for its radical anti-immigration views and language. The PS have experienced a sensational rise in Finnish politics since 2011 and are presently in the government coalition and the party with the second largest number of representatives in parliament. PS are known for both the populist and Eurosceptic views of their leader Timo

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Soini and their influential anti-immigration faction that have been rather euphemistically dubbed ‘immigration critics’.

These ‘immigration critics’, however, are not just a faction within PS. They represent various anti-immigration stances and, in this sense, must also be viewed with relation to the metapolitical background organisation called the *Suomen Sisu* (SuSi), as there are people who are active in both organisations. The rhetoric of these anti-immigrationists is thus my focus here; and the starting point comes from my long-held belief that the differentialist themes and concepts first launched and widely discussed in relation to egalitarianism, by the French *Nouvelle Droite* in 1968,<sup>2</sup> have been selectively interpreted by the Finnish anti-immigration movement and used in a more populist and simplified form.

My discussion takes place against a backdrop which emphasises the heterogeneous and international character of the *Nouvelle Droite* (ND) school of thought. Although it is largely identified with its French origins and its figure-head Alain de Benoist, the ideologically pluralist movement has become adopted in different European countries (Camus 2006). As well as having various counterpart ‘think tanks’ throughout Europe, the movement has gone on to affect the discourse of more than one European populist and anti-immigration party. The French *Front National* (FN) is an obvious example (it actually has had dissidents from the ND among its ranks),<sup>3</sup> but another is Italy, where some people have ideological, strategical or personal links with the New Right movement (Camus 2006; Anton-Méllon 2013; Bar-On 2013; Taguieff 1994).

Piero Ignazi (2003, 24) has suggested that, even if the New Right’s direct impact on various parties has so far been relatively limited, and goes somewhat “beyond the intentions of the *Nouvelle Droite* itself”, as a broader movement it has definitely produced a discursive shift within these parties. Various extreme right parties have exploited the *Nouvelle Droite* legacy to seek more acceptably moderate-looking formulations with relation to issues like national identity, immigration and definitions of racism. For example the ND’s argument about the ‘right to difference’ has served the extreme right’s need to move its discourse from harsh exclusionist rhetoric to a more moderate, culturally based interpretation; and this has generally become known as ‘new racism’. It is specifically these differentialist interpretations that I will be focusing on in this article, with the accompanying rejection of egalitarianism that it entails.

Finnish anti-immigrants have commanded quite a lot of attention in the Finnish discussion recently. For example, there have been books and studies made on Finnish anti-immigrant discourse and rhetoric (e.g., Hannula 2011; Hytönen 2010); the populism of the PS (e.g., Wiberg 2011); and recently even the PS’s welfare chauvinism (Pyrhönen 2015). Meanwhile, Koivulaakso et al (2012) have approached the subject from a somewhat wider European perspective and, to my knowledge, are the first to draw attention to the reception

and use of ND concepts in Finland. However, as their study only refers to the concepts on a general level, via secondary sources, I want to study them here in the light of their primary sources instead, in other words with reference to Alain de Benoist. In doing so, I am fully aware of the significantly different historical, intellectual, political and geographical contexts of the Finnish anti-immigration movement and the *Nouvelle Droite* in France. My intention has been to discuss only the selective reception of these ideas to emphasise the fact that the Finnish movement does not live in a vacuum or is isolated from ideas of this genre elsewhere in Europe.

When talking of ‘xenophobic’ or ‘anti-immigrant’ discourse here, I am referring mainly to the writings of Jussi Halla-aho (who personifies the anti-immigration stance in Finland), *Suomen Sisu*, and those in the PS against immigration.<sup>4</sup>

### ***La Nouvelle Droite* and Finnish Anti-immigrationists**

Before proceeding to the substance in more detail, I will first give a short description of the PS in Finland, and the ND in France, to better illustrate the role of the anti-immigration stance and its metapolitical implications.

GRECE (*le Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne*), which is better known as the *Nouvelle Droite* movement, was established in the same year and partly as a response to the largely left-wing student protests of 1968.<sup>5</sup> As a school of thought (*école de pensée*), the ND aimed theoretically, philosophically and metapolitically to renew French nationalism and right-wing thought, and was personified in its leader - Alain de Benoist. Yet, it also became more than just the homogenous movement gathered around a single figure, and has since grown to incorporate various persons, groups and ideological nuances. Furthermore, the movement has had different phases over the years and is no longer limited to France but also has advocates and publications in Germany, Italy and Belgium (see e.g., Camus 2006, 2013; Durantont-Crabol, 1988; Taguieff 1994).

The ideological core of *Nouvelle Droite* thought lies in its critique of modernism, liberalism, and the commercial globalisation of the world, i.e., against the homogenising effects of universalism. Its view of society is variously described as being organicist, communitarian, and yet also anti-individualist and anti-egalitarian. Racial and cultural questions (in a more or less moderate form), differentialism, identities, “roots”, and (ethno)regionalism have been among the key issues of the movement over the years, rather than nationalism *per se*. At times, sociobiological, racial psychological, and social darwinistic viewpoints have been emphasised as well - in the traditionalism of Julius Evola, for example ( *ibid.*; see also Spektorowski 2003; de Benoist and Champetier 1999).

