FRONTIER THINKING AND HUMAN-NATURE RELATIONS

WE WERE NEVER WESTERN

E. C. H. Keskitalo

Frontier Thinking and Human-Nature Relations

Combining historical, social and regulative analysis, this book builds a compelling critique of 'frontier thinking' as it continues to form our assumptions about social and environmental organisation – in ways that impact not least the present environmental crisis.

This book systematically identifies the ways in which images of nature and society are formed by the historically developed frontier-oriented narratives which have underpinned much Anglo-American and Anglocentric thought. The book confronts these conceptions at large, showing that they never held empirically, and contrasts them with the situation in northern Europe, where diverging assumptions are integral to this day. Through this juxtaposition, this book illustrates not only the pervasiveness of structures of understanding in steering policy but also the varying traditions regarding how understandings of the environment can be formed.

This study highlights how historical thought patterns, formed for very different reasons than exist today, continue to shape our assumptions about nature, the relation between urban and rural areas and our understanding of ourselves in relation to the environment. This book will be of wide interest to a range of academics and students in the fields of geography, anthropology, environmental studies, sociology, political science and development studies, amongst others.

E. C. H. Keskitalo is Professor of Political Science at the Department of Geography, Umeå University. She has published widely on Arctic regional development and environmental and natural resource policy.

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1 Frontier thinking

Introduction: understanding the idea of frontier thinking

Numerous bodies of literature have discussed the constructed nature of the relation between nature and society. The two are almost inherently separated in much of these narratives, with a delineating line drawn between not only nature and society but also the urban and the rural. This makes it crucial to understand the constellations of interests that establish and support various ideas of nature and nature use, and the way these translate – but may also transform – between areas. The way we organise is not necessarily delimited to specific areas but rather 'bleeds' between sectors and areas, so that we often apply the same thought patterns, assumptions and logics in several areas. In particular, large thought patterns, such as those focusing on the state, nature or society, are often not imagined anew but instead build upon what has come before.

This book develops the idea of 'frontier thinking' to understand how thought patterns around nature and society have formed throughout history as well as in the present, coming together perhaps most markedly in modern European colonialism from about the 1700s (Dirlik 2002). Using the term 'frontier thinking' instead of other, more established terms has the benefit of drawing attention to broad and common processes rather than to well-described detail and variation among classifications, which themselves, to some extent, reinforce the version of reality they describe. The common descriptionary processes in this type of thinking constitute a key example of the construction of people and place both simultaneously and separately (for instance, making people in migration retain the same descriptive characteristics even if they move). They also, and crucially, serve the purpose of attributing value to the describer rather than to that which is seen as described.

The historically identified narrative of frontier thinking is here identified as one that attributes the *centre, culture and civilisation* to what has often historically been a colonist culture, which subsequently and relatedly defines those they conquer as *non-civilisation*, *indigenous* and close to *nature*. Different practices are then associated with different sides of this binary. For instance, subsistence, which is considered close to nature, is devalued, while

large-scale agriculture that 'civilises' 'wilderness' is valued. The corollaries of this are numerous: it means that, for instance, rurality is not valued in itself but as a support to the urban (seen as being associated with the centre, culture and civilisation) (see further Chapters 8 and 9, also Keskitalo 2023). It has also meant that even at present, one is, for instance, when discussing natural resource practices, forced to relate to the extent to which these are binary 'indigenous' or 'non-indigenous' 'settlers' – even in areas that were not in this way impacted by the wave of modern European colonialism (such as historically developed European communities at the local scale, e.g. Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen 2010, Lehtinen 2012, Cruickshank 2009, Tuovinen 2011). Similarly, any use of the term 'nature' continues to carry with it assumptions of a 'human-free' 'wilderness', inhabited only by those definitionally regarded as Other (e.g. Cronon 1995, Nash 1982, Lowenthal 2013). In addition, the assumptions this type of model holds, valuing large-scale 'societies' over smaller and assumedly nature-close 'communities', also impact our assumptions regarding what societal organisation should be like; for instance, what the roles of property and the individual should be. Conceptions of property are integral to this type of conception, as they highlight what the relation to land can be: who can own it and to what purpose it can legitimately be put. Conceptions of the individual and of society – are also integral to this, as they are strongly related to conceptions of property: who or what can own land, and for what purpose.

Understanding frontier thinking thus requires tying together an understanding of how common conceptualisations of entities from state to individual are constructed – by thought models that are not based in actual practice but in abstractions and theoretical, atomistic assumptions regarding what progress is and in relation to what it is defined. The conceptions have a major effect in that they denigrate nature and non-intensive use or intrinsic value, placing value on human utilisation and particularly profit from nature, justifying resource extraction that is not linked to local use (Keskitalo 2023, cf. Swaffield and Fairweather 1998, Keskitalo 2004). Frontier thinking thus has an intrinsic economic – resource extraction – component (cf. Ioris 2018).

What is more, one should recognise that these structures remain very much in play in both politics and research and are, in fact, also often so embedded in categorisations and 'knowledge' in, for instance, area studies that they are difficult to extract, notably due to their adherence to nominal labels. Thus, even today, an imagined 'Arctic' area – even one extended in space to political cooperation far beyond historically 'Arctic' areas – continues to be described as a 'frontier' through the lens of indigenousness and close-to-nature subsistence practice (Keskitalo 2004). Thus, as late as the 1970s and early 2000s, conceptions that link space to people in essentialist ways (assuming specific characteristics to adhere to latitude) were used in the Canadian example of 'Arctic' cases (Hamelin 1978, McNiven and Puderer 2000).

More broadly, for the case of the 'indigenous' and 'non-indigenous' pairing, people have often had to define themselves in, and in opposition to, the terms

inscribed by frontier thinking, for instance, as specifically indigenous or akin to a 'settler' category – something that misdescribes the close linkages to land that exist in multiple groups. This has also meant that people have either been read in relation to an assumed closer linkage to nature and an often assumedly more bottom-up or even 'authentic' culture (Swaffield and Fairweather 1998) or in relation to an assumption that they are 'modern' and cannot claim such a linkage. These narratives also continuously mask that 'nature' has been shaped and influenced by humans: that what was constituted as 'wilderness' in early narratives was described this way for the purpose of conquest by colonisers, not because it was separate from human use (Cronon 1995).

The focus here is on the notion that such narratives can be traced back to conceptions of space and people that were popularised during, and implemented for the purpose of, modern European colonialism (that is, from about the 1700s onwards, Dirlik 2002). Due to its extensive spread through modern European colonialism, with legacies persisting even today, this structuring thought system has produced conceptions of the role of society, community and state that reflect territorial and environmental organisation and resource use (Smith 2003).

Frontier thinking is thus reflected in modernist conceptions that romanticise community, separate state and society, define what is rural and urban and support a view of nature as external to culture; in short, they promote and sustain a nature-culture or wilderness-civilisation divide. At the same time, frontier thinking posits a development path whereby groups and areas can 'progress' in stages towards increasingly advanced societies, defined mainly by increasingly intensive resource use.

In accentuating external and deprecatory perceptions of the environment, based more on assumption than reality and elaborated for the specific purpose of resource extraction, these conceptions may also be seen as contributing to today's environmental crisis. It is thus crucial to understand this assumption in order to, in turn, understand environmental degradation, not only as a part of environmental use but also as a part of larger thought systems whereby environmental degradation becomes possible.

These types of ideas can be seen as having existed in many guises from ancient times, possibly as cognitive simplifiers; that is, they allow an in-group to favour certain groups and dismiss others, and to claim resources the groups might otherwise not have been able to claim (cf. Mio 1997). This conception of the frontier is considered to have achieved global impact through modern European colonialism, and thereby in British imperialism, as well as in the development of the US and other settler states. However, this perception not only lay at the core of socio-environmental thinking in Turner's (1921) conception of the American frontier but has in fact been espoused in numerous cultures and historical periods as a political and cultural view of territory justifying conquest.

'The frontier' as conceived here is thus not necessarily a Western invention, even if it is today often associated with Western thinking and modern

European colonialism. Rather, it is a structuring metaphor or trope, logic, mentality, thought system, narrative or discourse (depending on one's exact theoretical inclination and definition) that has served as a cognitive simplifier in many systems over time. Its impact can be felt to this day in, for instance, assumptions underlying community and indigenous studies, conservation, ecological restoration and tourism, but also in conceptions that inherently limit sustainability, such as the understanding of environmental resources as being there for the taking. Frontier thinking entails a simplified conception of indigeneity and rurality as regards land use, whereby 'civilisation' is made synonymous with increasingly resource-intensive and urban occupations. It has thereby contributed to rural-urban dichotomies in regional planning, for instance, and even to particular conceptions of the state, as will be discussed in this book.

   While frontier thinking is seen as pervasive, an important aim of this book is also to show that it does not constitute the only way of thinking. In fact, as the book illustrates, conceptions related to what is here called frontier thinking have been empirically rejected in a great breadth of different bodies of literature, ranging from different types of nature and wilderness studies to rural policy, tourism and peasant studies. In addition, there are examples in which diverging assumptions about nature can be identified both historically and as persisting to this day. Such examples illustrate a different, more integrated human-environment type of thinking than is found in frontier thinking, as well as other ways of understanding social relations from the state down to the individual level.

   The contradicting examples that will be presented here focus on cases in Fennoscandia, specifically what is today Norway, Sweden and Finland. While these are often made subject to a frontier-related description, not least in having come to be seen as 'Arctic' since political developments in the 1990s (Keskitalo 2004), they have followed a fundamentally different development path than frontier-developed states. Notably, this is because they were not impacted by external large-scale settlement in the period of modern European colonialism and already had strong institutions developed at the time. Most notably, given their protracted historical development, including developing as proto-states already long before the state system was established (cf. Croxton 1999, Gustafsson 1998), they also include examples of organisational forms and relations to nature that do not centre on binary nature conceptions, in some cases centring on conceptions in which rural areas are naturalised as areas of livelihood and habitation.

   The Fennoscandian cases are far from the only examples of this type of development – many states and communities have a basis in relation to nature that is conceived of in other ways than through frontier thinking. However, as states that have often seen themselves as integrally 'modern', the Fennoscandian cases can be taken as examples of how a 'modern' state – and all the social relations therein – can have a relation to nature as well. To this day, this heritage can be seen in a number of more extensive rural-urban

interconnections, manifested in mixed rural-urban livelihoods, and in a conception of rural areas as lived-in environments (e.g. Cruickshank 2009, see also Chapters 8 and 9).

However, this is not to say that these cases are completely uninfluenced by frontier thinking – as later chapters will also discuss its historical influence there – but rather that frontier thinking is not inherent in the functioning of a modern state. Instead, a modern state can be conceived of in ways that can increasingly integrate nature relations, drawing on and extending traces that remain, for instance, in Fennoscandian examples. That additional examples around the world are not taken up is primarily related to the author's limitations: the reader, it is hoped, will be able to exemplify based on numerous other cases in order to illustrate ways in which integrated human-environment conceptions might be further developed.

Far from just history

The book thus argues that rather than being mere historical remnants, the legacies of thinking, assumption and organising in frontier thinking continue to permeate our present, 'modern' way of life. While the role of frontier thinking is particularly evident in areas formed as a result of modern European colonialism, it is also more broadly seen in its pervasiveness and spread through globalisation and in movements through which some of these features have become naturalised, even, for instance, assumptions of modernity (e.g. Therborn 2003, Kohn and O'Neill 2006). This makes frontier thinking a logic of separation – of humans from nature and of humans from each other (separate from a society) – that is theoretically rather than empirically based and construes the environment and all that is seen as related to it in an undifferentiated way as empty for the taking. These are conceptions that have sometimes been considered intrinsic to the understanding developed in the Enlightenment (Wolloch 2016) and that continue to have a major impact.

Drawing upon these broad lines of inquiry, the book aims to contradict the assumption of a distinct break into the 'modern' (cf. Nederman 2009), denaturalising our assumptions about the general content of broad terms such as 'colonialism', 'indigenous', 'individual' and even 'nature', 'society' and 'state', all the way down to specific conceptions of environmental governance, conservation and tourism as practices. A related aim is to illustrate alternative conceptions of such relations and the long lines of history, evoking Latour's (1993) argument that 'we were never modern' and neither are our social, economic or environmental forms of organisation in any given logical space; rather, they are the result of many changes that have gone before.

The book thus illustrates that if this type of thinking is regarded as 'Western', the assumptions that are often considered to be related to being 'Western' do not hold in many important aspects. Land is typically seen not as a wilderness in a frontier understanding but as laden with multiple practices by multiple peoples who may all exhibit 'indigenous' as well as 'modern'

traits. Just as we were never modern (Latour 1993), we were thus also never Western or a frontier in an American sense – neither in northern Europe nor in other areas of the globe in relation to the empirical criticism that has been levelled at the different components of frontier thinking (cf. Keskitalo 2023).

Thus, this book also shows that ways of thinking will be local, regional and national in pockets; the idea in this work is to support an identification of those who retain a relation to nature despite the overarching wave of 'modernity' that swept the world and included a separation of the two. In juxtaposing different ways of thinking, the aim of this research is thereby to provide an analytical frame for conceiving human-environment relations in other ways. The way we organise today is not the only way – it is not even the only way present in our societies. To reintegrate nature into our societies, we may need to identify both the pockets of organisation and the thinking along these lines that exist – and how they are manifested in widely varying cases – as well as learn to identify the multiple ways in which nature and society are disconnected in what are today often internationally dominant ways of thinking. This has important implications for the ways in which any of these terms are used and for any political actions that assume that specific distinctions and descriptions hold true for people or for nature.

Background and limitations

The focus in this work is on a thought system that has existed in many guises but that was popularised and vigorously implemented during the period of modern European colonialism, notably that of the British Empire. It is exemplified in its enduring effects in perhaps the Empire's closest successor, the US, but has had considerable impacts worldwide, not least through broader Anglocentric development and settler colonialism (e.g. Verancini 2013).

To illustrate the impact, it is as if a wave swept over the entire world from the 1700s onwards, leaving a residue of thinking and acting that many have been battling since. It is so pervasive as to have been analysed in numerous areas (in relation to large, overarching conceptualisations such as the Enlightenment, modernisation, capitalism, colonialism and imperialism), while nevertheless remaining crucial to our thinking and acting, leaving only pockets of different types of thinking and organisation. Establishing this linkage and realising that this wave is even larger and more pervasive than more targeted and delimited analytical means can identify is crucial.

Focusing on a thought system or discourse (as discussed later, one that influences far more than merely thought), the analysis does not purport to capture all instances of thinking or acting in British imperialism or indeed in the focal national development in the US. It also does not aim to suggest that developments along other lines do not exist in the Anglosphere as well, or that practices that actually do exist on the ground may not contradict the broader – and largely abstracted and unitary – thought structure of frontier thinking.

Instead, by drawing on established literature and criticism in the varied areas impacted by frontier thinking, it highlights that frontier thinking is not only almost universally pervasive (not least through its linkage to capitalism through resource use) but also almost universally contradicted.

Thus, the aim is to trace and highlight the enduring effects of this thought structure and identify these at numerous loci, showing that just as they are in fact not even descriptive of the areas on which they are supposedly based, they are also far from useful for understanding developments elsewhere, even if this is what is regularly done in broadly applying terms like 'wilderness'. In this, the focus is thus mainly on what could be seen as akin to tracing a Fou-cauldian archaeology and genealogy of a discourse, with a focus on frontier thinking and its boundaries as well as alternative ways of seeing nature-human relations (as further discussed in Chapter 2). The work draws mainly on estab-lished literature to do this, across a broad range of work related to historical developments in the focal areas as well as literature that discusses, or in other ways criticises or analyses, these developments. The array of material has been selected with the intention of elucidating the long lines of frontier think-ing, its development and its discontents.

This further means that this is not a work that assumes or in any way argues that frontier is a relevant descriptive classification or attempts to argue that it should be applied as an analytical tool. Rather, the argument is that fron-tier thinking as it is applied in its many corollaries leads to negative con-sequences, and that we should identify where it is or has been applied so that we can avoid the assumptions associated with it. The argument is thus similarly not that frontier thinking is anything that is applicable only in fron-tier zones or specific frontier areas, resource frontiers, borderlands or other related terms that could in any way be identified (e.g. Rasmussen and Lund 2018, Barbier 2010), but that frontier thinking, as a far larger and more wide-spread conception, has had and is still having enormous impact across the world in how we generally orient ourselves in relation to human-nature con-ceptions. Frontier thinking is thus regarded as a logic that can be mirrored in numerous developments far from any resource frontier, and that relates to how we see issues of human-nature developments and the basis on which these should take place.

The book is thus also not a review of the frontier as any type of concept that is suggested for application; rather, it is a review of how the discourse identi-fied here as being associated with frontier understandings has been applied, what logics and incentives it is a consequence of and what consequences this itself results in. This study thus suggests that the myth of the frontier has an impact not only in areas such as the US (e.g. Nash 1982) but also around the world in its general disjuncture between an assumed 'civilisation' and 'wilderness'. The idea of the frontier per se develops frontiers and sets nature apart from humans in all types of areas, and it must be noted that this is not a needed, given or necessary development but rather one that is premised on a specific logic.

Recognising pervasive frontier thinking and attempting to de-think or deconstruct this must thus be a crucial part of revisiting human-nature relations and the idea of development. This latter fact – the possibility of not applying frontier thinking – is illustrated in this study by contrasting it with empirically based criticism as well as with examples that still to this day carry remnants of alternative understandings.