The New Right movement has not exactly spread to Finland, but there has been a marginal, yet continuous interest in its ideology in the country over the years. As in other European countries, this has particularly been the case among the younger generation influenced by the extreme right and nationalism. From the early 1990s to the 2000s, radical nationalist Tapio Linna edited Finnish metapolitical magazine *Näköpiiri* which brought out Alain de Benoist's theories and published, for example, an extensive interview of him (*Näköpiiri* 1, 1999).<sup>6</sup> The magazine served as an important theoretical reference for those with nationalist interests. Indeed, the founders of *Näköpiiri* had close ties with the *Suomen Sisu* organisation, another metapolitical think tank and study group, founded in 1998. *Suomen Sisu* itself, has also referred to Alain de Benoist (e.g., hints for further reading), but since its policy is not really to go in for name-dropping, the articles and the programmes do not make any explicit references to him (Koivulaakso et al. 2012, 80-92; 110-112; Grönroos 2008). SuSi is, however, closely linked to the online magazine *Sarastus*, which openly discusses traditionalist and New Right matters.<sup>7</sup> *Sarastus* is maintained by the (somewhat controversial) essayist and translator, Timo Hännikäinen.<sup>8</sup>

*Suomen Sisu* at first provided a forum for a variety of more or less radical nationalists, but from about 2004 onwards, the activists of SuSi started to participate in municipal and then parliamentary politics, mainly within the ranks of *Perussuomalaiset*. (Eg. Koivulaakso et al. 2012, 110-112) At present, the SuSi members now form the core of the PS's anti-immigrant faction and due to these members' successes in local and parliamentary elections, *SuSi* is much more involved in everyday politics than ever before. SuSi officially proclaims itself 'politically independent' of any party; nevertheless it has direct connections via particular people to the PS party and its parliamentary group. For example, the SuSi leader, Olli Immonen, is an incumbent MP of the PS; while one of its longest standing members is Jussi Halla-aho, who is a linguist with a PhD<sup>9</sup>, and the *de facto* leader of the entire anti-immigration scene in Finland. He is also a former MP and an incumbent MEP for the PS in Brussels.<sup>10</sup> The importance of the anti-immigration faction within the party is thus hard to ignore, and its autonomy within the PS is strengthening all the time. In addition, the PS party owes its success to the fact that the anti-immigration theme has been made into a key political issue by party activists and broadly supported by background affiliations (via metapolitical activity and forums on the internet).<sup>11</sup>

The SuSi association can therefore be seen as an essential background feature of the PS. SuSi members have brought their ideas to the 'mother' party's programme mostly in moderate forms and, for example, by legislative initiatives to modify the law concerning racial hatred, which they interpret as a law which restricts the freedom of speech (see MP's legislative motions in *Lakialoite* 38/2013, and *Lakialoite* 39/2013). In spite of these attempts to re-

main moderate, some of the more radical arguments on immigration have led to court judgements.<sup>12</sup> As a consequence, anti-immigrant verbal provocations have since been mostly expressed in extra-parliamentary contexts, such as internet blogs (see Vaarakallio 2015). At present, the PS party has a large parliamentary group (38 MPs), four ministers (among whom Timo Soini is the Foreign Minister), and the Speaker of the House (Maria Lohela).

The anti-immigration faction within the PS may be a single issue movement, but the party itself is heterogeneous. While this faction's focus is purely on immigration and related issues such as national identity, multiculturalism, and their attitude towards Islam, there are other factions in the PS which are not so interested or necessarily aware of the anti-immigration faction's hardcore rhetoric. These factions include (with some overlap) the 'pure populists', who are usually also the devoted followers of Timo Soini; a faction of social democratically oriented trade union activists; and a faction of former Finnish Rural Party (SMP) members.

Besides the evident difference in intellectual 'emphasis' between the PS anti-immigrationists and the *Nouvelle Droite*, there are also major ideological differences between the two with regard to issues such as economics and nationalism. The ND has always aimed to be scientifically rigorous, for instance, and in so doing it has been willing to make a conscious break with traditional nationalism *à la française*. By this I mean the ND made a conscious effort to move conceptually away from the Maurrasian emphasis on putting "politics first" (*politique d'abord*) to putting "metapolitics first". The fundamental idea behind the ND was, after all, to achieve a kind of "right-wing Gramscism" or *révolution des esprits* within right-wing politics, collective consciousness, and culture (Camus 2006, 23). In their "Manifesto of the French New Right in the Year 2000" (henceforth Manifesto for 2000), de Benoist and Champetier stated that "metapolitics is not politics by other means" and claimed that for the last 30 years, the movement's aim had been to go "beyond political divisions and through a new synthesis, to renew a transversal mode of thought and, ultimately, to study all areas of knowledge in order to propose a coherent worldview." (de Benoist and Champetier 1999, 117).

Paradoxically this is the point where the 'methodological' connection or strategic parallel between GRECE (or ND) and contemporary Finnish anti-immigration rhetoric is most visible. I am not saying that Finnish anti-immigrationists have been aiming for the same ideological revolution as GRECE, but *Suomen Sisu* nevertheless wants some kind of cultural revolution by emphasising its explicit metapolitical mission of a nationalist education. Jussi Halla-aho has also claimed that *Suomen Sisu* has already achieved its main strategic goal to dominate the debate over Finnish nationalism and immigration.

“[A]lthough many members of *sisulaiset* (Suomen Sisu) have ended up in politics, the real achievement, in my mind, has been to dominate this political forces that is most discussed today [...and] Sisu has played its part, in not only providing the politicians that have grown up within its ranks but also the surge of electoral support from 0.5 to 20% for the PS” (Halla-aho 2013; see also Teemu Lahtinen’s [SuSi] comments in Koivulaakso et al. 2012, 110-11).

## Differentialism

### a) From race to culture

Differentialism is most famously crystallised in the ND slogan which calls for the right to difference (*droit à la différence*). This concept of ‘difference’ was, from the 1960s onwards, at the centre of anti-racist left wing arguments, and the *Nouvelle Droite* were attempting to adopt and redefine it for their own ends. Nowadays differentialism, at least in the French context, is perhaps more commonly associated with generally racist notions.

In the 1950s, the concept of differentialism was already being used within the field of ‘ethnic psychology’ by Georges A. Heuse. He endorsed “racial differences” and attacked UNESCO’s allegedly egalitarian Declaration on Race (1950). Meanwhile, in 1970, the Marxist, Henri Lefebvre published his *Manifeste différentieliste* as a call against homogenisation in the French context following the disturbances of May ’68 (see Taguieff 2013; Lefebvre 1970). The crucial point here, however, is not to concentrate on these earlier definitions of differentialism (within their various respective contexts), but on the fact that the ND was taking the same concept, and using it to endorse a new discourse that absolutised and essentialised differences between *cultures* instead of races. It was this cultural differentialism that became the key concept which paved the way for other related ND concepts too, such as anti-egalitarianism or the dangerously homogenising implications of an ideology of the Same (*l’idéologie du Même*).

The early texts of Alain de Benoist highlight the Indo-European heritage of Europe and they move the emphasis away from a restrictive French nationalism to a new ‘European nationalism’ which was based on notions both of a “white race” and a commonly shared European culture. This brand of nationalism was meant to be a “scientifically” rigorous project towards forming a federal and pagan Europe (including Russia) in which “the new type of individual” would flourish. The principal enemies were Judeo-Christian ethics, liberal economics, Marxism, and American consumerism which were all seen by de Benoist as vainly attempting to be inherently universal or ideologically egalitarian.

The point was that European civilisation was at war against these universalist egalitarian enemies, and the only means to win this battle was to seize the cultural power and thus to destroy the “intellectual terrorism of the left” (in other words to gain cultural hegemony before political). European civilisation was seen in purely racial and ethnic terms in the early texts of de Benoist, and the core idea somehow followed that it was necessary to preserve different “racial groups” and their collective identities and to avoid any kind of mixing between these ethnic communities; in other words, the segregation and consolidation (absolutisation) of racial or ethnic differences between them (de Benoist 1979; Taguieff 1994).

Once this somewhat elusive case for preserving racial diversity was made, it was but a short yet important step to call for the defence of cultural diversity and every people’s *droit à la différence*. That is the right of each “culture” to remain as it is and to protect its identity. In this ‘new’ language, the word “race” from earlier racist theories has thus simply been omitted and been replaced with “culture”. If racial inequality legitimised segregation in the ’60s, then it was a respect for ‘cultural differences’ that legitimised it in the ’70s (because it was a concept that looked more moderate and acceptable). Either way, this could also be seen as a shift from straightforward racism to what has become known as ‘cultural racism’ (see Taguieff 1994, 1987).

Before moving on, however, it should be noted that differentialism is not purely linked to cultural racism, but it has also served as the grounds for biologically exclusionist racist arguments at one extreme, and anti-racist arguments on the other (cf. Taguieff 2013).

## **b) The cult of diversity or its denial**

The cultural and communitarian definition of Europe is the trademark of Alain de Benoist and GRECE and the manner of speaking about protecting authentic cultural differences has been widely popularised. The idea of cultural difference is equally present both in the PS’s political programme and in a number of texts by Halla-aho and *Suomen Sisu*, even if the concept of differentialism is not explicitly expressed. For instance, the PS’s electoral programme from the year 2011 refers to national identities and cultures, while describing Finland in strongly nationalistic terms, referring to the “Finnish miracle”, independence, authenticity, and the Finnish national movement among other things. It says: “one’s own national culture is the only thing that each people is able to add to the world’s diversity”. This idea of natural diversity is developed further by *Suomen Sisu*, in an echo of the premises of GRECE.

“All peoples, races and cultures are valuable as such and their natural development must be guaranteed. The elimination of this natural diversity of humankind, in

the misleading name of multiculturalism should be stopped. Peoples must not be mixed together in an unnatural way and so destroy naturally developed cultures by replacing them with a wide range of global subcultures” (*Suomen Sisu* platform 2002).<sup>13</sup>

Here the idea of segregation, and the undesirability of mixing up cultures is clearly put forward, while the idea of natural is only thrown into relief in terms of what is “unnatural” (i.e., the global subcultures which are a result of this mix-up). The natural development of a ‘real’ culture in this argument somehow presupposes the idea of discrete cultures which should remain that way, and not be artificially eradicated by multiculturalism. In *Nouvelle Droite* terms, this differentialism or ‘cult of diversity’ (Taguieff 2013, 477) is seen as the best way to prevent this result of universalism. Natural cultural diversity is made sacred while, at the same time, it is described as the opposite to multiculturalism.

According to Finnish anti-immigrationists, the non-assimilation of immigrants which multiculturalism encourages will lead to a “change of population” in the long run, to the point where “Europe’s cultural continuum, which has continued for 2000 years, and even the much older ethno-linguistic continuum will break (it will not simply change or be enriched, but that it will break) within a century [...]”<sup>14</sup>. This means that current minorities (of immigrants, muslims etc.) are seen as becoming the majority in Europe and the ‘original Europeans’ the victims and the minority. In Halla-aho’s view, “[m]ulticulturalism is a group psychosis possessing the whole western world”<sup>15</sup>. It seems that it is those who want to mix together diversity and differences - that are the ideological enemy, namely the ‘multiculturalists’ or *monikulturistit*. In other words, Halla-aho commonly plays with concepts of diversity and difference. He uses these concepts sarcastically and pejoratively and emphasises that these concepts belong to the ideological enemy, namely to ‘multiculturalists’ (*monikulturistit*). (See e.g., Halla-aho 2009, 285-286)

Multiculturalism, allegedly a state ideology, has led to the situation where all foreign cultures are raised above the European culture, which then unfairly becomes what Halla-aho has called a “non-cultural culture” (*Kulttuuriton Kulttuuri*™)<sup>16</sup>. The other anti-immigration complaint is that accusations of discrimination and racism are more often levelled at the Finnish ‘original’ majority than against the immigrant minority.