Relating frontier thinking to other conceptualisations

Attempting to classify a number of existing fields of literature in relation to what is here seen as a discourse with highly distinct material effects by necessity means having to relate to a number of existing supra-scale denominations. The focus on the role of modern European colonialism is crucial, as this era has had an impact on various types of changes over greatly varying periods and areas and thus provides for a development unique in its impact, scope and depth. Moreover, as argued here, modern European colonialism was singular in its extensive application of frontier-related concepts that support specific types of exploitation focused on defining and gaining access to resources. In a comment that is pertinent in this vein, Dirlik notes:

> Modern European colonialism is incomprehensible without reference to the capitalism that dynamized it … This intimate relationship distinguishes modern colonialism from other colonialisms, both in scope (the entire globe) and in depth (the transformation of life at the everyday level) … [as well as in that it] was entangled from the beginning with the nation-state … from the seventeenth century
>
> <div align="right">(Dirlik 2002: 439–445)[1]</div>

This does not mean, however, that this is a study of colonialism – or even capitalism – per se. While modern European colonialism, and the US and related British conceptualisations and actions under it, is a crucial backdrop to the study, the focus is on frontier thinking and practice. Of principal interest here are the core socio-environmental features of 'civilisation' and 'wilderness' that were part of not only Turner's conception of the frontier but also wider movements and understandings of a nature-society distinction (e.g. Therborn 2003, Kohn and O'Neill 2006). However, it must be recognised that the world is seldom as clear-cut as our definitions: definitions like 'civilisation' and 'wilderness' readily spill over into assumptions regarding the nature of 'civilisation' – and thereby of society, the state and the individual – and come to be associated with other terms, although not always those that are used to justify the distinction (such as democracy, as Turner assumed, e.g. Citino 2001). For these reasons, all the conceptualisations noted above, such as the crucial role of understanding how environmental use is legitimised through conceptions of property or through other specific economic-political structures, become important parts of the study.

Thus, while it was disproven long ago that Turner's frontier concept would hold true as a description of either process or place in the establishment of the American West (e.g. Rundbell 1959), authors have noted that the conception of frontier 'haunts even those who profess not to be influenced by his thesis' (Berend 1999: 64). As will be shown here, the idea of the frontier, in various conceptions but always including a central core of juxtaposing wilderness and civilisation, is a fundamental and enduring assemblage of factors that can be seen to manifest itself in different locations around the world and in the actions of dominant actors from historical times to the present. As Slotkin notes:

> Although the Myth of the Frontier is only one of the operative myth/ideological systems that form American culture, it is an extremely important and persistent one. Its ideological underpinnings are those same "laws" of capitalist competition, of supply and demand, of Social Darwinian "survival of the fittest" as a rationale for social order, and of "Manifest Destiny" that have been the building blocks of our dominant historiographical tradition and political ideology
>
> (Slotkin 1998: 15)

What this book does is thus not only regard frontier thinking as an American conception but also show how this type of thinking in a much broader sense has influenced far larger areas and relations than is often assumed in work focused on the US. While seen as being assembled this way during and for the purpose of modern European colonialism and as largely related to Enlightenment thinking, modernism and industrialism, frontier thinking thus encompasses a number of established labels that will be avoided, as they typically steer any inquiry in relatively well-established directions. For instance, while colonialism is broad and difficult to define, it focuses primarily on peoples; for instance, it often highlights ethnicity, assigning labels such as 'settler' and 'indigenous' and assuming that the latter are closer to nature and the former are a uniform (while in reality they are fragmented) 'Western' group.[2] However, the relations assumed in regard to the concept of colonialism are themselves an artefact and the result of broader processes and cannot be assumed to cover the various experiences of migration and change over time. As Pearson notes, '[t]here is no neutral language one can draw upon to describe and analyse aboriginal, immigrant and settler citizenship patterns, since these names are both a political construct and cultural artefact' (Pearson 2002: 1000). The literature on colonialism thereby necessarily inculcates many of the labels it criticises: it universalises a division between indigenous people and others and causes various labels – related to tradition, nature or modernity – to be attached to the groups defined in this way. In contrast, this book sets out to question and illuminate the constructed nature of these labels, among other things. It asserts that their mere use reveals the operation of a modernist paradigm and a conception of reality imposed by

the types of activities – seen here as related to frontier thinking – that created these relations (cf. Nilsson Stutz 2013).

Similarly, while the modernist and broader Enlightenment framework is undoubtedly a master narrative in which frontier thinking gained its present impact, the interest here is more in explicating the consequences of – and contradictions in – specific forms of modernist organisation than in reviewing the many related conceptualisations that have been developed, for instance, in the cases of modern European colonialism, modernity or industrialism. While the continuing legacy of these conceptions is recognised, the volume focuses on the Anglocentric use and interpretation of frontier thinking, with a core focus on the wilderness-civilisation dichotomy. Yet, given the many specific applications in these contexts, it includes a discussion of broader frontier concepts and the various types of organisation that were regarded as following on from them – not necessarily because the idea of the frontier actually described the development in the region, but because it was *seen as* describing it. The idea of the frontier and its constituent parts thereby came to constitute a simulacrum – fantasy rather than reality – which came to serve as an implicit, and often also explicit, guide to development (see e.g. Cypher and Higgs 1997).

The literature examined here spans British imperialism and the implementation of frontier thinking in the US, as well as certain later work, mainly British as well as international Anglo-related and Anglocentric research (see also Keskitalo 2004 for an example from the Canadian Arctic). The selection of the broad case of Anglocentric development derives from the dominant role it has played in how we understand spatial and power categories today. These have been imposed on much of the world and have attained this dominance through the process of imperial colonisation and the conceptual world attached to and used to justify it. In this vein, some concerns are potentially relevant not only to the US but also to frontier settler societies that were defined through the spread of the British Empire, such as Canada and Australia (cf. Howe 2012). In the literature, the broader term 'Angloworld' has sometimes been used to cover a range of developments (here, the term 'Anglocentric' or 'Anglo-American' will mainly be used with the same aim); it is broader than a focus on British imperialism and 'clearly includes the USA, which is a full and central part' (Howe 2012: 694). Drawing upon Belich, Howe also notes that expansion 'took three successive forms: networks (especially of trade), empire (through conquest) and settlement … with a distinctively, uniquely Anglophone "settler revolution" across the long nineteenth century: "the Anglo divergence"' (Howe 2012: 695 with internal quotation from Belich 2009: 5, cf. Horsman 1981).[3] Anglo-American logic has thus become embedded – albeit criticised – in many of these states and in conceptions of the rural and 'liberal' economy (Belich 2009, cf. e.g. Prout and Howitt 2009, Sherval 2009). While the US, with its pronounced role for frontier mythology, will to this end mainly be placed in focus in this study, chapters also discuss the role of historical and not least British thinkers

and conceptions in relation to the form frontier thinking took on in this case and – as a result of the internationalisation of these understandings – around the world (cf. Belich 2009 for a review of how the internationalisation of the Anglo world development took place).

Contrasting examples illustrating alternative nature-society conceptions and alternative understandings of societal organisation draw on northern European, or Fennoscandian, examples and long-term historical development in this context. Examples are taken from what is present-day Norway, Finland and Sweden, with many of them taken from Sweden. Examples from different types of state development are thereby generally used in the work, and in the second chapter, the role of the state – and the need to also see different states as the products of their context and historical development rather than uniform containers – is discussed. It is also duly acknowledged that these states have historically never been internally, let alone collectively, uniform in structure or organisation; for example, what is regarded as 'Sweden' has differed over time, having earlier included areas that today are Norway, Finland and part of Denmark (e.g. Gustafsson 2016). However, while recognising the variations between states and in examples, it is also crucial to recognise that different areas may encompass different organisational forms (even if they use the same labels). The focus here on Fennoscandia – with its distinctive features and development of states, including some of the oldest in Europe – has been selected to highlight the institutionalisation of features of governing based on conceptions of a society-environment relation previous to, and with relatively limited direct impact from, modern European colonialism in the region. As part of 'Old Europe' in comparison with the 'New World' – many of whose characteristics developed from the tenets criticised here – the Fennoscandian cases featured traditions and governing mechanisms that were already established when frontier concepts arrived as part of the modern European colonialism and globalisation of their day. The Fennoscandian countries thus not only exemplify diversity within 'Western' conceptions – for example, conceptions often seen as 'indigenous' in a frontier context may well be held by majority populations – but also illustrate competing, well-institutionalised and to some extent still present conceptions and forms of organisation that reflect other ways of thinking about community-society-state complexes and nature and the rural.

In line with this framework, while much of this book focuses on comparisons that are elaborated in terms of states or territories, its aim is not to fully describe all the various factors that went into creating the contexts analysed, such as the US and Fennoscandia; rather, it seeks to highlight the elements of a frontier conception in the former and alternative or competing understandings in the latter. Unlike in the case of frontier thinking, the Fennoscandian views cannot be reduced to a merely 'indigenous' or nature-based conception of the world – or to 'modern' conceptions assumed to be distinct from these – but rather constitute historical as well as contemporary alternatives to such a categorisation. While there are undoubtedly other examples, in Europe

or elsewhere, that illustrate such differences and go beyond the binarity of purely 'Western' or 'indigenous' features, the present cases reflect the variety in 'Western' assumptions as well as alternative forms of societal organisation, not only under modernity but in states that have been seen – and defined themselves – as intrinsically 'modern' (e.g. Mjøset 2022, Ruth 1984).

A great deal of the literature referred to in this book has also been selected to relate to concepts rather than to cases. This is in line with the idea of an archaeology to distinguish the concepts relevant to frontier thinking, and simultaneously a genealogy to uncover their origins and where they developed (e.g. Foucault 1974), for instance, showing that they precede – and are also manifested more widely and earlier than in – 'Western' thinking and are often empirically contested and seen as not describing reality. With regard to comparison, the focus is thus not on a single territorial unit or state but on the discourse used in these, including the practices of the focal units and their governance over periods of time, that illustrates the influence of the thought systems at work. The reason for using such broad strokes in the comparison, of course, involves the ways in which discursive or organisational logics, metaphors or myths spread (cf. Foucault 1974, Slotkin 1998): they are not necessarily bounded by the borders of a single state (although they can be) or confined to a single polity, but are rather shaped by one another through the interactions and powers that operate and become dominant, as well as by resistance to these.

Similarly, in this context, it must be noted that this is not a work focusing on nationalism or nations but rather on concepts and experiences that are encased in discourses and exemplified by Anglocentric and Fennoscandian developments. The aim is not methodological nationalism, defined by Youkhana as '[t]aking pre-defined cultural, political, or social groups as obvious "units of analysis" … [as] an established paradigm that emanates from the assumption that the same regularities exist in the social world as in the natural world, involving clear spatial distances and measurable biophysical processes' (Youkhana 2015: 11). Instead, it is intended to be a work focusing on differences in discourse, thought and practice established through historical development and situations, not on differences in nation or nationality per se. In other words, the focus of the work involves historical divergences and ways of thinking about people and the environment, rather than ones that are assumed to be reflective of people or the environment in any intrinsic or essentialist sense. In this, the focus is also not on any coherence within, for instance, a 'Nordic model' (as a contemporary model that has been problematised in literature, e.g. Mjøset 2022, Hellenes Mørkved 2022).

Organisation of the book

This work aims to connect many disparate strands of literature and draw a conclusion in terms of social logic as to how differences in the interpretation of the social, nature and, relatedly, the urban and the state have resulted

in fundamentally different understandings of the world, albeit ones that are seldom reified and made visible for assessment and discussion (cf. Skinner 2002a, 2002b).

Chapter 2 discusses the book's theoretical foundations, that is, the construction of metaphorical systems that include conceptualisations of the state, rural, urban and nature and relate these to one another in overarching conceptions of social-environmental relationships. Here, the state in particular is examined as an overarching social conceptualisation that, by necessity, includes or is predisposed to a conception of the environment. As it constitutes an expression of authority, many other conceptualisations are necessarily related to or given expression in understandings of the state. Accordingly, the role of the state – and of actors within or relating to it – is thereby not a given but is rather contingent on developmental tracks – that is, a position in relation to frontier conceptions or a locus for conflict in relation to alternative logics and conceptions of human-nature relationships.

Chapter 3 then traces the development of components of the frontier myth. The chapter highlights the foundational distinction between 'civilisation' and a pure 'wilderness' or 'nature' (with groups already inhabiting these spaces devalued and defined by limited resource use and 'apartness' from 'civilisation').

In Chapters 4 and 5, the US is taken up as an example of the ways in which development focusing on the frontier and on a distinction between the social and the environmental contributes to a specific conception of state and society and related social and environmental concepts. The chapters also further illustrate that these conceptions are present in imaginaries of 'community' that draw a clear distinction between an imagined history and a modern situation with an assumed separation of nature from society. Contributing to literature in the vein of public administration and American political development, the study contradicts assumptions that the US state can be seen foremost as an organic, or 'bottom-up', internally driven development (e.g. Stillman 1997); rather, it is argued, the conceptualisation of the US as a state must be regarded as a result of a largely theoretically and philosophically driven development. That is, rather than being seen as a country formed *de novo* organically, it must be seen as based more on motivations and conceptions that were in vogue at the time of its development.

This makes for a significant difference to the protracted state development of the 'Old World' of Europe, where proto-states were formed through prolonged strife, which in a different way linked development to multiple interests and conditions of resource use on the ground (e.g. Gustafsson 1998). The development of the US can be conceived of as relatively rapid in historical terms. It drew on dislocated and already established 'societies' as well as a combination of transplanted features and philosophically, or even colonially, derived conceptions of environmental and social organisation. The US can thereby be considered to exemplify the organisational context of the 'modern' state while lacking its institutional underpinnings, an observation that has

been made in literature noting that there is little or no explicit conceptualisation of the state in American public administration (e.g. Stillman 1990, 1997). Both partly based in and with prominent formalisation of the frontier myth, contradictions within the US can to some extent thus be seen as following upon the specific mythical basis for some of its development.

As an example of how other conceptualisations can be made important, Chapter 6 then outlines ways in which the historical development of the Fennoscandian cases (with a prominent focus on the Swedish case) differs from a frontier development in how environment and 'wilderness' (although understood largely through different terms), society and community, as well as indigenousness, were conceived of and how human-environment relations were institutionalised.

With both understandings of frontier thinking and its discontents having been established, Chapter 7 then discusses the consequences that frontier thinking has led to around the world. These include the consequences of imagining people and territory together in ways that lead to determinism, as well as those of separating people in general from nature while continuing to imagine the indigenous as related to nature. Frontier thinking is also seen as having impacted our understandings of social organisation and the levels on which this is possible.

Chapters 8 and 9 then discuss one of the perhaps most visible consequences of frontier thinking in our everyday lives, that of a dichotomisation of urban and rural. The chapters illustrate the consequences of frontier thinking on conceptions of the rural, both historically and in the present day, and discuss the way in which current conceptions of the rural vary between more frontier-developed Anglo literature fields and Fennoscandian examples, drawing on, for instance, literature analysing Fennoscandian cases that largely positions itself in opposition to Anglo literature. Chapter 8 discusses these conceptualisations and criticisms of them, while in Chapter 9, alternative conceptions of rurality in present-day Fennoscandia are discussed with a focus on, among other things, the role of majority culture in relation to nature.

Chapter 10 concludes the study with a discussion of the historical construction of social and environmental organisations and their consequences today. The chapter thus also draws conclusions regarding the consequences of these types of conceptions that continue to exist and gain effect even today.

The study contributes to a broad range of research. As Pincus (2007) notes, the body of literature broadly related to state-building has seldom been historical, even though important exceptions to this can be found (cf. e.g. Hallenberg 2013, Haldén 2014, Skinner 2002a, 2002b). What much work has done, as Haldén has argued, is to have taken a more narrow and functionalist view of the state, focusing on its role in relation to warfare rather than as a polity, and often drawing a sharp line between 'modern' and 'pre-modern' politics: 'deeply colored by the selfunderstanding of modernity, which is predicated on strict dichotomies, e.g. between state and society, object and subject and pre-modern and modern' (Haldén 2014: 129–130). It has been argued that

scholarship has focused on more isolated characteristics in the present and that not even comparative studies (such as Swenson 2004, Lapuente and Rothstein 2014, Lubatkin et al. 2005) have included the broader and more long-term historical reasons for the present great divergences in state development (cf. Pincus 2007, Haldén 2014). In contrast, here, the focus is placed on the understanding of the construction of authority – in which the state is a crucial actor – and how this is developed over time with the result that different states may be fundamentally different types of entities.

In its focus on the development of society-environment relations in a historical context, the book also contributes to the literature on environmental history, a research area that has notably been formed by its American roots (e.g. McNeill 2003). Highlighting the importance of understanding the environment and how environmental and resource use have been legitimised in different cases, this study illustrates that the environment must be seen in relation to social organisation.

The study further adds to established understandings of how the American conceptualisation of wilderness was formed, for instance, providing a broader philosophical and liberal context to the foundational study by Nash (1982). In contributing a broadly comparative and alternative conception of society-environment relations, the book also adds to the established discussion on the particular American character of 'wilderness' and can serve as a backdrop to and problematisation of frontier studies literature (e.g. Cronon 1987, 1996, Slotkin 1998). The hope is thus that the book will contribute to an understanding of how our assumptions about conceptualisations such as 'wilderness' or the 'frontier' gain impact far beyond what could be seen as 'wilderness' or 'frontier' areas, as well as far beyond conceptions of the frontier in an American context.

2 Understanding the role of history in the present

Introduction: the co-construction of categories

In focusing on major discourses that are argued to have shaped a great deal of how we think about society, nature and the state in much of the 'Western' (and, through extension, larger parts of the) world, the present work takes its point of departure in the assumption that, as Catlaw states, 'ontologies are political. Our basic set of commitments and assumptions about the world implies specific ways of organizing politics and specific political forms' (Catlaw 2007: 2–3, cf. Skinner 2002a).

In this vein, understanding any type of organisation of space is seen as requiring that a number of assumptions be made – and made so clearly that they can constitute a basis for people to know how to interact in the particular area. For these assumptions to be articulated, they need to become or be used as concepts and be linked to other concepts and, moreover, to very specific meanings of these. For instance, Sundström argues that a:

> historical-institutional perspective … is not so much about testing and creating explanatory theories as it is about "borrowing" established middle-range theories in order to explain, through the study of historical processes, the stability and continuity of unique and complex phenomena that are considered interesting and important by the researcher
> (Sundström 2006: 402).

This chapter outlines the ways in which understandings of the concepts highlighted as belonging to frontier thinking must be seen as part of a metaphorical system, in which capacity they cannot be taken to signify a constant or given signifier but are rather used in order to propagate a specific understanding of things. Indeed, in the focal understanding here, understandings of nature and the environment, society, community and the state, rural and urban, as well as the relations among these, derive primarily from English-language concepts. These in turn largely reflect a specific reality, one that is coloured by the frontier thinking-related process and may differ significantly from other realities and ways of conceiving of our surroundings and our relation to them.

The chapter first discusses the metaphorical nature of concepts, the ways in which discourse as well as other theory can be used to capture their enduring or institutional character and, lastly, applications of these insights in theories relating to the state. The chapter thus illustrates the understanding that all these levels can be considered to be connected by specific types of logics that designate the social, urban, centres as being apart from nature, or the rural. The metaphorical nature of concepts thereby results in simplified and patterned understandings across scales.

The metaphorical nature of concepts

Lakoff and Johnson express the understanding of the metaphorical nature of language very clearly in their classical work, noting that 'most of our normal conceptual system is metaphorically structured; that is, most concepts are partially understood in terms of other concepts' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 56). In asserting this, they highlight a rather Foucauldian logic that focuses on the ways in which language both selects and obscures things:

> We can see what both metaphors hide by examining what they focus on. In viewing labor as a kind of activity, the metaphor assumes that labor can be clearly identified and distinguished from things that are not labor. …
> [However,] by contextualizing our experiences in this manner … we pick out the "important" aspects of an experience. And by picking out what is "important" in the experience, we can categorize the experience … high-lighting certain properties, downplaying others, and hiding still others
> (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 163)

What metaphors do is thus not only act in language (if there were such a thing), but act so as to divide the world into categories that are then assumed to be different. However, this use of language and, indeed, human thinking to divide the world into categories not only encases certain experiences in concepts but simultaneously creates the need for 'hybrids' or 'monsters', which arise when categories are transcended; that is, when these concepts do not match lived realities (Latour 1993).

The problem here thus lies in power over language, in that concepts have been created to encapsulate certain situations and not others and have political and lived consequences, making other situations difficult to express and contest (see e.g. Barnett and Duvall 2005). They may also politically encase certain ways of seeing something as those that count and steer policy or other actions. Metaphors, narratives and ways of expression can in no way be disconnected from material reality; rather, they co-construct each other in such a way that terms from one context may come to be imposed on another or be used to reshape it materially (cf. Foucault 1991).

On this basis, we need to think clearly and in an analytical and questioning way about assumptions made regarding broad categories and the way in

which these conceptions are commonly defined in relation to specific, historically developed societies and situations rather than being generalisable. Language can be expected to create categories that seem generalisable but that in fact highlight only specific experiences and make them seem general by developing a concept for them. As Lakoff and Johnson go on to note (again in a Foucauldian vein), this makes 'truth … always relative to a conceptual system' and means that 'any human conceptual system is mostly metaphorical in nature, and that, therefore, there is no fully objective, unconditional, or absolute truth' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 185).[4]

If categories that are used in language are metaphorical, it follows that they must be seen in relation to each other and not as discrete entities (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). The thought or motivation behind having different terms and understandings for distinguishing, for instance, nature from humans cannot be determined by assuming that the concepts have a meaning separate from that which they are given in specific societies and times or for specific purposes. It is essential to understand established truths, myths or metaphors in this way – not because they are relative to societies and development and, in this sense, would be less important, but because the fact that they may differ instead makes their study more important (if we are to be able to conceive of or understand other worlds or meanings, cf. O'Brien and Penna 1998).

In this conception, all societies can be seen as acting through metaphorical systems, expressed through language, in order to voice and even enforce a worldview and material organisation. In order for us to understand these power perspectives and how they are exercised – and thereby to have the chance to consider alternatives – the metaphorical and societal thought systems that manifest themselves in language need to be identified, analysed and contested to make other ways of understanding possible (cf. Keskitalo 2004).

In this vein, social and environmental – or territorial – organisation and thought must be seen as interlinked rather than distinct; social organisation or language in no way stands separate from how it organises environmental or territorial categories. Metaphorical and societal thought systems are manifested in language; they serve to create, describe and distinguish between different territorial units and peoples. Thus, the ways in which specific conceptualisations are formed for territories are always part of the legitimising of a broader social structure, one that is specific to a certain time and place. As Catlaw notes, drawing on Colin Hay, ontology is both political and, always, regional:

> Political forms … imply distinct ontological commitments, and an approach to ontology implies an account of politics, political form, collective life, and what it means to be … Approaching from the other direction, ontology implies a political form and establishes certain requirements for a theory of knowledge (epistemology) and the organization and constitution of instituted authority
>
> (Catlaw 2007: 2–3, cf. Smith 2003).[5]

   This means that the various concepts that are created for different political and territorial categories cannot be presumed to be given or to contain a specific content against which the real world should be measured (with 'rural' having a content and meaning different from 'urban', or 'environment' necessarily differing from 'civilisation').

   This would also apply to broader categories, such as state, society or community: the separation or integration of the content implied in such concepts is created based on specific assumptions rather than being given. Indeed, Lakoff and Johnson point out that studies need to contest, investigate and lay bare such metaphorical systems and their implications: 'Like all other metaphors, political and economic metaphors can hide aspects of reality. But in the area of politics and economics, metaphors matter more, because they constrain our lives' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 236).

A broad, discursive logic-oriented focus

Discourse, viewed through a Foucauldian lens, is one of the concepts that can be drawn upon to understand how geographically manifested systems of power and authority are developed and expressed (e.g. Foucault 1974, 1991). In general, a broad understanding of discourse can be seen to cohere with the basic understandings of metaphorical systems and theories in practice as put forward by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), among others. Text or language is in no way purely textual but rather a manifestation of systems of thought and action in analysable form (Foucault 1974). This type of understanding has been expressed in multiple but fundamentally related ways in multiple theoretical understandings. For instance, a broad understanding of discourse in a Foucauldian sense can be seen as related to that expressed by studies focused on embedded social practices (e.g. Macnaghten and Urry 1998). Macnaghten and Urry, for instance, maintain that such practices are discursively ordered through ways of talking and understanding, express specific understandings of nature and territory or environment, are temporally situated and include assumptions involving risk and agency (Macnaghten and Urry 1998; see also Rajkovic 2010, Heley 2010, cf. Everett 2002, Bourdieu 1977). While some authors distinguish everyday practices from more official ones, the broad conception here is that both formal and informal practices take place in an interplay of understandings that constrain as well as enable each other. Discourses are formed by the boundaries of what we can be, think and speak. In this understanding, everyday talk is part of, and partly formed by, larger systems of discourse and is not necessarily separate from them (cf. Hallenberg and Linnarsson 2016).

   A related relevant approach in this vein is to see discourses as related to other Foucauldian concepts, such as governing mentalities; that is, how the 'conduct of conduct' is regulated, or the way in which certain assumptions or rationalities 'shape, guide, or affect the conduct of some person or persons' by making them seem logical (Gordon, 1991: 2, cf. Rose and Miller 1992).[6]

Official discourses are embedded in specific instruments that structure and enable, or even require, specific ways of acting. Terms such as 'rationalities' or 'logics' can be applied to highlight the main elements at work in such discourses (cf. Leira 2011). The bases for such rationalities or logics are always viewed as not externally developed and thereby not necessarily 'rational' to an outside observer; yet, they constitute major points in relation to which actors (a term used here for simplicity rather than 'subject positions', as highlighted by Foucault) understand, undergird, justify, think about and execute their behaviour (cf. e.g. Koch 2016, Armitage 2000).

Much of the steering within such systems thus occurs through self-policing, that is, learning to act within specific frames. These may be economically or otherwise useful to an individual, but they may also be detrimental and impossible to clearly identify and assess, as no direct, 'external' vantage point may be available (Simons 1995).

What could be called discourses, or, if you will, structuring metaphors with political effects, are thus integrated and embedded in material practices, motivated by material and economic requirements, and of course supported by what in some literature is seen as ideas (seen here as integrated in metaphors and discourses, cf. Kratochwil 2000). Once established, they become ways of being, thinking (in the way 'frontier thinking' is understood here) and assuming that make other ways of being, thinking and seeing difficult – or nearly impossible. Much of the strength of discourses at this point lies in their being assumed rather than consciously assessed (Foucault 1974), and this is the case for the types of megastructures taken up in this book, ones that have come to govern highly divergent assumptions in very many areas.

The structures discussed here can also very well be conceived of in other ways, and their treatment here in no way implies that other theoretical orientations have failed to make similar points. In fact, given the strong institutionalisation of what is discussed above in terms of discourse systems over a long time, they can also be regarded as institutions in the sense that they fall squarely under and create a 'logic of appropriateness' (March and Olsen 1996); this establishes what can be seen as institutions or structures that individuals then continuously co-construct. As Stern notes for his case, broader understandings of the role of historical development can be gained through such 'institutional approaches that de-emphasise distinctions between behavioural categories, such as commerce and politics, [which] allow the possibility of excavating deep ideological connections across the history of empire' (Stern 2015: 15–16). Understanding the ways in which certain conceptualisations and understandings support specific types of institutionalisation and organisation could thus contribute to a more profound understanding of how institutions work (Mahony and Thelen 2010; see also Keskitalo, ed., 2019, Keskitalo 2022).

Another related approach can be taken from studies of history, in which efforts in conceptual history to understand 'how and why a given concept has managed to accumulate different and sometimes incommensurable meanings

over time, and how those different connotations in turn have conditioned the possibility of thought and action' can closely resemble discourse studies (Bartelson 2000: 181).[7]

In the present work, despite its focus on particular concepts, the object of interest is not these concepts per se but rather the identification of patterns of thought around them as discourse, tracing them back in time, and reviewing their consequences – in what Foucault (e.g. 1974, 1991) has described as archaeological and genealogical thinking. In this vein, the crucial part to be played by studies of the role of history in the present, of thought systems, organising metaphors or discourses is that by analysing and defining the conceptualisations used in specific systems they may be contrasted with other existing systems. Given the local and regional character by which systems of power and related language have developed, different systems will work differently depending on, among other things, the actors and actor constellations that have come to power, or whom one must engage with in order to retain power (cf. Barnett and Duvall 2005). They will have their own assumptions that differ from an established English-language content of, for instance, conceptual pairs that relate to human-nature binaries (e.g. Keskitalo 2023). While English-language terms thereby do not capture the breadth of understandings in other languages, however, it is important not to assume that they capture the breadth of understandings in Anglo areas: just like all other structures, language must be understood as being formed in relation to power, resulting in practices on the ground generally not conforming with what frontier thinking mandates.

Thus, any accepted line of description for an area or group should be assumed to contain accounts that are not, in an intersubjective form, relevant to the area or groups themselves but have rather been formed by power and interests in relation to which the descriptions were developed. This results in a legacy of power in all territorial or other descriptions, which has perhaps been most readily recognised in postmodernist critique or critical area studies (Koch 2016, Barnett and Duvall 2005, Armitage 2000).[8] The scope of these conceptualisations and analyses is also in no way limited to a large, territorial scale; rather, the very reason why specific power discourses are deployed is that they work across any scale from territory to individual; they may cause people to be described in relation to the environment (sometimes even if they move to other areas) and thereby enable some groups to retain power over others, regardless of the scale of organisation of competing groups.

Thus, conceptions of 'city', 'urban' and 'state' may be closely related in systems in which they have been used to govern and contrast 'rural' and 'environment', but this may not be the case in all systems, for instance, if rural systems have been an explicit basis for power. In all cases, however, 'individuals' and the individual level will be constituted through, rather than separate from, such systems (Roseneil 2009). This means that while some social studies have identified certain systems as 'individualist' and others as 'communitarian', there are not only two ways in which an 'individual' may be constituted

in this regard. An 'individual' is not necessarily a single, non-communitarian unit but can also be constituted as part of a larger unit without this necessarily being seen as communitarian. English-language conceptualisations of the individual as versus, rather than within, a larger whole, mask the multiple ways in which social units may be developed. What is more, they obscure the way in which the individual in an Anglo-American understanding is also constituted as a highly specific, non-generalisable construct for specific communal purposes (Roseneil 2009; see also e.g. Asplund 1979, Hallenberg and Linnarsson 2010).

Societal logics and language categories as expressing the outcome of societal strife

The ways in which languages as metaphorical systems and expressions of discourse work are thus far from apolitical; they are rather political through and through (Foucault 1991, Barnett and Duvall 2005). Highlighting discourses or logics in this sense and attempting to identify them based on broad historical developments necessarily requires some specification and delimitation of what can be done in a broad-ranging work such as this. While the intense struggles that may have accompanied developments and the resulting types of rationality are not always apparent to us given the extensive temporal and spatial scope of the phenomena discussed, this is not to say that logics have in any way developed without any social contestation. Quite the contrary, it is assumed that social groups contest ideas and policies that develop and are enforced over time and that decisions and steering are developed under conditions of conflict (cf. Holyoke 2009, Callaghan 2011, Dür and Bièvre 2007). Indeed, concepts that become applicable on a large scale likely become so because the tenets underpinning them have been able to unite groups at a particular time, speak to specific situations or encapsulate what has already become an established practice, and are thus seen as simply a description of what is (cf. Thornton et al. 2012). In all these ways, concepts – the means by which discourses, which always also incorporate practices and the surrounding world, manifest themselves (Foucault e.g. 1974, 1991) – embed and express specific social relations, justifying specific actions or making it possible to talk about them. At the same time, they obscure other ways in which the world could be shaped or even the same linguistic expression or specific concept could be understood and applied in another context; in other words, they are political, even when it is not apparent to us, as we are not always able to document the struggles that must have existed around them in specific societies (cf. Smith 2003).

This work features not only a broadly comparative dimension but also a temporal one from the past into the future. The assumption here is that, like the thinking in historical institutionalism, the patterns that are laid down in state and other systematic thinking and enforcement persist over time (e.g. Mahony and Thelen 2010, Liebowitz and Margolis 1995, Pierson 2000). They

draw upon the power of having encased specific experiences and assumptions in concepts to which others then have to relate and which both frame and co-construct later development and self-understandings. As observed in a comparative study of industrial policy development across states, '[e]very political culture is organized around the sustenance of certain sorts of practices as conducive to social order, and the repression of others as destructive of social order' (Dobbin 1994: 20). Dobbin continues: this 'shapes how nations perceive and respond to problems … characteristics of political culture shaped emergent industry policy strategies' (Dobbin 1994: 22).

While this does not imply that patterns are unchangeable and paths cannot be broken, it does imply that broader suprastructural logics that have become encapsulated, structuring metaphors in many areas are difficult to alter, as logics in one area may rely on similar logics in others (e.g. Meadowcroft 2009). With regard to such suprastructural organisation, it has been argued that '[o]ne need only grasp the logic underlying current policies to be able to guess what future policies will look like, because policies in different countries follow fundamentally different logics' (Dobbin 1994: 11).

Thus, this study largely indicates that historically developed logics are not only historical but also reach into the present as well as the future; a further claim is that the more assumed and less contested these logics are, the greater the risk (or possibility) is that they will steer future development, even if this would take directions other than those from which some – or even many – actors or groups would benefit (cf. Marsden et al. 2014). Dobbin, for example, has shown that already in the nineteenth century,

> countries had developed a distinct political culture, comprising practices and their meanings. Political practices that had emerged for identifiable historical reasons took on meaning where ideological principles were articulated to support them, so that existing state characteristics were socially constructed as constitutive of political order. In each case, state characteristics symbolized particular positive means to political order and citizens came to think of those means as the only way to achieve order
>
> (Dobbin 1994: 22)

Thus, as means of political order, much of the work that specific conceptualisations do is not necessarily descriptive or reflective of reality, as it is conceived of by different groups, but is instead *constitutive* of reality in that these conceptions come to form the way people think about their worlds and how they act. Rather than being any direct reflection of actual situations, metaphors or narratives constitute means to interpret these situations; they provide plots, starting and ending points, and fundamentally a valuation of or support for conceptualisations of the world around oneself (Cronon 1982).

The 'descriptions' may thereby be more myth than actuality and may do the political work of, for instance, serving as a narrative underpinning of

specific identities or understandings of values (e.g. Baele et al. 2016, Rovisco 2010). In such an understanding, a myth might – even if over time it becomes detrimental to steering decision-making as it does not correspond to lived realities – have value because of its political and nation-building role (Slotkin 1998, cf. Anderson 2006). Where it is most divorced from lived realities it may even be seen as a simulacrum; that is, no more than a representation of reality, but an expression of a desire or simplification that is attractive to the human mind in, for instance, its simplification of relations between groups or an understanding of the environment (e.g. Cypher and Higgs 1997).

Understanding conceptualisations and forms of authority as co-constructed

The above suggests that societal systems and descriptions can be understood as metaphorical systems developed under power. The way in which these types of relations play out can be analysed conceptually through, for instance, analyses of documents that take up the interrelations of concepts in the vein sketched above. As noted, if the focus is placed on larger-level conceptual systems, it may be beneficial to look at multiple organisational levels as well as fields including seemingly binary pairs such as 'nature' and 'culture', or other apparent juxtapositions that may be formed through multiple metaphorical structuring processes.

   In this perspective, concepts on different levels of organisation or geography can be considered to be potentially related through this type of metaphorical system. Conceptualisations or metaphors that are formed by and express power relations, should be expected to act in relation to territory or territorial resources and units. These units range from rural and urban to the unit that has historically been the most strongly related to sovereignty, the state. Any understanding of territorial units should thus be linked to a discussion of how specific areas are defined, for instance conceptualisations of landscapes, conceptualisations of rural vs. urban, or definitions of 'state'.

   Smith (2003) is among the authors who have clearly expressed this. Drawing upon March and Olsen's conception of institutions, Smith (2003) asserts a strong linkage between the ways in which political power and the urban are structured. In Smith's words,

   how stratification and authority were constituted and reproduced over time … inevitably must be, at least in part, through the instruments provided by urban landscapes as settlement forms and as imagined places. That is, *spatial practices of urbanism and political practices of authority are not separable*

   (Smith 2003: 199, italics added)[9]

   'Urban' is thus not seen as an unproblematic concept but rather, like all concepts, as hinging on its being defined as separate from something else

(cf. Latour 1993). It is often made to stand in contrast to a residual and partly imaginary rural, an entity born of definitions in the self-proclaimed centre that produces particular descriptions of nature or actually a variety of concepts that cannot be directly related to the categories defined as 'central' (e.g. Keskitalo 2017). Similarly to Smith, Scott notes that 'there is no hitherto realized form of capitalism that is not also associated with urbanization' (Scott 2012: 17). To this end, Scott argues that:

> the growth of cities is likely to be best explained in terms of the development of the central production apparatuses and agglomeration processes that give rise to their existence in the first place together with the institutions of urban governance that help to maintain competitive advantages and social order
>
> (Scott 2012: 26)

In this understanding, the urban can thus be regarded as the result of and co-constructed with broader conceptual definitions. Over time, as Smith sees it, the state becomes the modern and extended parallel of the historical urban, a centre of power in relation to which numerous other units are defined: 'components of a broad vision of the practical constitution of authority' (Smith 2003: 110–111). The state is thus made particularly relevant as an expression of authority, as it is often considered the highest sovereign hierarchical power – and was perhaps defined as a major authority already in the period before the modern state (cf. Braddick 2000). In terms of authority, the state can even be seen as a concept in relation to which other concepts (rural, urban, society, community, civilisation and the like) come to be metaphorically organised in order to gain importance.