The defence of “authentic” cultural diversity is directly linked with the simultaneous belief that the cultural melting pot of multiculturalism “endangers the culture of the original population” at least according to someone writing under the name of MN on the *Suomen Sisu* internet site. MN and Halla-aho’s main concern, however, seems to be that the principle to ‘protect’ different cultures unfortunately does not extend to “white western culture.” (<http://web.archive.org/web/20050215002635/http://www.suomensisu.fi/kirjasto/monikult.html>).

Nevertheless, there is an important disparity between the ND and Finnish anti-immigrationists with respect to their views on the assimilation or integration of immigrants. Alain de Benoist rejects the kind of assimilation currently in place in France, based on the Jacobin state idea of citizenship which, as it is in such an abstract form, “holds no interest in the collective identities nor in the cultural differences” of individuals (de Benoist and Champetier 1999, 135; de Benoist 2008). Instead, a communitarian model is proposed, which would “spare individuals from being cut off from their cultural roots and which would permit them to keep alive the structures of their collective cultural lives”. The authors even go so far as to say this could eventually lead to a complete “dissociation of citizenship from nationality” (ibid.).

According to de Benoist, “we are living nowadays in a multiracial but certainly not in a multicultural society”. His call for ethnopluralism therefore stems from a pessimism linked to his belief that “*tout le monde se trouve plongé dans un univers tristement monoculturel, celui de la logique du capital et de la course au profit*” (de Benoist 2008). But whereas de Benoist agonises about “the West’s conversion to universalism”<sup>17</sup>, and denies the benefits of a global market economy; Finnish anti-immigrationists seem to be just plain worried about a “multicultural nightmare” (in whatever form it takes) as well as the negative ramifications of a “multiculturalist state ideology” (see e.g., Immonen 2014a; PS’s immigration policy programme 2015). In 2009 however, perhaps to deflect accusations of inciting racial hatred, the SuSi declared on their main site that the principle reason for their organisation was to “maintain one’s own identity in an increasingly globalised and mixed world. We are interested in who we are and why are we here. We want to take good care (*huolehtia*) of our own roots”.

In this last quotation we can see the selective reception of certain *Nouvelle Droite* ideas, mixed with more traditional nationalist views in the calls to assert one’s identity, and to avoid the uprooting of people, mixing of races, and globalisation of cultures. In particular, the SuSi talk like the ND about preserving cultural identities and ‘organic, cultural roots’ (Immonen 2014b,c), but with an emphasis on *nationally* defined “ethnic roots”. One ND idea that they completely adhere to is that “[a]ll cultures have their own ‘center of gravity’ (Herder): different cultures provide different responses to essential questions. This is why all attempts to unify them end up destroying them. Man is rooted by nature in his culture” (de Benoist and Champetier 1999).

As Pierre-André Taguieff indicates (2013, 478), this ethnoculturalism illustrates the “new ethnic conservatism” of the movement which is based on biologically determined, hereditary (or *völkisch*) collective identities which should be defended. This theme is also visible in Finnish anti-immigration rhetoric, but with a somewhat blunter interpretation (that is, rejection of any kind of multiculturalism within a nation state). The above quotation not only

refers to Herder, but is also reminiscent of the nationalist, Maurice Barrès' rhetoric of *racines* and *terre* (see Vaarakallio 2004). In this sense, it is not so much new, but more like a mixture of old and new ideas, applied in a particular rhetorical context.

Ethnopluralism, ethnoculturalism, or differentialism in general, are all seen by the *Nouvelle Droite* as being on the opposite end of the scale from the homogenising tendencies of universalism, totalitarianism, monotheism, western imperialism and racism. "Differentialist anti-racism", as the Manifesto for 2000<sup>18</sup> so beautifully puts it, accepts "the other as Other through a dialogic perspective of mutual enrichment". In other words, the ND wants to explicitly step back from making qualitative judgements about races or cultures and thus cleverly avoids mentioning anything about superiority or inferiority.

As we can see from his blog post below, Jussi Halla-aho is not quite as subtle in his terminology.

"Because to my mind our own western culture is better than African or Asian cultures, I think it is necessary to barricade ourselves against them. [...] I, contrary to 'tolerants', support their right to existence as they are. As long as they are somewhere else than I am."<sup>19</sup>

In this quotation from a clear proponent of Finnish anti-immigration, the cultural difference is explicitly interpreted in terms of a self-evident, subjective hierarchy between different cultures. Taguieff would see this as a clear case of differentialist racism based on "heterophobia" (Taguieff 1994, 66-67), where the Other is evidently feared. A different, and perhaps cleverer way to make the same case is to do more as the ND has recently done, and appeal to "heterophilia", which emphasises how wonderful all the different cultures of the world are, precisely because they are naturally different, and this self-evident distance and incommensurability between different cultures must be preserved through exclusion to ensure that they continue to flourish. Cultural difference as a fundamental base for a rhetorical argument can therefore take two different forms (*hétérophobe*, *hétérophile*) and, although the ND has used both, it is clear that de Benoist most recently favours the latter.