However, as with the urban-rural relation and definitions of nature versus a 'culture' dominated by the urban (or that which the rural is defined as the absence of), the state cannot be assumed to denote a highly specific structure; that is, beyond its central place in descriptions, or beyond the cultural content it is given in discourse, understood as and through practice (how it is practised, not as any disembodied text). While Smith's argument in general highlights that the urban centre of power does the describing, this argument is confined to the frame of analysis Smith has established (Smith 2003); while urbanity and the state have over time been closely associated with each other, systems are conceivable that do not deem 'rurality' or 'environment' secondary to them, or even see these as necessarily separate. This is entirely contingent on where the centres that produce descriptions are located. Rurality or the environment can be integrated into conceptions that include power; the outcome depends entirely on how power is organised and conceives of itself, on the actors to which it needs to relate and on how the 'practical constitution of authority' (Smith 2003: 110–111) and, fundamentally, the state are organised.

Thus, any study of structures of authority that use reified conceptualisations such as 'the state' or other blanket descriptors for authority needs to

recognise that any such structure, including '[t]he State, despite its central-ity, is an entirely nebulous object of study without a clear referent' (Smith 2003: 95, cf. e.g. Crofts Wiley 2004, Braddick 2000). This situation is not surprising: as the entities referred to as states across the globe have devel-oped in very many different ways, sometimes having in common only a rudimentary form and internationally acknowledged characteristics, any given state is always the product of the particular developments surround-ing its emergence.

A fundamental consideration in reviewing how different authority systems draw on different conceptualisations (including that of the frontier) is thus to open up rather than take as given a particular form and content (cf. Skinner 2002a, 2002b). Smith underscores this, writing:

> The State is built on both an absolute ontology of space and an abso-lute ontology of politics … like space, politics arises in relationships between groups and individuals, not full grown from a repertoire of types. This relational account of politics begs numerous questions—what is the nature of civil ties? what kinds of groups or subjects should be thought of as agents within the political sphere? what sociocultural links parallel political relationships?
>
> (Smith 2003: 101–102)

The state, or any type of authority that is reviewed, should thus not be viewed as being of a single type, only relevant to particular types of actors. Instead, to manage an understanding of political life one should focus 'not …. on the rigid absolutism of the State but … authority, an umbrella term for a set of concepts that emphasize the intersection of space and time in political practice' (Smith 2003: 101–102).[10]

Similarly, such a conception should also not aim to 'carve out a structurally discrete political sphere' but should acknowledge that '[p]olitics intrudes far too profoundly on economy, culture, and social life to be confined within a well-bounded … position' (Smith 2003: 104–105).[11]

The state is thus not separate from society (or any of these other catego-ries), nor is it constituted separately from it: 'the separation between society, or civil society, and the state "does not exist in reality"' (Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005: 11–12, with internal quote by Aretxaga 2003: 398). Loughlin provides examples of this scale on the social level: 'In order to specify the character of the state, two contrasting types of collective association must be distinguished: community and society' (Loughlin 2010: 197, cf. Farole et al. 2010). In the conception embraced in the present study, these are not separate but rather metaphorically related and can be either separated or not from the assumed content of the state depending on its particular construc-tion. Rather than any one given referent or type, in each situation, authority is co-constituted with multiple groups (depending on the power configura-tions) and is dependent, in its construction and continuous co-construction,

upon assumptions held among these groups.[12] The way in which, for instance, the state is constituted as either part of or separate from society is a result of societal organisation and specific assumptions about the state, relations between groups, and trust or interaction between these, to cite some examples (Gärtner and Prado 2016, Gustafsson 2008).[13] In each case, the state incorporates governing conceptions that relate to a role for nature and environment, rural and urban, and society, community and state; and given that the state is formed to establish authority, its authority is not only political but also social and networked, economic and manifested in other wide-ranging ways (cf. Larsson 2013).

This is also true of other types of authority that have partly taken over historical roles of the state today: they are not confined to particular sectors but rather have far broader effects (cf. Kingsbury et al. 2005). In such an understanding, concepts for forms of social organisation are thus containers rather than uniform moulds in which the same concept necessarily denotes the same reality.[14]

Any authority structure should thus be seen as a result of the multiple processes that make up that structure, with no given delineation between concepts created later to classify and distinguish between organisational forms. Jessop captures this approach in the following, with a focus on the state:

> the state must be analysed both as a complex institutional ensemble, with its own modes of calculation and operational procedures, and as a site of political practices, which seeks to deploy its various institutions and capacities for specific purposes. Rather than trying to define the core of the state in a priori terms, we need to explore how its boundaries are established through specific practices within and outside the state. Moreover, in identifying this core, one is claiming neither that this identification exhausts the state nor that this core (let alone the extended state) is a unified, unitary, coherent, ensemble or agency. The boundaries of the state and its relative unity as an ensemble or agency would instead be contingent. This indicates a need to examine the various projects and practices that imbue the state with relative institutional unity and facilitate its coherence with the wider society
>
> (Jessop 2006: 246–247; see also Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005, Alon 2007)

One further issue in trying to explain the construction of authority, and the multiple metaphorical conceptualisations applied in doing this, is that of temporality. To understand the configuration of authority and how it is formed, studies that include examples from different states cannot take as their point of departure simply the time at which a specific type of state is seen as having been formed but must include the broader and longer-term formation of authority. Instead, it is necessary to use 'a relatively flexible definition of the

state which allows for its use in relation to political forms quite different from the nation states of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' (Braddick 2000: 1, cf. Ertman 1997, Day 2002, Bagge 2010). Braddick goes on to note:

> Readers offended by the term "state" in this context might substitute the phrase "territorially bounded and coordinated network of agents exercising political power"… [under the assumption that] in order to understand the rise of the [modern] state it would be necessary to understand the functioning and weaknesses of the forms of political association that preceded its emergence
> (Braddick 2000: 18, footnote; see also Ertman 1997)[15]

Temporally, in order to understand the type of state being developed, the interaction between the numerous groups in what is becoming a state territory and the state thus also itself needs to be seen as a mechanism under development, problematising its linkage with and for the people (Alon 2007, Haldén 2014). Historically, polity formation is assumed to have contributed to and created tracks – from realm to state – that we can still identify in present polities and that indeed make them comprehensible.[16] These tracks will express both societal logics but also serve as an illustration of what powers formed and gained influence in the state. As Jessop concludes his work on the state:

> an adequate account of the state can only be developed as part of a theory of society … for all its institutional separation and operational autonomy, the state is embedded not only in the broader political system but also in its wider natural and social environment
> (Jessop 2006: 247–248)

Conclusions: organisation and categorisation as governing

None of the forms of social organisation are thus structured without assumptions about others.[17] As related to territorially bounded units and social use, the environment – if not explicitly discussed – is at least implicit in all social organisations, for instance in how it can be used, what resources are legitimised, and for what purposes and what groups (cf. Smith 2003). Authority structures and pronouncements or expressions that highlight value or power always also relate to resources (if not in fact primarily to resources), and all conceptualisations treated here, such as rural-urban, state or others, entail conceptions of who has the right to designate and use resources that are territorially and environmentally based.[18]

This means that the environment and understandings of it are implicit in any conception of authority.

Any conception of authority, such as the state, centre or urban, can thus not be understood without understanding questions such as the following: By

and for whom is it built – that is, who in practice are the actors it represents? Who are those who have a say in – and thereby contribute to – forming the widely varying content of what a state – or authority – is?[19]

Taken further, this line of inquiry would imply that the focus on the state and the international as separate units can itself be seen to be a result of the historical dominance of the state as a form of social and political organisation. It would also indicate that very different societies and types of organisation hide behind this label of 'state', 'urban', 'city', 'rural' or other terms. While some may link the spread of the (nation-) state to imperialism and colonialism, arguing that states are perhaps more mediated to their citizens than are smaller-scale territorial and social abstractions of units, such an assumption cannot be made in all cases (cf. Anderson 2006; Neumann 1994, 1996; Hobsbawm 1983). Authority, organisational systems and the 'state' are many different things to many different people; while parts of them are mediated, some parts are also directly experienced, for example, through experiences with systems that the state funds and employs. While the *nation*-state is imagined, the state – like other social polities – may be both imagined through myths and partly experienced in the way it actually impacts, restricts and empowers, depending on the particular case and society (e.g. Kumlin 2002, Faizullaev 2007).

Finally, it can also be questioned whether the nation-state, particularly in relation to modernity, was not a highly specific type of state, one which created specific circumstances for its citizens, contributing to the kind of estrangement that has often been associated with the 'modern condition'. What if such an estrangement – taken up extensively in much recent literature on individualism and on the risk of society, for example – does not result from the size of the unit that is developed but from the conditions of its development? The state may thus play fundamentally different roles in cases such as those described above by Dirlik (2002) for modern European colonialism compared with other contexts, where corresponding authority structures, now encased in the state system, may, for instance, have been formed by multiple interests over a protracted period of time.

As has been noted, it is thus 'fruitful to approach the state as a continuum of regulatory power that has differential effects on different types of associations' (Moon 2010: 481–482, drawing upon Phrarr 2003) and that can be filled with different content and contradictions, depending on its specific processes of development. While many definitions of the state or specific other conceptions of authority focus on a particular period, the longer processes of authority formation viewed here mean that the state cannot be defined solely in functional terms as involving a monopoly on the legitimate use of force or the like (cf. Tilly 1992, Smith 2003) or in terms of state-building (or terms related to this, such as state formation, cf. e.g. Day 2002, Michael 2012). Instead, understanding any expression of authority and form of social organisation requires linking its conceptualisation to other categorisations such as nature, urban and rural relations, society and even community.[20]

Both the state and all other expressions of authority and valuation can thus be seen as being under constant struggle, manifested in how they, as well as related metaphors for social organisation, are expressed. Our territorial conceptualisations are thus not firstly descriptive but perhaps aspirational: they express the world in the way a group in power – or, in the best case, multiple groups in proto-democratic or democratic systems – want to see it. On this basis, we thus turn to how different specific groups have conceived of territorial development in relation to the frontier in order to develop power over other groups.

3 Frontier thinking

Why is a distinction drawn between close-to-nature 'communities' and 'modern civilised' societies or states?

Introduction

Categorisations that distinguish nature from culture, or the environment from 'civilisation', have grouped humans as belonging entirely to either nature (with highly simplified characteristics) or culture (normalising their characteristics). Establishing such characteristics has been seen as emblematic of modernity (cf. Schmidt 2000; Therborn 2003).

Bruno Latour's classic *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993) makes this case compellingly. Latour asserts that we should acknowledge how little we know about anything: by giving things names we obscure them, because we then see only the name – on a map, for instance – and take this for the thing, the territory. As Cohen notes on Latour's argument, 'To be modern is to insist on the separation between well-"constituted" practices. As a result, once their non-separation is acknowledged, "we immediately stop being wholly modern"' (Cohen 1997: 346, with internal quotes from Latour 1993).[21] It is thus because of the 'Western overvaluation of "difference"' (Cohen 1997: 341) and modernity that we fail to see that we have never been modern. While we try to distinguish 'civilisation' from nature and from people living in nature, the distinctions, which have come to underpin many social systems, were never as large as they were made out to be.

This chapter reviews frontier thinking as a means by which we have reified and sought to divide up units of social organisation internally and to distinguish them from nature, generally ascribing lower value to humans whom we see as related to nature. In such a conceptualisation, nature and the environment are separated from, or 'Othered', vis-à-vis humankind. While many of the conceptions that distinguish nature from culture perhaps achieved their greatest reach and strongest acceptance through modern European colonialism and its focus on modernity, they have also been used in other times and places to establish temporal and spatial distance. However, if we acknowledge that these distinctions, like their present systematic construction, are not given but rather creations made for specific purposes, it becomes possible to ask what a human-environment relation that does not embrace and act according to such sharp divisions might look like.

Defining frontier thinking

The pre-eminent theoretical construct used in modern European colonial-ism was that of the *frontier*. While, as discussed in the introductory chapter, this has been given many and varying definitions – to be discussed later in relation to the US context – a demarcation between 'nature' and 'culture' is central to most treatments (including that of Turner 1921, cf. Kohn and O'Neill 2006, Slotkin 1998). Indeed, for purposes of human-environment relations, the core of the frontier concept distinguishes what was regarded as pure nature or *wilderness* (defined as populated only by *pre-modern* societies living *off the land or in subsistence conditions*) from what was regarded as *culture* (*civilised* and *modern* populations, which by implica-tion increasingly included *urban* populations). What is more, the frontier concept assumes a movement whereby 'nature' is subsumed and made more valuable when it is encompassed by 'culture' – the highly specific type of culture represented by 'civilised', 'modern' and non-subsistence (agriculturally based) populations – with wilderness or 'non-modern' socie-ties erased or at least described as exceptions. All these distinctive features of the definition are the subject of major bodies of literature, which often explore and criticise linkages between the features (see e.g. Nash 1982, Katz 1997, Descola 2013).

The term 'frontier' thus also includes at this core both a valuation and a binary: societies and environments are mutually exclusive categories; the former is better than the latter; and there are no in-betweens, conflicting or alternative categories, or even a gradient between the two (cf. Latour 1993). Instead, the categorisation gives rise to a scheme whereby 'development' must be understood as based on which of these two categories any given phe-nomenon can be assigned to, however with the power of definition lying with the category of 'culture' or 'civilisation'. Thus, for instance, 'rural' becomes devalued as a component closer to the environment than to 'culture', while 'urban' becomes valued as a result of the same type of conceptualisation. Associations can also be made whereby rural or natural areas must be more similar, or at least possible to conceive of and describe from the outside; the outside – the urban, civilised and modern – being by definition the only legiti-mate centre of description (cf. Shubin 2006).

This conceptualisation or core entails wide-ranging implications for legiti-mising certain uses and dismissing others, as well as for both dividing up and valuing different groups. In effect, '[t]he frontier operated as an ontological device for enacting the dualistic metaphysics of modernity. At once cogni-tive and material, this device generated distance in the context of proximity' (Davison and Williams 2017: 18). Similarly, the same authors argue:

> [h]olding coherence and incoherence apart, the frontier was inscribed spatially through the material project of civilising wild environments. The movement of this frontier through time was an objective record of

progress, a forward motion towards enlightenment as nature made way for modern organisation

(Davison and Williams 2017: 17)[22]

The role of 'development' or even 'progress' is thus given a highly specific characterisation. For instance, the direct use of and interaction with nature ('wilderness') is a stage to be transcended, with this transcendence resulting in becoming modern, which is considered a value in itself. This development, in terms of stages to be fulfilled, has been regarded as a crucial part of Enlightenment thinking (Whitton 1988). Rendall elaborates as follows: 'Though the details varied, a common pattern of evolution was of four stages of progress, from savage hunting and gathering communities, to the barbarian pastoral stage, to a settled agricultural cultivation, and finally to the stage of commercial civilization' (Rendall 1997: 157).

This conception can be seen as being related to, drawing on, and bolstering multiple developments over time: later in the late 1800s, a vague romanticism, as well as natural science studies applied to human societies, gave rise to social Darwinism and assumptions involving survival of the fittest with very specific notions of race (e.g. Uppman 1978). It has also been argued that particularly the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers such as Adam Smith and David Hume, taking their lead from Montesquieu, developed this theory of stages into a 'unique and profoundly influential eighteenth-century historical narrative' (Kohn and O'Neill 2006: 194). Yet, many of the conceptions inherent in this mentality seem to have operated based on a 'folk theory of social change' (cf. Kashima et al. 2011) that assumes progress to be from a more primitive to a more advanced stage and that has existed for a long time in various guises with and for the exercise of power.[23]

The major impact of what is here called 'frontier thinking' is that it came to underpin a number of elements that were brought together with considerable impact and almost global reach as a result of modern European colonialism (cf. Dirlik 2002).

One of the main consequences of the device of the frontier, where the environment was concerned, was to link conceptions of the natural, rural and pre-modern (all of which it shaped in part) to emptiness; areas that were not settled by 'urban' and 'modern' 'civilisation' were assumed to be empty (of relevant populations) and to be wilderness and pure nature (cf. Jahn 2013, Turner 1921). The ideas from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries onwards of nature as either savage or noble/innocent have been described as having evolved 'broadly into what we now term the Enlightenment and Romanticism' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 19–20). However, in social terms, the conception of 'wilderness' vs. 'civilisation' differentiated the centre – defined as those pushing the frontier ahead of them and as civilised and rightfully exploring natural resources – from those who were not doing so, relegating the latter to a geographical or temporal space of their own.

These conceptions could be seen as crucial ingredients for a frontier theory – and its many related conceptualisations – to 'work'; that is, to provide underpinnings for a material outcome. If areas with natural resources can be defined as 'empty', they are open to conquest. Land that was defined as 'empty' or wilderness, with or without the people who lived there, who were not defined as part of civilisation, could be claimed and thereby play a role in modern European colonialism and related capitalism (cf. Ioris 2018). In this vein, Davidson and Williams note:

> Understood on its own terms, the progressive establishment of an Anglo-European settler society … filled the goading vacuum of terra nullius, a space perceived to be barren of meaning and without time, pushing the frontier of nature to the margins of colonial society
> (Davison and Williams 2017: 18)

These types of arguments and their implications can be traced through extensive and varying bodies of literature, and this will be done throughout the book. Turner (1921) is largely credited with developing some of the most influential work on the frontier; however, as Jahn (2013) points out, concepts similar to that of a frontier that serve to delineate land that can be appropriated from land that cannot are readily identifiable in Locke, who played a crucial role in motivating the settlement of the pre-eminent frontier settler country, the United States. Locke based his work on an assumed difference between land that appeared empty – or was held in common – in England and land in the colonies.[24] Jahn notes that Locke based his assumption on the fact that England was recognised as a political community and, as such, as having the right to common property (Jahn 2013). In contrast, the group that has sometimes been described as the Amerindians, emblematic of how pre-modern societies were imagined at this time, were not seen as a political community as they did not exhibit the characteristics of modernity related to settlement and, implicitly, the state. Accordingly, their land could be appropriated since, as noted by Jahn, citing John Stuart Mill: 'Barbarians have no right as a nation' (Mill 1984: 119, quoted in Jahn 2013: 126).