But in Finland, the PS, *Suomen Sisu* and Halla-aho also use both types of argument to legitimise exclusion. Although they often confuse heterophile and heterophobic arguments, it is clear that heterophile arguments predominate in the texts intended for a wider audience (e.g., party programmes, parliamentary speeches), while the more heterophobic texts are reserved for blogs directly linked to the anti-immigration faction. In the latter context however, "glorifying difference" and "otherness" might also be dropped altogether, as it was, for example, in the so-called 'Sour' Election Manifesto (*Nuiva vaalimanifesti*)<sup>20</sup> of 2011.

So it seems that the Finnish anti-immigration faction does indeed play with concepts that originated in the ND context; but it is equally clear that the emphasis on cultural diversity or difference serves another purpose to what it does in the original context. In the Finnish discourse, the idea of cultural segregation is less hidden and resembles the ‘popularised’ and more straightforward form of the ND’s discourse, which was also put forth by the old ‘intellectual faction’ of the *Front National* (FN) in France. I am referring here mainly to the FN faction that had direct links to the ND (via the *Club de l’Horloge*) and which centred around the FN’s second-in-command, Bruno Mégret (see Mégret 1996) in the ’80s and ’90s. Therefore it might not be so far-fetched to argue that differentialist racism (Taguieff) is based on a belief in the insurmountability of cultural differences and the incompatibility of traditions and life-styles; and this now manifests itself in the radical right’s ‘rejection of multiculturalism’, which began with the premise of a ‘right to difference’ (cf. Balibar 1991, 17-28; Taguieff 2013, 460-488).

### Egalitarianism

Questioning egalitarianism is one of the *Nouvelle Droite*’s key concepts. Egalitarianism and differentialism are presented as contrasting concepts (differentialism is *the* method to struggle against a fallacious egalitarianism) and so anti-egalitarianism has thus also become one of the main political objectives of the ND.

This stance is very much linked with the pagan worldview of GRECE, because de Benoist felt it was hypocritical that Christian missionaries were able to spread their false proclamations of human equality before God while at the same time it was being colonised. This led to a ‘deculturation’ of those countries that were colonised. As for Europe, he argued that the Enlightenment and ideas of 1789 carried out the secular version of utopian egalitarianism and began, in that way, to kill off particular cultural features; with the French Third Republic finalising the destruction of ethnic cultures and regional languages (de Benoist 1974; 1977, 16). Another consequence of this is that because the declaration of human rights, and the “ideology” it espouses, stem from the philosophy of Enlightenment, it is culturally and historically bound to that period, and should thus not be treated as “universal”. From this, de Benoist then argues that the very concept of universal human rights is flawed. In his opinion, “all universalism tends to either ignore differences, or dispense with them altogether”<sup>21</sup>.

The analogy is thus drawn between egalitarianism and universalism, with the result that any kind of universal egalitarian values are, by definition, against

differentialism. For de Benoist, in the society where “equality reigns, differences disappear”,<sup>22</sup> his role is thus to be *for* the “diversity of the world” and *against* egalitarianism. Indeed, we can see from his earliest writings (see excerpt from *Vu de Droite* below), that this is what defines being a right-winger for him.

“J’appelle ici *de droite*, par pure *convention*, l’attitude consistant à considérer la *diversité* du monde et, par suite, les inégalités relatives qui en sont nécessairement le produit, comme un bien, et l’homogénéisation progressive du monde, prônée et réalisée par le discours bimillénaire de l’idéologie égalitaire, comme un mal” (de Benoist 1977, 16. Italics as in the original).

This widely quoted citation of de Benoist clarifies these reservations about “egalitarian ideology”. In 2002, de Benoist revisited this theme to also point out that a singular, abstract, culturally homogenous concept of equality ignores the various concrete contexts (or inequalities) that it requires to exist in the first place. In his estimation, it was significant that “egalitarian rhetoric” refers to inequalities in the plural, but equality in the singular. For him, this was an example of *l’idéologie du Même*, where “equality is just another word for the Same” (de Benoist 2002a, 413).<sup>23</sup>

De Benoist’s belief in the relativity and non-universality of equality is based on thorough discussions in many forums. The same idea, although in a more simplified form, can also be found on *Suomen Sisú’s* site and in Jussi Halla-aho’s texts. In fact, after the 2014 EU elections, SuSi organised a meeting in which the writer and essayist Timo Hännikäinen made a speech referring explicitly to de Benoist’s ‘ideology of the Same’. He referred to the perils of a “global culture” and “atomistic society” that disconnects people from their local ties and communities, Hännikäinen, following Benoist, called for diversity (*monimuotoisuus*) and a strong sense of identity (Hännikäinen 2014).

Jussi Halla-aho approaches what he calls “egalitarian nonsense” by denying the universal value of egalitarianism too. According to him, “one contemporary axiom is the equality and universality of human value/dignity” (Halla-aho 13.4. 2005)<sup>24</sup>. He argues that the grounds for this are false, as human value/dignity (i.e., the worth of each individual) is something that is impossible to measure.

“The claim that everyone has an equal value requires that a person’s value is a known and measurable quantity. If it cannot be measured, there is no way to determine to what extent each individual is in possession of it. [...] In fact there is no indication that the equality of human value, or indeed the entire concept of human value, is anything but an accepted convention and declaration, characteristic of our time[...].” (ibid.)

Halla-aho underlines the same temporal and contextual relativism regarding human rights as Alain de Benoist did earlier, but he then goes on to explicitly define differentialism in terms of inequality.