As seen above, the core of frontier thinking in its many guises thus includes the juxtaposition of civilised and empty space, with the latter and its inhabitants essentially devoid of value and open to government from the centre. Finding the origin of such conceptions is no easy task. Some have highlighted the role of Imperial Rome as 'a powerful element in the European psyche since Classical times' (Hingley 2018: 81), seeing it as 'causally connected to many structural features of the contemporary world, at least in terms of symbolic resources, and albeit through the varied permutations of reinvention that have occurred from the Roman period itself onwards' (Gardner 2013: 20). Here, it has been noted that the field of 'Roman frontier studies … employs quite particular concepts of civilisation and barbarism' (Gardner 2017: 1–2).

In particular, the 'Roman concept of unity was focused on Rome as the centre of the world … a major legitimation of chauvinistic European attitudes to the Orient from which, it was often argued, the burden of civilization had passed to Europe' (Delanty 1996: 97).[25] However, it has also been noted that such classifications are not only related to the 'West'; for instance, Heywood (1999) discusses frontier areas in a similar sense in relation to the Ottoman state.

In addition, Smith (2003) observes that decision-makers as different as Theodore Roosevelt and the Urartian King Argishti I (before 700 BC) spoke of 'wildernesses' in relation to areas that had been occupied by other peoples for centuries. Smith notes that 'by reclassifying them as "waste spaces", expansion was not only conscionable, it was mandated' (2003: 87). Smith goes on to point out that:

> [i]t is the tension between civilization and the insatiable drive of the barbarians to blot out its achievements, a dramatic theme rooted in Herodotus and updated by Gibbon, that lies at the heart of numerous late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century accounts of "the rise of Civilization"
>
> (Smith 2003: 87)

Closer to our era, the way such frontier thinking gained ground was by being linked with and understood through major ongoing developments. From the 1600s on, with the natural sciences given a greater role after the Renaissance, the assumption gained ground that increasing knowledge over time would result in 'man in the future being able to make himself "the ruler and owner of nature" – that is, the idea of progress' (Lindborg 1978: 57, my translation). Here, for example, Spencer (seen by some as writing in this vein) assumed that development could be seen as a progression through which societal forms of organisation become more integrated and differentiated, in parallel to the way in which organisms evolve to become increasingly complex (Ambjörnsson and Elzinga 1977). By analogy, purportedly lower-status cultures became the 'white man's burden' to colonise and develop (Ambjörnsson and Elzinga 1977).[26] We thus see not only an illustration of highly simplified conceptions about development but also an assumption that social systems should work in the same way as the natural systems that at the time had been recently categorised.

However, the fact that similar ideas had existed for centuries makes it likely that it was not solely the conceptions that prevailed at a given time that were to blame; rather, the ideas in a social context reflect an argument that is highly attractive to humans who seek cognitive simplification of the world and who can situate themselves at the locus of 'civilisation'. The extensive application of these concepts in modern European colonialism took place at a time of great uncertainty, when governing agents increasingly called for clear means to justify their position. For instance, the natural sciences revolution,

in connection with which some of these types of ideas were sustained, has been described as having been 'clearly linked to the growth of cities and the bourgeoisie as a political and economic factor' (Lindborg 1978: 60–61, my translation), which in turn resulted in the need for strong classificatory frameworks.[27] Somewhat similarly, Rich observes:

> [f]or Braudel what ultimately differentiated "civilisations" from mere "cultures" was the presence of towns for it was urban life that ultimately contributed to the growth and development of a civilization … the discussion of civilisations in world history has by no means entirely escaped from its Eurocentric moorings
>
> (Rich 2000: 349)

As a thought structure, frontier thinking was thus in no way detached from material structures but was rather expedient and legitimising. The representative of 'man', who defined 'himself' as the entity writing down and thinking these thoughts, as well as benefitting from them and asserting domination over nature, was perhaps most often an urban, wealthy citizen of the Anglo world (or someone of similar position in another imperial or similar society).

What conceptions like those described above also did was to construct the world in terms of neat typologies, something that has been regarded as the hallmark of modernist thinking and must be regarded as co-constitutive with both the rise of modernism, which we are perhaps still experiencing, and, simultaneously, its spread worldwide through modern European colonisation (e.g. Muecke 2009). While neither modernity nor the Enlightenment can be conceived of as unitary developments (e.g. Schmidt 2000), they have often been seen as resulting in conceptions such as these, most notably ones to the effect that there is one way of being that is more modern or enlightened than others, i.e., a valuation and a definition of what progress is. Thus, Foucault asks,

> I wonder whether we may not envisage modernity rather as an attitude than as a period of history. And by "attitude," I mean a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task
>
> (Foucault 1984, para. 28)

For Latour, what have here been regarded as core concepts of frontier thinking are pathological manifestations of modernity. He pointedly comments on the misconceptions created by these distinctions: '*The asymmetry between nature and culture then becomes an asymmetry between past and future. The past was the confusion of things and men; the future is what will*

no longer confuse them' (Latour 1993: 71, italics in original). As a result, however, it is:

> the sorting that makes the times, not the times that makes the sorting.
> Modernism – like its anti- and post-modern corollaries – was only the
> provisional result of a selection made by a small number of agents in
> the name of all
>
> (Latour 1993: 76, italics in original)

So while even King Argishti I of Urartu may have used concepts of 'empty' space to justify dominion over those who lived there (Smith 2003), his conceptions could not travel or be applied globally at the time. However, given the nature of modern European colonialism, these conceptions came to influence not only those who came into direct contact with them but also those who had access to such descriptions through media, such as travel books. Thus, as '[i]n the seventeenth and eighteenth century, explorers and colonists departed from their homes in Western Europe … [seeking] explanations for phenomena that had previously been viewed as miraculous, supernatural, or the work of the divine' (Young 2005: 1), they also communicated back and spread 'information' on their journeys that was notably tinged with such assumptions. In some cases, it seems that established metaphorical understandings of a situation were even reinforced without consideration of the concepts sustaining these understandings. For instance, as Ward observes in regard to the descriptions in these books, '[m]ost travel books about the life of the bushman written before 1850 stress the "naturalness" and freedom of frontier life, without consciously comparing it with that of the "noble savage"' (Ward 1977: 300).

Turner's much later work on the frontier thesis for the US – to be discussed in later chapters – thus drew upon established and colonial ideas (cf. Turner 1921), which also, to some extent, recurred in later community studies, as described by Tönnies (1955 [1887]), and in rural/urban conceptions (both of which are discussed later). This suggests that, just as conceptions that were highlighted in modernity were not necessarily 'modern', 'colonial' developments are not confined to the specific locations where they were imposed. Rather, concepts and relations that were enforced through modern European colonialism had and continue to have an impact on a scale ranging from a modicum of power at home (often by necessity more limited) to a more severe exercise of power abroad and play a part in imposing understandings even in areas not directly impacted by colonisation (cf. Smith 2003).

Such mechanisms are thus not necessarily related to any specific group of people or class or any given characteristic of a people or place; rather, they are the consequence of the long-noted human tendency towards Othering (e.g. Newman 2006).[28] Frontier thinking does most of its work by excluding certain perspectives from power – not only the many who can be made to fall on the non-culture side of definitions but also those who cannot be described neatly in terms of binary categorisations (Keskitalo 2023).

Nature as empty of recognised human impact: The idea of 'wilderness'

The idea that nature and (recognised) human action are separate is a core element of frontier thinking. Like all its other components, it can be traced far back in time to a location of descriptive power that predominantly utilised, rather than lived in, the environments where the utilised resources were located. The idea of nature as separate can thus be seen as providing separation and justifying the seating of power in this self-ordained prescriptive centre; over time, this has been a crucial component in administering and providing justification, as it were, for empire (cf. Hardt and Negri 2000). Thus, this descriptive power cannot be separated from a need for separation, that is, a need found in the describers rather than in the environment.

Alder notes that what are today considered Western ideas of wilderness are based in early Christian ascetic traditions, from the period 'when Christianity became the official religion of a Roman Empire whose eastern hinterlands took on new political significance with the movement of the imperial capital to Constantinople' (Adler 2006: 10, cf. Nash 1982). Such ideas about nature have often sanctioned human intervention, for instance, views that linked it to divine design, according to which God had purposefully left his design unfinished for Man to improve on (Glacken 1967). These traditions 'lionized the tiller of the soil, praised husbandry, and venerated antiquity' (Kaufmann 1998: 667). No doubt, an empire requires agriculture to feed its people, including towns, cities and troops.

However, the idea of the pure state was also idolised as a return to Eden. Adler asserts: 'Movement backwards, as return, represented moral progress: *reversal of the Fall*. Resumption of a simpler, more primitive, even animal-like life announced the advent of a new Adam, and hope for paradise regained' (Adler 2006: 18, italics added). Thus, early monastic texts, as Adler points out, 'written by and for a literate (and by that very token, urban) cultural minority' describe angels and demons locked in battle, 'in a wilderness whose separation from "the world" is represented as pure and unqualified' (Alder 2006: 19).

This millennia-old religious idea of wilderness continues to form ideas of it today, and played a crucial part in forming what is discussed here as frontier thinking. In the statements above on monastic texts, it is even possible to see representations that would later become instrumental in Turner's conception of the frontier: the idea of progress or improvement through involvement with wilderness and a sort of 'hero's journey' (visible both in later American ideas of involvement with wilderness and in tourism, cf. Robledo and Batle 2017, Campbell 2004 [1949]).[29] Alder comments on these monastic writings:

> The simultaneous representation of wilderness as pure refuge and demonic habitat attests to a dynamic instability of binary oppositions, and of moral geographies established with reference to them. Promising direct contact with the demonic and the divine, wilderness was the

ground where knowledge of illusion and of truth, of the demonic and
the angelic, were only to be won in tandem

(Adler 2006: 27)[30]

Similarly, Carolyn Merchant argues that 'the Enlightenment idea of pro-
gress is rooted in the recovery of the garden lost in the Fall … [it] functioned
as ideology and legitimation for settlement of the New World, while capital-
ism, science and technology provided the means of transforming the material
world' (Merchant 1996: 137).

Frontier thinking, then, could be regarded as a crucial ideology with great
impact on modern European colonialism due to its being already known;
it was part of a historical mental legacy made familiar through religion and
other practices and also gained popularity and acceptance in the centres of
these self-same societies based on the positionality it afforded.

Further steps towards 'civilising' (being able to utilise) what was considered
to be 'unclaimed' nature can then be seen in the seventeenth century, when
the Baconian idea of 'nature as useful to man, as a field for human exploita-
tion' took root (Baumer 1977: 307); other examples are Huxley's notion that
'man and nature were enemies, though man, Prometheus-like, could, if vigi-
lant, commandeer any part of nature he chose for his own purpose' (Baumer
1977: 345).[31] These, too, were not new ideas but rather ones fundamentally
built on established lines of thought. As noted earlier, a major proponent of
transforming 'wilderness' into 'civilisation' during modern European colonial-
ism was John Locke, who also drew on established rather than novel concep-
tualisations. As Katz notes, 'Nature, for Locke, was merely the raw material
for the development of human property' (Katz 1997: 229). Locke's theory of
the creation of property thus assumed precisely an established struggle with
'wilderness', although in his view it was the labour invested in agriculture that
justified the creation of private property out of 'wilderness' (Woods 1997).

A historical trend of projecting nature as a font of human action and a
basis for resource use was thus already well established when Romanticism
(following upon the eve of widespread industrialisation across the world)
caused a resurgence in 'romantic' conceptions of nature. Again, as Kaufmann
observes, these were not novel: 'Romantic nationalists did not break with
earlier traditions but, rather, built upon them' (Kaufmann 1998: 667). For
instance, the thinking of Alexander von Humboldt – sometimes credited
with being a founder of ecological thinking as well as a source of inspira-
tion to Darwin and the American early environmentalists (Thoreau, Emerson,
Muir) – can be seen as having been shaped by German Romanticism, Goe-
the, and the nineteenth-century Jewish Enlightenment (Adler 2006), with a
foundation in religious and wilderness conceptions. The Romanticist ideas
of nature continued a history of influencing travel writing and tourism and,
in line with earlier traditions, highlighted a 'visual consumption of nature'
that came close to spectacle (with all the attributes of angels and demons
that were present already in antiquity). In the 1800s, the 'sublime' was thus

regarded as a mixture of horror and excitement, understanding nature as 'desolate, wild, primaeval, hideous, frightful, tremendous, dreadful' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 110–112, cf. Nolte 2000). And in line with established dualist thinking, '[n]ature was increasingly taken to exist on those margins, away from the centre of industrial society … Nature was where industry was not' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 21–22). The increasing influence on nature areas by large-scale human developments was taken as evidence of 'wilderness' disappearing, resulting in the early environmental movement's notable and unsurprising strong development in the US (to be discussed in the following chapters).

In this line of thinking embedded in religion and myth – and with numerous connotations that are influential but seldom made clear in argumentation – nature is transformed into 'wilderness', separated from Man, in a millennia-old production of empire. Such conceptions gained widespread credence under industrialism, while natural areas (which were never wildernesses of the type idolised here, as there were people living in them in all colonial areas) decreased. One reason for this may have been that wilderness itself was never the key element, but rather the struggle and 'progress' that the battle with wilderness was seen as affording modern (and not so modern) Man (cf. Robledo and Batle 2017).

As a result, those who today protest that ideas of 'wilderness' are a human construct with incorrect and ahistorical application (the consensus among those having studied the concept, e.g., Nash 1982; Cronon 1996) fight not only explicit lines of argument in the present but also the legacy of thought embedded in them. For instance, Cypher and Higgs note:

> We hesitate using the term wilderness in the context of discussing reality or real nature … [it] is a Euroamerican cultural idea that carries with it connotations of a depeopled Arcadia, a view which denies natural flux and the management activities of native people
> (Cypher and Higgs 1997: 126, note; cf. Cronon 1995)

Latour (2004) asserts that the existence of a conception of nature as 'out there' in itself suggests that there are only nature cultures. However, he argues, there is a blanket refusal to see this despite the fact that the argument illustrates this very point: 'When one appeals to the notion of nature, *the assemblage that it authorizes counts for infinitely more than the ontological quality of "naturalness", whose origin it would guarantee*' (Latour 2004: 29, italics in original, cf. Muecke 2009).

Classifications of people who already lived in areas before colonisation: Noble or ignoble

As shown above, where the frontier myth prevailed, the fact that there were people already living in an area was not sufficient to prevent its being seen as 'empty' or 'wilderness'. Rather, to justify conquering the people living

there – who would become a large part of the citizenry in the colonial and later postcolonial states that developed – colonial powers had to describe them in various ways as unworthy and incapable of self-rule and create divisions that persist to this day. What is more, the conception of some spaces as empty with inhabitants of negligible value and others as civilised and marked by valued human development entails the assumption that societal organisation progresses from the former to the latter. As noted, this was perhaps most clearly expressed in the so-called four-stage theory of development in the eighteenth century, which assumed progress from a subsistence economy to pastoral farming, agriculture and commerce/industry (Borsboom 1988, drawing upon Meek 1976). The issue of race, as well as the categorisation of people in terms of race or type, emerged as part of this development; all those who were not Western and instantly culturally recognisable to the modern European colonist, or did not practise the agricultural or industrial practices this group used to identify themselves, were placed on a lower rung of the developmental ladder. Accordingly, in much Anglo-American development, the Amerindians were seen as exemplifying the lowest stage, subsistence (Jahn 2013).

The sweep of modern European colonialism was thus justified in the name of 'progress' from more close-to-nature livelihoods to those assumed to be of 'higher' status, transforming not only 'wilderness' but also the person in it. Borsboom makes the following observation, linking these developments logically:

> From this four-stage theory of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment it seems only a small step to the emergence of the classical evolution theory in the nineteenth century. Like the adherents of the four-stage theory, evolutionists like E.B. Tylor also tried to construct an all-embracing theory of the development of human society. Here, too, the key word is "progress": progress from savagery as still represented by contemporary hunter and gatherer societies to civilization as it had developed in Europe
>
> (Borsboom 1988: 425–426)

So, in order to be placed lowest on the developmental ladder, people had to be imagined as occupying this position – since they lived in 'wilderness' they were either demons or angels, but never entirely or sufficiently human to be accorded rights; that is, before they had eventually 'progressed' to become like the colonisers. They were thus '[t]he savage, either Noble or Ignoble, […] a European mythical creation – a mytheme' (Borsboom 1988: 419, with reference to Lemaire's work in Dutch). Borsboom elaborates as follows:

> In European social thought mainly hunting and gathering societies (American Indians, Australian Aborigines) or horticulturalists (Pacific Islanders) have served as a model for the development of this mytheme. These societies have been pictured as precisely the opposite of European civilization.

As such they have fulfilled a double function in European philosophy and ideology. On the one hand the contrast with European civilization has been phrased in negative terms: no progress but stagnation; not civilized but cruel and primitive; no history but timelessness; not logical but pre-logical. In this respect the concepts "Primitive" and "Savage" were antipodes of the European situation and they formed a legitimation for the European process of civilization

(Borsboom 1988: 419)

Conrad sees this type of development ladder as an indication that the Enlightenment was 'obsessed with the problem of origins' (Conrad 2012: 1025). He links this to the need to find alternative descriptions of origins, as biblical and divine authority could no longer be called upon (Conrad 2012). However, as we have seen above, it instead meant that the search for origins, rather than losing its foundation in myth, instead managed the need for foundation myths through making these the basis for conquests of foreign land (cf. Delanty 1996), studies in anthropology and popular culture. It has thus been argued, for instance, that:

Robinson Crusoe, the man of parts who found the good life by "returning" to "nature", may stand as the harbinger in England of the "noble frontiersman" of the nineteenth century, just as his Man Friday may be considered, in some ways, a progenitor of the "noble savage" of the eighteenth

(Ward 1977: 298)[32]

However, to fulfil their function as a projection of assumptions related to nature and to what was then assumed to be earlier stages of development, these groups were seen not only as savage but also as vested with attributes that would be needed for the later development of a theorised 'community' related to pre-modern societies. In this regard, Borsboom argues:

These societies have been objects not only of antipathy, and even distaste, but also of desire and nostalgia… human beings in these societies were still living in a natural state, free from the oppressive bonds of civilization. These Children of Nature … lived in close harmony with their natural environment, which provided all their material and biological needs. All this has been lost in the process of civilization. In both cases the ideas about the nature of primitive societies are mythical creations which serve as an antithesis for the notion of European civilization: the first-mentioned attitude as a justification for progress, development and even colonization; the second as a fundamental criticism of that self-same process

(Borsboom 1988: 419)

In this description, 'noble' and 'ignoble' can be seen as two sides of the same coin and inherent markers of otherness, however they are defined. Yet, as Borsboom points out, drawing upon Meek (1976), it was the Ignoble Savage that was highlighted in the English and Scottish Enlightenment, with reference to the four-stage theory of progress in which hunters and gatherers represented the most primitive stage. This being the case, Borsboom concludes: 'From there, it was only a small step to evolutionism and social Darwinism, in which there was no place at all for the Noble part of the Savage' (Borsboom 1988: 423–424).

Again, as is true of more general depictions of the elements underpinning the classifications, identifying the origins of such descriptions is more difficult than simply finding both classical and relatively recent works that apply them. Illuminating the origins of the classification, Borsboom makes the following observation:

> In his major work *Politica*, the Greek philosopher Aristotle worked out the dichotomy human/non-human. To the first category belonged the Greeks, to the second the non-Greeks … who lived out in the woods outside the *polis*, the name applied to whom was *barbaroi* … beings without any culture, government or laws
>
> (Borsboom 1988: 424)

This type of dichotomy, as Borsboom (1988) points out, can be found in sources as varied as Icelandic sagas and the Plinian races of Pliny the Elder. Seeing people as Others and being able to imagine these Others as either angels or devils is thus far from new, and we may note that such black-and-white descriptions also play a fundamental role in Western religion as well as thought, classifying the world broadly into good and bad, or good and evil (a tendency highlighted by numerous postcolonial writers such as Said 1978).

These ideas have been significant in shaping assumptions that many still hold about the international world, as distinct from an at least somewhat socialised state. Borsboom observes that an early, influential exponent of not seeing savages as noble was Thomas Hobbes, who '[l]ike the "Primitivists" of his time … saw the Americans [Indians] as the living evidence for his theory … "poor", "nasty" and "brutish"' (i.e. savage) (Borsboom 1988: 425–426). The counterpoint to this, although equally imagined, was found in Locke's terms, in which they were instead seen as exhibiting 'peace, goodwill, mutual assistance and co-operation' (i.e. noble) (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 19–20, cf. Baumer 1977).

These representations of an original state, or anarchy, which we now know were simplified with regard to the American Indians (as well as societies at large), nevertheless later came to shape the so-called Realist School of International Relations studies and liberal theory, the former Hobbesian in spirit and the latter Lockean (cf. Jahn 2013). Later, these have been contrasted by, among

other things, a Constructivist school, which argues that our construction of what we believe something to be will impact how we behave towards different groups and that our constructions must be understood in the context of our contextually developed understandings (e.g. Finnemore and Sikkink 2001).

Frontier thinking assumptions of community: Longing for an imagined world

In relation to this, the assumption that a community – or, in some cases, even a society as an integrated polity – cannot be found in larger units has long been voiced in the literature. Much literature has assumed a 'community' to be something primordial, antecedent to a 'modern' society. Conceptions of community often draw on categorisations created during industrialisation and reflect the types of simplifications associated with smaller-scale organisational units in frontier thinking.

The idea of a community as a small-scale harmonious and notably pre-modern unit is typical of Ferdinand Tönnies's influential book *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, often treated as the pioneering and foundational work in community studies (first published in 1887, translated into English as *Community and Association*) (Tönnies 1955). This book defined two ideal types of social organisation, which subsequently became mainstays of sociology and social anthropology, discussed by Marx, Durkheim and Weber, among others (cf. Alleyne 2002). 'Community' (*Gemeinschaft*) was used to evoke pre-industrial Europe, characterised by small towns and villages, customary law, supportive social relations and the importance of kinship and religion. By contrast, 'association' (*Gesellschaft*) was considered to be a result of industrialisation, modernisation and capitalism and was typified by functional differentiation, contract-based and impersonal relations and bureaucracy (Alleyne 2002; Glackin 2015).

However, the express purpose of this conceptualisation could rather be seen as being to divide and displace communities either in time (as 'pre-industrial' in Europe) or in place (as 'non-Western', as the term was later often applied by anthropologists, or at least 'rural'), depicting them as something traditional or pre-modern, and to distinguish them from a modernising or modern society (Alleyne 2002). This dichotomisation also came to be seen as 'formalis[ing] … the division between urban and rural social organisation' (Glackin 2015: 25).

By contrast, the term 'society' – with inherently wider-ranging features and assumed to be larger in size[33] – is often linked to nationalism (cf. Farole et al. 2010). However, borders drawn as a consequence of nationalism may also preclude the possibility of larger communities or, indeed, societies, as these boundaries are largely defined by characteristics that clash with understanding 'community' as pre-modern per definition (cf. Dirlik 2002).

Community studies theory, which includes evolutionary or development path assumptions such as those discussed above, can thus be seen as being

connected to specific historical ways of seeing the world, perhaps linked more to those doing the perceiving than to the world itself.[34] As a result, relatively recent criticism argues that community studies can be regarded as 'a knowledge format … used to produce, mediate, and structure representations of scientific knowledge' (Davidovic-Walther and Welz 2010: 90). Similarly, drawing upon George Marcus and James Clifford's explanation of how such formats work, Davidovic-Walther and Welz argue that:

> so-called realist ethnographic texts do not portray culture but rather invent it by employing specific textual strategies and tropes that make their representations of culture plausible … [and] which conceal by structuring the narration in such a way that it also excludes certain aspects of social life
> (Davidovic-Walther and Welz 2010: 98: see also Bond 2011)

they do this by, among other things, focusing on everyday life situations, which may, one might argue, more readily exhibit characteristics considered to be linked to community.

What is more, this type of construction can also be regarded as having influenced not only what the ascribed content of categories such as 'community', 'rural' and 'urban' is but also the role of the individual in these contexts. In accordance with the logic of frontier thinking, 'the city and rural areas were portrayed as two completely different worlds: simple dichotomy was deployed to distinguish between urban and rural' (Shubin 2006: 423). Furthermore, Shubin claims, '[f]rom this point of view, a negative definition of rurality was developed to describe rurality as places "out of the city": the rural as "the other" to the urban' (Shubin 2006: 423).

The dichotomy again reflects the types of assumptions found in the four-step development theory, progressing from an assumed noble or (simultaneously) ignoble situation. Glackin elaborates on this as follows:

> This binary opposition between rural and urban (or, arguably, good and bad) social organisations … [is] the basis for many of the overly negative perspectives of contemporary social theorists, where nostalgic interpretations of the past and the demise of the traditional (and therefore supposedly better) forms of social structure are incorrectly associated with the deterioration of society as a whole
> (Glackin 2015: 24)[35]

Accordingly, in British and Russian community studies formed as part of this development, it has been noted that modernisation was conceived of 'as a process of gradual change from a simple, "village economy", to a diversified economy of urban centres' (Shubin 2006: 426). 'Empty', 'stagnant' or 'dead' space was thus regarded as 'opposite to … the city seen as developing and extending its limits' (Shubin 2006: 428, cf. Kay et al. 2012). Rural dwellers,

through their position in the rural, were regarded as 'literally poor country cousins', 'the herd invading the city to buy goods' (Bater 1996: 192, quoted in Shubin 2006: 426).

The Western 'civilisation' and urban 'centre' thus remain privileged as a point of decision-making and the assumed location of those whose work involves writing and reading; at the same time, they are assumed, in a matter-of-fact manner, to be more dystopian as regards possibilities for social organisation in comparison with a more utopian community, albeit one displaced in time or space. As Glackin points out, many other paired assumptions are attached to these concepts: individuality becomes an assumed significant aspect of larger-scale association, or *Gesellschaft*, but is not regarded as achievable in community, or *Gemeinschaft*; and civic engagement comes to be related to assumptions regarding small-scale rural communities (as e.g. in Putnam 1995) (cf. Glackin 2015).

Conclusions

This chapter illustrates that the transformation of nature into 'wilderness', separated from Man, gained widespread credence as something to define 'civilisation' in relation to. But while civilisation is seen as representing progress and advancement, it is also assumed to represent a loss of community. Humans under the modern condition are assumed to long for a simpler, pre-modern past where they lived in harmony with nature as, in the terminology applied above, 'noble savages' (e.g. Borsboom 1988, Ward 1977, Marx 2008). People in pre-modern social groupings are assumed to be not only closer to nature but also more social; they are assumed to live in very small-scale societal units, that is, communities which, in some understandings (notably Locke-inspired ones), maintain a sociability and societal unity that larger units cannot. In keeping with these assumptions, civilisation is also seen as having severed a direct link to cohesive social-environmental units.

However, the chapter also illustrates that the boundary of a 'society', 'community', or other organisational unit can in real life be considered fluid and dependent on one's definition of both 'society' and 'community', rather than being a prerogative of specific group development. As a result, it has been argued that, rather than assuming specific dichotomies, we should 'imagine community in a pragmatic fashion' (Alleyne 2002: 617). Alleyne concludes from this that:

> we cannot meaningfully argue for the sociological relevance of ethnic communities on the grounds that they represent a collectivity of persons bound together by culture in common. By failing to account for the struggles and negotiations between competing subjects and standpoints over the naming of ethnic communities, we substitute metonymy for epistemology
>
> (Alleyne 2002: 620)[36]

While this should not be taken to mean that people cannot think they are part of a community and that a community does not in this sense 'exist',[37] it does mean that communities cannot be regarded as given. This understanding of 'community' as something imagined as a characteristic of the Other – that is, perhaps as a characteristic constructed by outsiders who saw something they longed for in the cases they constructed – says something about the apparently strong sense of belonging that is further increased by increasing globalisation.

In contrast, modern organisational units – states or other large-scale entities, seldom mentioned per se but assumed under the modern condition – are instead considered incapable of maintaining sociability or a link between society and social organisational units. Larger organisational units are seen as modern, more developed – in line with development path or evolutionary theory – and as negatively affecting those living in them. This allows for particular understandings of individualism while obscuring others, including any individualism that can be attained while still being part of a society or community, depending on how these are defined. This focus is expanded upon in the following chapter, which illustrates how these conceptualisations were drawn upon in the development of the US as a state.

4   The role of frontier thinking in the development of the American state and society

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have seen that frontier thinking, although it gained much of its strength and influence through modern European colonisation, has prevailed over time, perhaps because it also speaks to a human desire for cognitive simplification. It is a type of classification that serves to divide the world into archetypes, which, in the present instance, have resulted in particular definitions of progress and development. The preceding chapter has also illustrated that not only is frontier thinking a historical conception, but that it continues to shape what we think of as nature even today.

This chapter, as well as the following ones, extends this analysis. It shows that these conceptions of nature and society are central to ideas of the state, ideas of environment and resource use and even conceptions of the people at large.

The development of the US as the archetypal frontier state

The development of the frontier in the US as an archetypal – perhaps *the* archetypal – frontier state exhibits all the characteristics one might expect from the descriptions of frontier thinking in earlier chapters. The US saw the frontier as a boundary in front of it, separating justified ownership by the British coloniser from the non-acknowledged ownership of land by Amerindians, who were seen as inhabiting and being part of 'wilderness'.[38] This included all the associations identified in the previous chapter: this 'justified' colonisation largely through specifically developed conceptions of private individual ownership based on labour (notably agriculture) invested in land – a Lockean version of frontier logic – that were developed for and by the British to limit civil strife in the homeland and gain access to resources; and it took place based on a largely Anglo migration that brought with it these conceptions, which would later lead to the US seeking to define itself as separate from yet part of the legacy of British thinking. Factors that may have made the US frontier legacy so strong include its being considered an exemplar of British colonialism and being used for and by emerging Americans in defining their

state and occupation of the land and, later, their separation from Britain. This could be regarded as a search for identity in a nation under development that led to its being defined precisely and explicitly in relation to frontier logics (cf. Arneil 1996, Jahn 2013).

Thus, while many see the frontier thesis as beginning with Turner's work on America (1921, to be discussed in more detail in later chapters), Turner rather summarised a development that was already well under way and had numerous theoretical constructs to support it. Indeed, this may have contributed to the success of his analysis: the developments were already widely known but were 'packaged' by Turner in a coherent, timely format (e.g. Beckman 1966). Or, as Ireland puts it, 'a nationalist systematization of pre-existing popular ideas, which Turner, like every American, was exposed to through the media of the western romance and dime novel' (Ireland 2009: 676).

Not only, then, did American development take place with a frontier thesis as its core, as it has been defined in this work; it extended this mythology, made it central to the state and divisions in social roles and purpose and popularised and embedded it in a popular culture by which the frontier experience and its nature-society divisions and assumptions were normalised.

The role of Locke for frontier thinking

As noted earlier, several scholars have gone back to Locke, often seen as the father of liberalism, to understand the course of frontier development in the US. For instance, as Arneil emphasises, Locke's thinking was widely applied in what would become the US. In *Two Treatises of Government*, published in 1689, Locke considered America to be the 'beginning of civilisation' (Arneil 1996: 1). Along these lines, Borsboom has argued that:

> [i]n this conception, the inhabitants of America represented the natural state of mankind and eventually led to Locke's famous phrase that "In the beginning all the World was America". In a nutshell, this phrase expressed the idea that the first ancestors of the Europeans had lived in much the same way as the American hunters and gatherers were living in Locke's time. This idea appealed to Rousseau, who worked it out in his own way, constructing a semi-fictional natural state based on what was known about American Indians, the Carib Indians in particular. Of all known human beings, they were still the closest to that supposed original natural state
>
> (Borsboom 1988: 422)

One main element of Locke's theorisation was to argue for the protection of private property, creating a specific agglomeration linking labour, particularly in agriculture, with land rights. This created a specific conception in relation to frontier thinking that not only devalued non-owned, 'empty' 'wastelands' but also asserted private ownership on a specific basis as the

model (Dowling 2002). Whitehead notes that 'Locke's concept of wasteland, as opposed to value-producing land, constituted a founding binary opposition that constructed how landscapes were categorised' (Whitehead 2010: 83). Jahn summarises the argument as follows:

> [F]reedom is based on property … Private property constitutes individual freedom and individual freedom requires government by consent whose main task in turn is the protection of private property and thus that of individual freedom
>
> (Jahn 2013: 43, cf. Whitehead 2010)

While this argument was problematic as it denied non-property owners full political rights, contradicting Locke's claim that all people were born free and equal with the right to consent to government, Locke argued that this right could be fulfilled by, ideally, turning all persons into property owners (Jahn 2013). Jahn elaborates on this point as follows:

> This was a neat theoretical solution, but in practice it threw up the problem where all this additional property was to come from … Assuming that land – at the time the most important additional resource of wealth … – in England was too scarce to provide the vast and rising number of poor with property, Locke looked abroad … It was this common land in America which could be used, at least in principle, to furnish all individuals with property and thus make them eligible to full political rights
>
> (Jahn 2013: 49)

In line with what we can associate with frontier mythology, Locke thus argued that the land in America – and by analogy any land that is not under 'civilised' rule and settled (used for agriculture), with people investing labour in it, but rather in a 'state of nature' – was there for the taking. Thus, 'At most points, Locke equated the category of wasteland with common land and used it in opposition to land that was privately owned, cultivated, commodified, and enclosed' (Whitehead 2010: 85). The development path theory discussed in the previous chapter, which holds that people who practise subsistence livelihoods other than farming are simply at a lower developmental level, was thus used to justify the expropriation of their land as well as the devaluation of natural land and the legitimacy of human activities on it (cf. Jahn 2013, Borsboom 1998).[39]

Through this reconceptualisation, 'the definition of property was changed to suit the new goals of the colonists' and 'allow the English to supersede the rights claimed by virtue of occupation' (Arneil 1996: 18). Arneil goes on to observe:

> The *Two Treatises of Government* provided the answer. Labour, rather than occupation, would begin property, and those who tilled, enclosed, and cultivated the soil would be its owners. England superseded the

right of occupation by the Amerindians by virtue of their specific form of labour. Suddenly a whole continent was open to English colonization, and agrarian labour became the basis of both English colonial claims and Locke's *Two Treatises*

(Arneil 1996: 18)

In addition, 'by using North America as an example of wasteland, Locke was also potentially expanding its geographical scale to all areas of the world in which lands were supposedly not worked through settled cultivation' (Whitehead 2010: 85).[40] This 'labour theory of property was utilised repeatedly to support successive waves of English settler colonialism in North America, Australia and New Zealand in the nineteenth century, mainly by people dispossessed by English and European capitalism' (Whitehead 2010: 85). However, while Whitehead notes that 'its influence elsewhere has been less well-examined' (Whitehead 2010: 85), in this discussion of frontier thinking, we can note the enormous impact of ideas that in such a way devalue nature.

The Lockean understanding of natural rights could be seen as a highly mainstreamed basis for social organisation, one that does not mention the social other than as a boundary principle and one in which the condition for acknowledgement as an individual with political rights is that one be like everyone else within this set system (cf. Love 2008). In addition, it constitutes a system in which one's type of livelihood is connected with rights; that is, it places an inherently economic and resource-based interpretation on human rights as well as on nature. Nature is regarded as having only specific types of legitimate uses, with 'wilderness' or natural land devalued.