“The only measurable and therefore definitely real human value is an individual’s instrumental value. Individuals can justifiably be hierarchically ordered by the extent to which the absence of their abilities and knowledge from a community would weaken it. [...] Until someone demonstrates to me how everyone can have an equal value, I shall consequently consider differences of kind to lead to differences of value, and that everyone has a different value (*erilaisuus on eriarvoisuutta ja että kaikki ovat eriarvoisia*). Unlike egalitarians imagine, this does not result in gassing those of lesser value in the absence of valid reason.” (ibid.)<sup>25</sup>

Both de Benoist and Halla-aho deny the universalism of human rights because they argue that this is historically, ideologically and culturally bound to a certain era (the Enlightenment), when this was a commonly held political understanding. But now this consensus no longer holds, and both rest their arguments on the concept of difference. But whereas de Benoist stops at differentialism, Halla-aho goes further to spell out his case that difference actually means inequality. In the GRECE context, differentialism provides the meta-political grounds that legitimise anti-egalitarianism. In the Finnish context however, this lack of objectivity (because human dignity cannot be “scientifically” measured) leads to the conclusion that the only measurable value relates to a human being’s instrumental ‘usefulness’ to society.<sup>26</sup> But both de Benoist and Halla-aho maintain that the notion of universal equality among human beings is radically in conflict with the biological reality. Halla-aho has even written about this in English.

“All of the racial bitterness and misunderstanding, I believe, can be laid at the feet of liberal do-gooders that along with equality also desired a world univocally fair. Nature unfortunately is not so designed and neither is the genetic makeup of groups” (<http://jussi.halla-aho.com/whyracematters.html>).

The Finnish anti-immigration faction makes a clear division between equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes. Their Sour Election Manifesto states that “equality does not mean that everybody crosses the finishing line at the same time, but that everybody has a chance to start from the same line and at the same time.” Any practises based on ethnic quotas or positive discrimination should not be allowed, for example, in public recruitment. In this respect, representatives of minorities should not be given exemptions from social duties for religious or cultural reasons. Muslim doctors and nurses who refuse to treat patients of the opposite sex can be cited as an example” (*Nuiva vaalimanifesti* 2011).

This citation makes it clear, as do the previous ones from Halla-aho, that policies based on universal equality (i.e., on the equal value of every human being) should be rejected. Instead of this philosophical premise for universal equality, the focus should be on material premises and instruments, and on ‘opportunities’ that should be equal from the outset for everyone, but which should then allow for competition between individuals on ‘equal terms’, so that liberal competition (as in a market economy) will define the hierarchical position of an individual. The implication is that the (welfare) state or any other official institution should not be interested in whether individuals achieve ‘equal outcomes’ or not. It does not seem to matter that in any society, both socially and politically, ‘equal opportunities’ is an oxymoron - in fact, this might be precisely the aim of incorporating it into anti-egalitarian discourse. By pursuing an ‘equality of opportunities’, anti-egalitarians are drawing attention away from their clear antipathy towards the idea that human beings have the same value. The reality is however, that instrumental utility and competition have replaced any real kind of equality.

De Benoist, for his part, also makes clear in the Manifesto for 2000 an explicit distinction between natural and political equality. He draws a parallel between democratic and political equality and claims that “democratic equality is not an anthropological principle (it tells nothing about the nature of man); it does not claim that all men are *naturally* equal, but only that all citizens are *politically* equal, because they all belong to the same political body” (author’s own italics; de Benoist and Champetier 1999, 139). The classic political consequence from this argument is that now a legitimate distinction can be made between citizens and non-citizens. And this is precisely the type of argument commonly used within various anti-immigration movements (e.g., the French FN). In this way, the denial of universal human rights serves as a tool for the legitimate exclusion of immigrants.

### Rhetorical Strategies of the New Right

The New Right movement has significantly contributed to shaping current European thinking and conceptualisations of immigration, national identity, racism, and so forth over the years. From the beginning, this cultural and political ‘revolution’ of the New Right was linked not only to ideological but also rhetorical tools. Care was taken to “abandon an outdated mode of expression and adopt new habits” as the GRECE’s confidential internal circular stated in 1969 (Shields 2007, 145). This involved using greater ‘academic rigour’ to update vocabulary and concepts.

The New Right's rhetoric has since then found its way into nationalistically oriented right-wing parties, and been popularised there (e.g., French FN), but at the same time these conceptual transfers show that the rhetorical strategy of these parties has been to follow the path of double discourse. This applies not only to the FN (especially under Jean-Marie Le Pen's leadership), but also to the PS and its anti-immigration discourse. In effect, the official statements use more moderate language than those of factions in blogs or the media (Vaarakallio 2015).

One additional strategy within the PS that echoes the *Nouvelle Droite* is the use of neologisms, euphemisms, and especially reverse rhetoric (whereby concepts are hijacked). The ND has purposefully redefined various concepts of its political opponents for its own purpose such as the respect for cultural differences, or anti-racism. According to them, anti-racism stands for the preservation of ethnic/cultural differences and racism signifies a universal and imperial ideology which is sustained by Judeo-Christian beliefs that lead to rootlessness. Such ideologies include the demands for universal equality and human rights against which GRECE fights. Halla-aho and *Suomen Sisu* follow the ND's example in this sense. They also define totalitarianism as a multiculturalist state ideology which is maintained by a "tolerant elite", i.e., *suvaitsevaisto*. According to these "immigration critics", such state totalitarianism, which includes a censorship of the media, legitimises the prevalent multiculturalism every which way it can.