This type of argumentation has had a profound effect on what is considered to be legitimate use of nature as well as legitimate claims to land, not least in international law and the transformation of historical natural law since the 1600s. The role of the characterisation of America's indigenous populations has often been overlooked in scholarship on Locke and, subsequently, in scholarship on how natural-law theorists such as Hugo Grotius and Samuel Pufendorf were influenced by colonial interests. Arneil argues that:

Two Treatises was written as a defence of England's colonial policy in the new world against the sceptics in England and the counter-claims of both the aboriginal nations and other European powers in America … to justify the 17th-century dispossession of the aboriginal peoples of their land, through a vigorous defence of England's "superior" claims to proprietorship

(Arneil 1996: 1, cf. Ivison 2003)[41]

However, definitions that focus on 'open land' – *vacuum domicilium* – as open to appropriation and central to what here has been called frontier thinking can be disputed – and in fact were at the time. Relatively recent studies show that the Roman laws on conquest that were often used as the basis for claims were used in partial and faulty ways by the powers (Benton and

Straumann 2010). Indeed, it has been noted that 'Locke's writing, for example, was "an exercise in high theory" that both contradicted other views and had scant influence on land policy conducted by settlers who would have "known [that] Locke was wrong"' (Benton and Straumann 2010: 8, with internal quotes from Banner 2005: 47–48).

The implications of such a questioning of the role of specific types of labour in constituting ownership of property could be wide-ranging. As regards implications for the state system, Jahn goes so far as to claim that the fact that communities based on this type of property were accorded political rights while others were not 'underpin[s] … the modern international system consisting of sovereign states' (Jahn 2013: 56). As a result, she argues, 'liberalist' thinking based on Locke would come to form the basis for – not stand opposed to – realist and power politics thinking by defining what it entails to be regarded as a legitimate state (Jahn 2013). In another example, it can be seen that Thomas Hobbes, whose scholarship is often referred to as the antecedent of realist thought, invoked imagined characteristics of American Indians, '[who] represented a level of existence lacking order and laws' in describing settlement as an 'anarchy [that] was currently under control thanks to an elaborate system of laws' (Borsboom 1988: 425–426).[42] These sources thus undergird what are often seen as foundational assumptions of both realist and liberalist thinking on human nature. In addition, liberal thinking also appears limited in its focus solely on specific sectors of society and its requirement that particular developments involve natural resources. Jahn points out: '[L]arge-scale technological and economic development were the result of, rather than the condition for, the establishment of protoliberal institutions'; in addition, 'none of these gains were available to the vast majority of the non-propertied population' (Jahn 2013: 63).[43]

Apart from their implications for major legal and international theories on the role of colonial thinking in determining legal and state claims, these theories had a great impact at the time in the US. The idea of open land ripe for the taking, *vacuum domicilium*, which had a long history in colonial thought, was not applied by Locke alone; quite the contrary. Arneil explains the background:

> Thomas More was perhaps the first writer to use this term in relation to the Americas. Couched in both biblical and Platonic notions of the promised land or Utopian republic, More's theories drew a link between the vacant land, on the one hand, and the overflowing and industrious nation, on the other
>
> (Arneil 1996: 79)

In addition, this type of thinking, influenced by Descartes's dualism, separates man from nature, allowing him to exploit nature for his own ends (Dowling 2002). The conception became very popular, as it gave anyone 'a *natural right* within himself, through his labour, to appropriate land' (Arneil 1996: 166, italics added).

The argument found favour among preachers and politicians in research and philosophy drawing on Locke's theories at the highest political level, and legally, until a Supreme Court decision in 1823 established that Amerindians also had land rights. Arneil notes:

> No other political figure better demonstrates the use to which Locke's theory was put during this period than Thomas Jefferson. His views went beyond simply limiting Amerindians to certain parcels of land. As first articulated by Locke in his *Two Treatises*, Jefferson ultimately argued that the natural man must eventually succumb to civil society and the hunter's life to that of the farmer
>
> (Arneil 1996: 20)[44]

Commenting on this broad Lockean, but also frontier thinking-related, line of argument, Jahn observes that '[t]he same argument was also influential in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada throughout the 18th and well into the 19th centuries' (Jahn 2013: 64).

The promised land: frontier thinking as destiny fulfilment

What is more, in the US, many of these descriptions had a biblical slant to them, for example, in travel books, touting frontier-oriented mythology as well as differentiating 'between the civilized Christian man and the pagan, American savage', the latter described as increasingly ignoble as more conflicts arose between colonisers and Amerindians (Arneil 1996: 26). Understandings of 'open' or 'vacant' land as 'wilderness' – as seen already in early Christian works – thus continued to be explicitly stated in US development. This role of populating 'empty' land was given religious underpinnings, sometimes referred to as 'manifest destiny' (White 1991). Arneil observes: 'authors discussing aboriginal land draw the same parallels to biblical stories comparing *Indians* to nomadic peoples in the early colonization of the Middle East. Filling the land thus takes on mythical proportions in line with exoduses described in the first few books of the Old Testament' (Arneil 1996: 110, cf. Delanty 1996).[45]

Indeed, in this line, some stressed the:

> eschatological and paradisiacal elements in the colonization of North America by the pioneers, while others noticed that the Puritans imported the Holy Land idea and reality, as they perceived it, to America, as a transgeographical spiritual entity. They spoke of their Errand into the wilderness of the new world, that would be transformed into the Kingdom of God, thus bringing together the sacred and the natural world. Thus, America was the "Promised Land" settled by the "chosen people," who frequently applied the names Zion, Canaan, and Jerusalem to their new lands and churches
>
> (Kark 1996: 49, cf. Borsboom 1988, Kaufmann 1998)

Frontier thinking in the US thus linked arguments and material consequences in a way that had not been applied (or perhaps had not been possible to apply) as forcefully in Europe, although some argue that they were mainly transpositions of a European understanding of wilderness and the Orient (cf. Delanty 1996, Adler 2006). Nevertheless, as shown, the arguments they drew on were historically established conceptions. They were also linked to resource use rather than separate from it. For instance, biblical allegories could also be used for economic gain. Arneil points out that '[t]he proprietors of the American colonies began using the Garden of Eden metaphor in their pamphlets to sell their plots of land' (Arneil 1996: 74). At the same time, in attracting additional colonists, the US also placed great emphasis on religious freedom. Many of the arguments in the formation of the US as a state cited religious freedom from the British state and highlighted that the US would not reproduce what were deemed wrongs in Britain (cf. Berggren and Trägårdh 2006, Kark 1996).

The formation of the US polity

The concepts drawn upon for the formation of the US state can thus, to some extent, be considered to be a result of British conceptualisations elaborated for colonialist purposes, which, despite their British origin, became integral to assumptions in colonised areas. As the US matured as a state – that is, as the frontier gained a greater role in defining the nation rather than in claiming territory for it – the colony threw off the perceived yoke of the state; this was the British state, of course, but by extension also part of the concept of what a state was. The frontier idea, which, as we have seen, does not imply a particular type of society but rather a 'civilisation' or population of higher standing by dint of its land use, could be seen as partly justifying the development of a limited state.

Then again, the parallels drawn between the idea of a state and the conception of Britain, from which the US wanted to break free, as well as the difficulties involved with organising a polity relatively quickly in historical terms and over such a large area, could also be regarded as making a virtue out of a necessity. The US did not build on any single strong conception of what a society should be – and what differentiated it from a collection of individuals – and could not derive such a conception from the frontier theory that otherwise greatly influenced US development (cf. Dowling 2002).

In particular, it has been argued that this process must be seen as part of a frontier development in states that utilise such conceptions. Citino as well as Cronon et al. argue that there are:

> several stages to the recurring frontier process: species shifting, market making, land taking, boundary setting, state forming, and self shaping. Statebuilding and identity formation are therefore integral to the frontier experience
>
> (Citino 2001: 683, cf. Cronon et al. 1993)

While much work, especially in the field of American political development (APD), discusses the factors behind the emergence and conceptualisation of the US state, the summary of this here as well as in later chapters focuses mainly on state development as related to frontier thinking. The paramount consideration in this process was breaking free from, and differentiating the new state from, British rule and an assumption that this was the model (organisational as well as ideological) for a state; nevertheless, it can be seen that core frontier assumptions, including a broader European or even Roman legacy of thinking as well as a British and not least Lockean legacy, continued to strongly influence the developing state and its conceptualisations of the relation between nature and society, as well as rural and urban, and how the role of individuals in relation to this could be defined. Some even see the American Revolution as a response to British ideologies and increasing assertions of American identity in light of the British seeming to consider the US less worthy – indeed, as a frontier (Breen 1997).[46]

However, around the point of the American Revolution, in the mid- to late 1700s, the coordination among the various groups making up the US was not very well developed. The small, decentralised government in the colonies was largely a legacy of British rule. Despite the colonies being seen as an exemplar of British colonialism, 'local provincial autonomy continued to characterize American life. Never had Parliament or the crown, or both together, operated in actuality as theory indicated sovereign powers should' (Bailyn 2017: 191). Bailyn elaborates as follows:

> The condition of British America … was therefore anomalous: extreme decentralization of authority within an empire presumably ruled by a single, absolute, undivided sovereign. … since … no sustained effort had been made to alter the situation, the colonists found themselves in 1763 faced not merely with new policies but with a challenge to their settled way of life—a way of life that had been familiar in some places for a century or more. The arguments the colonists put forward against Parliament's claims to the right to exercise sovereign power in America were efforts to express in logical form, to state in the language of constitutional theory, the truth of the world they knew … there was no vocabulary … to resort to: the ideas, the terminology, had to be invented
> (Bailyn 2017: 192–193)

Bailyn describes the situation leading up to independence as a number of different provinces and groups attempting to 'abstract from the deep entanglements of English law and custom certain essentials—obligations, rights, and prohibitions—by which liberty, as it was understood, might be preserved' (Bailyn 2017: 187–188).[47] However, at the same time, '[t]he United States was born in a war that rejected the organizational qualities of the state as they had been evolving in Europe over the eighteenth century' (Skowronek 1982: 20–22). This made the question of establishing an organisational unit

for decision-making separate from Britain – the state and its representation or, even more foundationally, its institutional basis – largely a question of reinventing the wheel: a state that rejected the (British and European) state model while at the same time protecting foundational values.

Given the development of the US, these values inherently leaned on the mythology of the frontier. Bailyn notes that the role of a constitution gained particular weight as it would 'mark out the boundaries of governmental powers' (compared with the situation in England, which lacks a formal written constitution) (Bailyn 2017: 177–178). It has been argued that in this process, 'American thinkers enthusiastically espoused Locke's theories during the Revolution and the later adoption of the Constitution as amended by the Bill of Rights' (Dowling 2002: 914). In the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson, who, as noted, embraced a frontier and Lockean interpretation of the relation between humans and land, modified men's natural right from Locke's 'life, liberty and property' to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' (Dowling 2002: 914). However, it has similarly been pointed out that this:

> intended no slight to the inalienable right of property. All [Founding Fathers] were men of means, and of those among them who a decade later assembled at Philadelphia to write a constitution for the American States there was hardly a man whose political philosophy was out of tune with… Locke
> (Wittemore 1964: 118–119, quoted in Dowling 2002: 914–915)

In fact, Jefferson himself suggested that the Declaration was not to be original in 'principle or sentiment' but rather 'an expression of the American mind … All its authority rests then on the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or in the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke' (Jefferson, quoted in Dowling 2002: 195).

Following the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution would define what the state could and could not do and also formally set out its authority; however, it focused more on delimiting rules than on creating the machinery for exercising them (Stillman 1990). Skowronek describes the situation at the time following the Declaration of Independence and covering the drafting of the Constitution as follows:

> The political and intellectual achievement of the men who met in Philadelphia in 1787 was to formulate and legitimize an organizational framework for the state that bypassed both the European and revolutionary designs. They established the integrated legal order necessary for the control of the territory, but at the same time, they denied the institutions of American government the organizational orientations of a European state. Their Constitution, as it was "extorted from the grinding necessity of a reluctant nation," is fundamental to any assessment

of the peculiarities of the early American state and later American state building
<div style="text-align:center">

(Skowronek 1982: 21, with internal quotation of former President John Quincy Adams's famous statement for the 50th anniversary of the Constitution, see Adams 1839: 55)
</div>

Thus, many authors note, the development of the Declaration of Independence (in 1776) and the Constitution (coming into force in 1789) not only constitutes a protracted process but also one in which potentially different understandings of the state – and particularly what role it should have in society – were articulated.[48]

In the judgement of some APD scholars, the development and even more so the administrative elaboration and implementation of the Constitution are processes that extend into the present day (Skowronek 1982; Orren and Skowronek 2004).[49] Lim describes this aptly:

> The American 'Founding' as a monolithic event is a myth, because there have been Two Foundings articulating two distinct and rather irreconcilable conceptions of union, not one. … *The First Founding of 1776–1781 created a league of nations*. What followed during the Second Founding, in 1787–1789, represented rupture and not continuity, when the 13 states yielded a portion of their sovereignty to create a compound republic, still partly federal but now also national, with a national government sanctioned by 'We the People' aggregated across state lines
>
> <div style="text-align:right">(Lim 2014: 1, italics in original)[50]</div>

This, Lim argues, created an enduring tension between federalists and anti-federalists, or, one might say, between the individual as a single unit in a specific sense – in what has later been considered a hallmark of a 'frontier' development (e.g. Turner 1921) – and a conception of society in which the individual and society are connected. Lim notes:

> The unique feature of the American Constitution is not so much that it is dualistic … but that it codifies two legitimate ways of characterizing the collective American identity: whether the United States is a union of individuals or a compact of states. Over two centuries after the fact, we still cannot agree if the Second Founders meant We the People of the *United* States or We the People of the United *States*
>
> <div style="text-align:right">(Lim 2014: 21, italics in original)</div>

Thus, in early conceptions, the concept of the people here was potentially more readily associated with a 'civil society' – a society separate from the state – than with the state as a subject of society. Instead, the state was perhaps conceived of as a superstructure for a population that championed individualism and free commerce, as suggested by its liberalist origins (cf. Jahn 2013).

As the government – and particularly the British government – was seen as the threat, in comparison with what were mainly small-scale economic actors at the time, interpretations of the role of the state perhaps included more in the way of external imposition than organisational preference. Stillman thus notes that, despite later changes, '[t]he Constitution of 1787 created … a "negative government," primarily concerned with smashing public power while turning a blind eye towards the potential dangers of [future] large-scale, concentrated private power' (Stillman 1990: 166).

In addition, US development also had to come to terms with classical assumptions involving royalty, nobility and commons as the main political actors, balanced by the nobility, which had been inherited from seventeenth-century English thinking (Bailyn 2017, cf. Wood 2011). These again forced the US to reinvent the wheel, with the object of this effort now being rights based on property. This involved resolving a tension between the conception already entrenched through and in Lockean and frontier thinking and a freedom whereby the citizen supposedly left behind inequal and corrupted European assumptions at a time when many still considered inequality natural (cf. Wood 2011). On balance, the US ultimately reproduced what were seen as risks to democracy in the literal meaning of 'people's rule' (Bailyn 2017, cf. Egnal 2010, Wood 2011). In discussing the development of a second, democratic chamber of government, Bailyn notes the reluctance to establish a popular representative assembly (Bailyn 2017),[51] about which it has been suggested that some viewed '"too much democracy" as an invitation to repression by the majority--or to the redistribution of property, the major wealth source in America at the time' (Dowling 2002: 915).

The major freedom, then, was that of propertied men to create their own fortune. The assertion of such a freedom was much in line with the thinking of British theoreticians at the time, as well as with the more delimited yet idealised idea of men being equal before the frontier and the application of labour. Appleby observes that the:

> view of limited government drew its theoretical support from the seventeenth-century English economic writers … In the absence of a visible past and of institutions to enforce deference, the workings of the market – no respecter of persons – had gone a long way toward creating an undifferentiated society of private negotiators. America was rich with new possibilities. The economic theory of England's first liberals offered a language for discussing them, and the American Revolution created the need for an ideology which could lead men with a good conscience from a defense of the rights of the English to an articulation of the rights of man
>
> (Appleby 1978: 958)[52]

However, while such a conceptualisation of the individual could potentially have focused on the great variation in individual interests, it did not differentiate

individuals from one another except as private, potentially property-holding persons; they were distinguished based on what property they held more than on their potential interests or even what social groups they belonged to. As Wood concludes, 'Whigs, like Locke before them, regarded the people as a unitary, property-holding, homogenous body' (Wood 2011: 62).[53] Yet, individualism also entailed a notion of hierarchies. For instance:

> Americans of 1760 continued to assume, as had their predecessors for generations before, that a healthy society was a hierarchical society, in which it was natural for some to be rich and some poor, some honored and some obscure, some powerful and some weak
>
> (Bailyn 2017: 279)

Thus, as America adopted a focus on small government, perhaps prompted by liberalist ideas but also in an attempt to free itself from Britain and its model of a state, the ways of representing Americans as a society nevertheless remained unclear and derived from British assumptions, including that of balancing power within a hierarchical society, with a somewhat unclear role for the broadest component of American life – the individual citizen. The individual was defined mainly as a relatively undifferentiated figure, similar to others, who was to be allowed to act on a market and manage his or her own property: 'to be there without significant interference by the state … was the key to the American meaning of individualism. Individual achievers would thus be beholden only to themselves, not to the government' (Karl 1983: 233, quoted in Stillman 1990: 166).

The logic of individualism in the US market framework

The American assumption of individualism can thus be regarded as a logical follow-through of a logic whereby a large-scale polity is assumed to contrast with the assumed characteristics of smaller-scale communities. It can be viewed as partly inherent in the Lockean emphasis on private property; it can also be seen as a justification (a cognitive means of empowerment) for those who left behind established societies to create a new life; and it may be considered a consequence of the focus on the market as the organising principle it was becoming in US life – an interest that was not balanced with that of established social groups that otherwise would have influenced development. The development can also be seen in light of a focus on the environment as a resource, which was to gain value on the market and with increasing differentiation, something that makes sense in light of the four-step theory of development 'from savage hunting and gathering communities, to the barbarian pastoral stage, to a settled agricultural cultivation, and finally to the stage of commercial civilization' (Rendall 1997: 157).