Another concept that is altered in meaning is 'discrimination'. The conventional interpretation of it as 'discrimination against minorities', is reversed to become the 'discrimination against the majority by minorities'. In other words, the anti-immigration faction sees the 'original' Finnish population as the real victims of the official ideology of tolerance - with all the ramifications that it entails. Similarly, racism is interpreted in terms of racism against the 'original' Finns, with 'positive discrimination' (i.e., preferential treatment of certain minorities who are traditionally excluded) being an example of this - as we have seen above. In this connection, the faction's statements have clearly social-darwinist and individualist connotations (see the 'Declaration Against Racism' made by the PS parliamentary group in 2011)

A huge amount of neologisms have also been invented within the PS, by modifying and redefining certain well-known concepts, for example "xenomania" is used to describe what they see as the "principle of ethnopositive existence/evaluation". As for euphemisms, the best example is of course *maanmuuttokriittisyys* ("immigration criticism"), which to my knowledge was invented by Halla-aho himself, and has now by and large replaced the original term *siirtolaisvastaisuus* ("being against immigration") that was previously used in the everyday mainstream media. This indicates how concepts can be loaded in a special way and then be smoothly transferred from specific to general use.

And this is especially important when this is as controversial a topic as immigration.

It is clear that Halla-aho's personal tactics are to cause a sensation with his choice of words. As a linguist he plays endlessly with words and concepts and deliberately tests the boundaries between free speech and language that is deemed politically correct (e.g., footnote 12; Vaarakallio 2015).

## Conclusion

The *Nouvelle Droite* offers a number of ways to reconceptualise certain notions, and the two that were under discussion here were differentialism and egalitarianism. My starting point was the fact that the ND's theoretical contributions have now crossed certain temporal, geographical and intellectual borders and are being selectively used and exploited by various extreme/radical right parties in Europe. More generally speaking, similar concepts, clearly identifiable and largely theorised within the New Right discourse, are also being selectively used and are on the move among various populist movements all over Europe, albeit in a more popularised form. It appears that this is what has also happened within the PS's anti-immigration faction and among its metapolitical affiliates. In this respect, it is not the conceptual transfers so much as the selective verbal acts which proclaim that one belongs to a certain tradition or group. These create an important sense of ideological unity or parallel world views. As Koselleck puts it, "[t]he concept is not merely a sign for, but also a factor in, political or social groupings" (Koselleck 2004, 156).

Therefore using similar concepts and conceptualisations that are known as being used by either the New Right or other radical right-wing movements with support, the Finnish anti-immigration faction can place its metapolitical background more effectively within the wider movement of European nationalist and communitarian conservatism.<sup>27</sup> Even if Halla-aho's or *Suomen Sisu's* interpretations of concepts such as differentialism or egalitarianism differ in some ways from the ND, it seems that by selectively using these conceptualisations and discussions, they are better able to legitimise their own otherwise harshly expressed anti-immigration stance (based mainly on 'statistical facts' and radical stigmatisations).

The concepts used here can be seen as *topoi* for the ideological map of the PS and its anti-immigration faction; providing political guidelines that are easy to adhere to, and whose message is easily recognisable by the like-minded. Also by making these ideological concepts (differentialism and egalitarianism) seem diametrically opposed, the speaker requires people to choose one side over the other, and clearly shows where they stand on the issue, i.e., with the speaker or not.

Egalitarianism and differentialism have been proposed as two such contrasting concepts in both the *Nouvelle Droite* and Finnish anti-immigration discourses. It means that if one wants to defend differentialism, one must simultaneously and automatically reject egalitarianism, as the two are described as being incompatible. Likewise, egalitarians are expected to be automatically opposed to differentialists, and thus through a clever use of counter-argumentation, there is no need to defend the principle of equality in any way as it automatically goes against the principle of diversity, which must be defended at all costs. This ideological dualism between differentialism and egalitarianism is so distinct in the *Nouvelle Droite's* rhetoric that, in my view, they are comparable to Koselleck's asymmetric counter-concepts (see Koselleck 2004, chapter 10) - only they are even more asymmetric and incommensurable. It is definitely the case here, for example, that "the opposite is not equally antithetical" (op.cit. 156).

However, the main political objective of this 'metapolitical' rhetoric (or rhetoric aspiring to be so) is that nobody can politically support both counter-concepts at once. In this sense, it is irrelevant whether the arguments are more theoretically justifiable (ND), or less (SuSi). The most important aim is the same - to drive a wedge between the 'us' and 'them'.

## NOTES

- 1 *Perussuomalaiset* was founded in 1995 out of the ashes of the former Finnish Rural party (SMP). To start with they modestly called themselves the 'True Finns Party' in English, then this was officially shortened to the no less humble 'Finns Party'.
- 2 I will also use the English concept 'New Right' when referring to the European *Nouvelle Droite* as the metapolitical movement in a broader sense.
- 3 Before the split within the FN in 1999, the party had an influential 'intellectual' wing whose main members were activists of the *Club de l'Horloge* association, that was founded by *Nouvelle Droite* (GRECE) dissidents in 1974 who were not content to simply dabble in metapolitics (see Taguieff 1994, 9-10, 52-63; Chebel d'Appollonia 1988, 336-338). It is still argued in the press that the ND continues to have ideological links with today's FN party, for example, in the speechwriters of Marine Le Pen (<http://droites-extremes.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/01/26/alain-de-benoist-en-soutien-critique-a-marine-le-pen/> ; <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/05/14/marine-le-pen-s-closest-advisor-comes-out-of-the-shadows-in-donetsk.html>).
- 4 Hence, I will not focus on the anonymous online discussion forums surrounding the 'question of immigration' which is very vivid (e.g., within *Hommaforum*). For more on the historical development of *Suomen Sisu* interpreted by an 'insider', see Grönroos (2008).
- 5 Indeed, the connection between these two movements is also controversial pre-

- cisely because the *Nouvelle Droite* was, to some degree, a right-wing reaction to the leftist student protests (e.g., Camus 2009; Taguieff 1994, 10-11).
- 6 The pen name Tapio Linna has recently started to blog. He continues along similar lines to before when he was published in the printed media (see <http://www.tapiolinna.com/in-english/>).
  - 7 The traditionalism of Julius Evola, Joseph de Maistre and Oswald Spengler are equally mentioned as references on the site of the online magazine *Sarastus*.
  - 8 <http://sarastuslehti.com/sarastus-english-deutsch-francais/>.
  - 9 Halla-aho, who is called Master by his followers, has written his famous blog *Scripta* since 2003. The blog has concentrated on harsh and direct ‘immigration critique’, gathered a lot of followers and gradually radicalised the issue of immigration. As a consequence, he now personifies anti-immigration in Finland (“*Nuiva asia henkilöitynyt minuun*”, Halla-aho in “*Työmiehen tuumaustuntti*”, PS office 16.1.2015), while his personal support in both national and EU elections (2011/2014) has been very high.
  - 10 Because SuSi membership is kept secret, it is difficult to say how many PS party members or MPs actually belong to it; but the current Speaker of the Finnish Parliament, MP Maria Lohela, from the PS, has described herself as an ‘immigration critic’, as has the current leader of the PS parliamentary group, MP Sampo Terho (<http://www.vaalimanifesti.fi/index.php/manifestin-allekirjoittajat>).
  - 11 Party leader Soini distances himself from the anti-immigrationists for now (Soini 2014, 133-142) and is reluctant to admit the importance of the faction and its potential to challenge his leadership.
  - 12 Two former PS MPs were convicted of inciting ethnic hatred and denying people the right of freedom to worship. Jussi Halla-aho, for example, was convicted by the Supreme Court (June, 2012) for insulting both Somalis and Islam in his blog published prior to entering parliament (Korkein Oikeus: 2012:58; Halla-aho’s blog, 3.6.2008/ 4.11.2010).
  - 13 *Suomen Sisu* revised its platform slightly in 2006. Their internet site states that a new programme (which will clarify the points formerly vaguely expressed, as they say) is under construction – it has been so quite a long time already.
  - 14 Halla-aho 2009, 285.
  - 15 Halla-aho, *Scripta* 31.8.2007.
  - 16 *ibid.* 386.
  - 17 de Benoist and Champetier 1999, 131.
  - 18 de Benoist and Champetier 1999, 135.
  - 19 [http://www.halla-aho.com/scripta/mietteita\\_kansainvaelluksesta.html](http://www.halla-aho.com/scripta/mietteita_kansainvaelluksesta.html)
  - 20 This was written by 13 “immigration critics” of the PS centred, more or less, around Halla-aho.
  - 21 “Tout universalisme tend à l’ignorance ou à effacement des différences” (de Benoist 2003, 29; 2002a,b).
  - 22 “Dans une société où l’égalité régnera, les différences disparaîtront” (de Benoist 1979, 212).
  - 23 “[...] l’égalité n’est jamais une donnée absolue, qu’elle ne désigne pas un rapport en soi, mais qu’elle dépend d’une convention, en l’occurrence du critère retenu ou du rapport choisi. Énoncée comme un principe se suffisant à lui-même,

elle est vide de contenu, car il n'y a d'égalité ou d'inégalité que dans un contexte donné et par rapport à des facteurs qui permettent de la poser ou de l'apprécier concrètement. Les notions d'égalité et d'inégalité sont donc toujours relatives et, par définition, ne sont jamais exemptes d'arbitraire. Il est significatif que l'on oppose couramment les inégalités (au pluriel) à l'égalité (au singulier). Au travers de l'unicité du concept, la notion d'égalité tend d'elle-même vers l'homogène, c'est-à-dire vers l'unique." (de Benoist 2002a, 409)

- 24 For the most part here, I follow the translations made by Sam Hardwick and published in <http://hardwick.fi/blog/?p=1881>
- 25 Interestingly, Halla-aho has not included the above blog texts in the book (2009) which puts together his blog posts from over the years. The post on human dignity has been completely omitted, as have some radical comments on "multiculturalist state ideology": "The truth is that multiculturalism, and the icon of it, is a dark skinned immigrant" (Halla-aho's *Scripta* blog 2.10.2005). These blog posts are still present on *Scripta*, although he is more than irritated if reminded of these writings.
- 26 It should be noted that Halla-aho values the criterion of measurement highly. In other words, the criterion for measuring the 'success' of immigration, is its utility to Finnish society. Once the PS party entered government in spring 2015, they demanded that "an independent study of the costs of migration and its impact on Finnish society" be included in the government programme, to "enable a facts-based discussion on better integration policies and better decision-making." (Finnish Government Programme 2015, 40) Moreover, Halla-aho considers immigration not only as a threat to Finnish security (because of Islam) but also as a threat to the Finnish welfare state, the functioning of which is incompatible with liberal immigration. These views approach what has commonly been referred to as welfare chauvinism or economic nationalism.
- 27 Timo Hännikäinen (2014) has stated within *Suomen Sisu*: "it is essential to understand that the nationalistic (*kansallismielinen*) movement is simultaneously a pan-European movement". According to him, the electoral success of different populist parties in Europe indicates a pan-European protest against liberal ruling parties and at the same time it challenges nationalistic movements in each country to form a pan-European front of nations and communities calling for European identity. This pan-European demand to defend the continent against "alien civilisations" also clearly resembles the New Right discourse in cherishing "European civilisation".

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