The argument that early US experience focused on individualism in a market framework, also with consequences for how different types of agriculture

and a preference for industrial agriculture were perceived, has been put forward in relatively recent literature. Arguments on the nature of the early American farmer have centred on whether US farmers historically lived and worked in a subsistence economy or could more accurately be seen as operating within a market framework, and whether they could be regarded mainly as individuals or living in a family rather than in a community or societal context (see for instance the discussion between Henretta 1978, Henretta 1980 and Lemon 1980; cf. Shammas 1982, Nobles 1989). Here, Lemon (1980) has argued that the early American farmer should be regarded as 'playing out what John Locke established in principle: absolute and exclusive right to property' (Lemon 1980: 693–694), adding that rather than farming being practised with the aim of subsistence, '[t]he basic dynamic was toward economic growth, toward success defined by wealth … and toward accumulation as a goal in its own right' (Lemon 1980: 694–695).

In light of the heavy emphasis on (economic) liberalism, however, it has been argued that the most intensive establishment of the individual and individualism as an American ideology did not take place until the late 1800s. In this regard, Fevre observes that an earlier combination of cognitive, sentimental and religious individualism in the US, born out of numerous different ways in which one could conceive of the individual, coalesced into a particular economic way of thinking with *The Man versus The State* (Spencer [1884] 1960) as '[t]he chief document of Individualism' (Fevre 2016: 96). Authors have here noted that '"Spencer was … the leading philosophical spokesman for a significant and influential late nineteenth-century political ideology", namely individualism' (Fevre 2016: 96, with internal quotation by Taylor 1992: 4). In line with earlier argumentation, this conceptualisation was seen as providing further validation for an American way of life distinct from that in Britain, where this more market-based conception of the individual and society had been rejected (Fevre 2016). In addition, in Spencer's conception, we may recognise assumptions similar to those of the development path that had already come to undergird early developments as well as frontier thinking in the US: in his theory of history, society evolved 'from a custom-bound, hierarchical society based on relations of status and subordination to the open, free, progressive society of classical liberalism with its voluntarily assumed social relations' (Taylor 1992: 167, quoted in Fevre 2016: 104–105).[54] Fevre goes on to observe that '[u]nlike the proponents of laissez-faire and the utilitarians, Spencer put the economy in charge of the future of humanity by treating it as if it were an amanuensis for evolution and, as Taylor puts it, a natural process' (Fevre 2016: 113).[55]

In line with the social evolutionary and progression-bound thinking in frontier mythology – conquering the wilderness, improving towards a better and more advanced state – individualism was to be found through competition on the market, that is, succeeding as well as failing individually. Failure was viewed as a result of evolution and of factors on the individual level rather than a consequence of any at the systemic level (cf. Love 2008).[56]

If individuals were all the same, in line with Lockean thinking, and were defined mainly in relation to their interaction with property on the frontier and their abilities in this regard, there could be no factors influencing them on the systemic level (cf. Love 2008). Instead, individuality – just as suggested in early Christian theories of struggles in the wilderness, and as would be summarised in Turner's (1921) conceptions of the frontier – was what was formed in this struggle: only by bettering oneself as an individual on the market, in conquest of resources, could one emerge from the undifferentiated mass of sameness among otherwise equal property holders (cf. Stillman 1990; Adler 2006). Thus, using a label that was only later applied to this type of theory,

> Spencer's theory brushed aside Adam Smith's prediction of a soul-deadening division of labour with which neoliberalism would have found it hard to win hearts and minds; … [rather] the increasing complexity of the division of labour held out the prospect of an opportunity to develop and express our individuality … The *promise* of individuality at some unspecified point in the future was one of the neoliberal seeds carried by American individualism
>
> (Fevre 2016: 115)[57]

The particular understanding that individualism gained in the US, perhaps absent a defined conceptualisation of the relation between society and state, thus entailed ideas that reflected frontier (as well as broader modernist) thinking. Beyond the notion of progress or evolution through different stages, frontier thinking entails only an undifferentiated understanding of the nature of the civilisation that is pushing the frontier: it is not a society per se and does not have any systemic characteristics other than transforming 'wilderness' and making it useful, that is, extracting resources. It does this with the aim of progressing through increasingly advanced stages of development, as defined by a commercially oriented society, towards the highest value in the four-step development theory. This ambition was also present already before this, in the assumption that a desire for resources for colonial purposes was the main reason for conquering 'wilderness', as discussed in the previous chapter.

While today this conception of progress in general and the conviction that we are somewhat better or more knowledgeable than our historical predecessors have caught most of the world in their sway, and similar concerns have indeed been noted in many settler colonial states (e.g. Brown 2005; Trigger et al. 2010), in its day it no doubt held particular appeal to a new nation with a frontier background. This conception of progress, in precisely the way framed by frontier thinking, later became one of the cornerstones of the American Dream (cf. Stillman 1990). The notion of commerce or the market as the highest value to aspire to and as the measure of advancement was thus firmly embedded in American thinking long before it became the crucial point upon which different formulations of state were divided. As a measure of advancement, the market was not to be guarded against but rather

welcomed as a mechanism for differentiating otherwise equal and similar property holders. The state, however, fundamentally coloured by conceptions of the British state as well as being a symbol of other types of hierarchies, was to be guarded against (e.g. Stillman 1990, Wood 2011).

Americans were perhaps extraordinarily well placed to accept such assumptions and suffer the contradictions inherent in and resulting from them. One such weakness was adherence to an essentialised development path whereby contribution to any wider context was based on getting ahead in the market through one's own efforts and merits, while discounting the role of systemic factors, constraints and the potential inequality of opportunity. The fiction of a unitary but balanced body politic hid many unacknowledged social and systemic differentials that had already threatened the cohesiveness of the new nation. Fevre asserts the following:

> Spencer's theories validated a new American individualism in which the poor had no practical options to exercise the freedom they had been equally guaranteed by the Constitution but must pretend otherwise
> (Fevre 2016: 110, cf. Ceaser 2006, Rundbell 1959)

The evolutionary theory applied to human systems, however, failed to note that not only the state but also businesses coerce and limit individuals and may encourage patronage and unfair recruitment and entrench historical privilege, thereby thwarting the much-touted evolutionary process. As Fevre further notes, 'This double-think had particular relevance in a society distinguished by slavery' (Fevre 2016: 110). This development also failed to question the role of capitalism in evolution and whether social processes can at all be likened to evolutionary processes in nature (cf. Fevre 2016, Hawkins 1997).[58]

Conclusions

This chapter has illustrated that American development was fundamentally based on *theories, found in theoretisations of the day as well as myth* popularised throughout modern European colonialism. Rather than being based on the people and existing conflict groups, it was based on conceptions of the people, market and state that did not necessarily exist as institutionally based characteristics in the world but rather as characteristics conceived in theory and thinking about the world. This means that, rather than developing from real-life institutional underpinnings based on balancing social conflicts at the locations, American development and theories of development and progress were based in theory, not in real life. Similarly, as will be discussed, conflicts emerging around the basis for this type of organisation, the resources in the environment, would also come to be driven by the question of whether the environment should only provide that which was explicitly assumed to

further civilisation and commerce – that is, resources – or whether 'wilderness' itself could have value.

These assumptions can be regarded as the result of frontier thinking, which juxtaposes modern civilisation with all temporally and developmentally preceding categories that imply a relation to nature. The corollaries described in this chapter can further be seen as a consequence of the logic of frontier thinking, whereby different practices or situations are ascribed, or rather assumed, to link to other specific practices or situations divided up along assumed binaries.

5 The following through of frontier myth by Turner and the wilderness movement in the US

Introduction

We have seen that what has here been called the frontier myth, and components of it as they were developed and redeveloped in the US, were present long before 1893, when Frederick Jackson Turner published his work on the frontier (Turner 1921). It should be noted that this was somewhat after Spencer had originally published his theories, which continued to sustain other American myths such as the classless society, the American Dream and the country's particular interpretation of individualism. What Turner's work did was to summarise many of the factors that by then had contributed both to the development of the new state and to extending an identity for it, in line with interests that had been present and able to enforce their understandings early in the nation's development.

Although these factors are regarded as myths today, for a time they had extreme historical and nation-building significance. As Beckman observes, '[f]rom the time he delivered his momentous essay in 1893, until the early 1930s, Turner's theoretical statement dominated American historical writing and his ideas went virtually unchallenged' (Beckman 1966: 362). Today, however, and since the 1930s, the theory has drawn extensive criticism in which almost all of its claims have been disproven. It is seen as deterministic, almost fatalistic, and as having been built on incorrect conceptions that there was 'free land' beyond the frontier. It is considered to have served as a social evolutionary force that called for a special kind of man and thereby produced individualism, to have claimed that the frontier in itself would support freedom and democracy, and to have caused the differentiation of American institutions from European ones (e.g. Pierson 1942, Rundbell 1959, Cronon 1987, Bonazzi 1993).

All the assertions on which these developments build have so far been disproven in this work: land was not empty, and the American man, individualism and highly particular notions of freedom and democracy based on the market and assumed development paths were not based in reality but predicated upon theories intrinsic to frontier thinking that were promulgated at the time. Nevertheless, Turner's characterisations not only brought together

numerous assumptions Americans wanted to make about how the country had been formed but also influenced many of those who came to continue forming it, ranging from people such as Woodrow Wilson to Pulitzer Prize winner Frederic L. Paxson and numerous authors who in different ways continued a Turnerian legacy, such as Walter Prescott Webb in his work on the Great Plains (Rundbell 1959, cf. e.g. Webb 1952). Commenting on Turner's work, Ward points out: 'Like other great historians, Turner explained the past in a significant new way, without altogether realizing the extent to which his work would also constitute for the future a picture of the mind of his own time' (Ward 1977: 285).

Turner's thesis and the continuation and formalisation of the frontier myth

As noted, Turner was not the only one to extol the pioneer legacy and other components of the frontier myth. For instance,

> in a history of the Old West published in 1918, Hough opened with a flourish: "The frontier! There is no word in the English language more stirring, more intimate, or more beloved … It means all America has ever meant. It means the old hope of real personal liberty"
> (Van Nuys 2002: 10–11, with internal quote from Hough 1918)

Turner's thoughts were also well in line with conceptions already strongly popularised in literature, such as the legend of hardy frontiersman Daniel Boone that emerged based on a real person in the late 1700s and the protagonist of James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* in the early 1800s; these figures even came to influence real-life Western protagonists such as Buffalo Bill (Kaufmann 1998).

Turner's work may thus have become so popular and well known because it captured and articulated an understanding people had already been attuned to through the conception of progress in the natural sciences and liberalism; it now served to justify a particular imperialism and what could be gained from it, from the individual to the state level.

As Ward observes, one of Turner's achievements was to make this development seem specifically American, potentially appealing to those who wanted to free themselves from their European origins. Indeed, Turner wrote of the American:

> Little by little he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe, not simply the development of Germanic germs, any more than the first phenomenon was a case of reversion to the Germanic mark. The fact is, that here is a new product that is American
> (The Frontier in American History, New York 1948: 4,
> quoted in Ward 1977: 286)

Turner's description of the use of the frontier and its strong role in defining the US thus exhibits a number of features we would expect by now, including the focus on defining the country vis-à-vis Britain, the role of commerce and liberalism in forming ideas and motives for the US and an assertion of the superiority of this development.[59] Turner writes: 'First, we note that the frontier promoted the formation of a composite nationality for the American people. The coast was preponderantly English, but the later tides of continental immigration flowed across to the free lands' (Turner 1921: 22). This was seen as having numerous benefits, not least economic ones, which also led to the activity of government:

> Before long the frontier created a demand for merchants … The legislation which most developed the powers of the national government, and played the largest part in its activity, was conditioned on the frontier … The pioneer needed the goods of the coast, and so the grand series of internal improvement and railroad legislation began, with potent nationalizing effects
>
> (Turner 1921: 24)

In this sense, nature, or 'wilderness', is ever-present as a resource, as the continuous external purpose for which Americans went west and the utility they sought in doing so. In Turner's conception, the frontier was also a 'safety valve' for accommodating an increasing population. The western frontier was thus a safety valve for the East, just as the US had been a safety valve for Europe. Webb, expanding on these ideas, argued that the Great Frontier was situated not only in the US but also in fact in all countries settled from the 'great Metropolis', i.e. Europe (Rundbell 1959, Rundell 1953, Pickens 1981, Webb 1952).

In this regard, Turner provides the following account of how the frontier constitutes a nearly ennobling feature, in line with an idea of its role in spreading civilisation:

> *The West, at bottom, is a form of society, rather than an area.* It is the term applied to the region whose social conditions result from the application of older institutions and ideas to the transforming influences of free land. By this application, a new environment is suddenly entered, freedom of opportunity is opened, the cake of custom is broken, and new activities, new lines of growth, new institutions and new ideals, are brought into existence. The wilderness disappears, the "West" proper passes on to a new frontier, and in the former area, a new society has emerged from its contact with the backwoods
>
> (Turner 1921: 205, italics added)

Here, we recognise the multiple themes that we have seen cogently come together in frontier thinking, such as 'wilderness' and 'backwoods

transformed'. Here, Turner also noted that '[at the frontier] the complex European life [is] sharply precipitated by the wilderness into the simplicity of primitive conditions' (Turner 1920: 9, quoted in Redclift 2007: 25–26).

We also see the emphasis related to that in liberalism, which figured prominently in the role given to free commerce and to the individual in lieu of more systemic descriptions of a society. As Ward writes, 'Turner insists that an individualist outlook was easily the most important single component of American frontier democracy, and he explains how individualism was stimulated by the material conditions of frontier life' (Ward 1977: 289). Turner, like many later observers, thus saw individualism as a product of the frontier rather than as a notion contingent on its specific application in liberalism:

> The most important effect of the frontier has been in the promotion of democracy here and in Europe … the frontier is productive of individualism … complex society is precipitated by the wilderness into a kind of primitive organization based on the family. The tendency is anti-social. It produces antipathy to control, and particularly to any direct control … steadily the frontier of settlement advances and carries with it individualism, democracy and nationalism
>
> (Turner 1920: 35, quoted in Redclift 2007: 25–26)

Interestingly, however, as we have seen, for instance, in its basis in Locke, this emphasis can be attributed in part to British state-related interests in colonialism and is thus perhaps not as detached from the state as one might think at first glance. In US frontier thinking as formalised by Turner, individualism was considered a result of the frontier, as following from having to interact with 'wilderness'. In reality, however, given the highly different understandings applied to relations to nature in other cases, it was more a result of the specific situation and mythology related to this interaction. Redclift also notes the following: 'The history of the United States, claimed Turner's critics, has less to do with the supposed virtues of frontier individualism and more to do with the advance of corporate power, and American capitalism' (Redclift 2007: 27). Authors have also noted the particular ways in which American power was formed – and continues to be promoted – not necessarily through conquest but through commerce (Redclift 2007: 37).[60] Individualism, here, could, in this understanding, be seen as gaining its focus as a result of the disintegration of the relation to nature rather than as a result of the relation to nature itself.

Rather than being ennobling and factual, the conception of the frontier thus gained its application from being a myth that is normative and prescriptive rather than descriptive. Its core features have been applied in numerous locations around the world, and in its particular American conceptualisation – which comprises a core of frontier thinking and a specific American understanding related to the features of its development at a particular time and involving a particular relationship with Britain – it has come

to form what are today often regarded as features not only of the international market system and economic thinking but also of conservation.

Keeping the frontier: the wilderness conservation movement

Despite any frontier theory being disproven – for instance, by establishing that there was no 'wilderness' to start with – the concepts within it seem to continue to captivate not only thinking but practice as well. As noted previously, much literature and also political argumentation is wedded to a conception of 'settlers' and 'indigenous' inhabitants as coherent groups with internally consistent characteristics (cf. Chapter 3); development is often seen in frontier terms; and the environment is conceived of as separate from humans and even as 'wilderness'. While Turner's concept of the frontier and other frontier concepts live on in such conceptions (not least in the popular media), the concept of 'wilderness' has gained a meaning that is now wholly detached from the concept of frontier to which it was originally tied, but that nevertheless includes the same assumptions it was provided in relation to a frontier conception.

In general, the wilderness movement emerged not only in the US but also in England, Germany and other states in the late 1800s, largely as the 'success' of development led to more limited nature areas and a greater distance to (including limited direct use and involvement with) nature among the middle class of the time. In this way, as Nash notes, '[a]ppreciation of wilderness began in the cities' (Nash 1982: 44). In the US, given the historical importance of 'wilderness' as a term, as described above, this development came to be formative of prominent conceptions of 'wilderness' that exist today in international literature. In line with the Romanticist development in the 1800s, 'wilderness' as a value was celebrated by travellers, settlers, poets and painters (Lowenthal 2013). Perhaps one of the most influential of these was Henry David Thoreau, who, in the mid-1800s, 'waxed poetic about the virtues of "a primitive and frontier life" in his writings at Walden' (Kaufmann 1998: 673, with internal quotation by Fussell 1965: 212). Couched in a naturalistic aura, however, '[m]uch of Thoreau's writing was only superficially about the natural world' (Nash 1982: 89); instead, it focused on nature as a fond for his own feelings and indeed, unsurprisingly, development (Kaufmann 1998).

In line with established frontier understandings, the wilderness was conceived of as a site for human improvement, struggle and religiousness. However, it was also constantly a site for visitation rather than for daily life: Thoreau leaves Walden and, over time, advocates a focus on wilderness as a place of travel or tourism (cf. Fletcher 2015).

Also inspired by Thoreau, among other writers, was John Muir, travelling across 'wild country' and writing about his experiences in the late 1800s: Muir's 'writings coincided with the beginnings of national concern over conservation, and … received more popular attention than any previous effort to publicize the virtues of wilderness' (McDonald 2001: 193, cf. Fox 1985).

Muir was also a key actor in the 1890 establishment of Yosemite National Park and was one of the founders of the Sierra Club in 1892. Muir also, at one point, worked with Gifford Pinchot, who would later become the first head of the US Forest Service (under President Theodore Roosevelt) and another leading conservationist (McDonald 2001, Dowling 2002).

This focus on 'wilderness' was supported by the 'wilderness cult' (Nash 1982) in the early 1900s, which was linked to the wide appeal of Turner's frontier thesis. Another development at the time was the founding of the Boy Scouts, whose purposes included teaching wilderness values (McDonald 2001). The Wilderness Society, a key American non-profit land conservation organisation with Aldo Leopold as one of its founders, also originates from this time. In line with frontier thinking, the organisation's members argued that wilderness was rare and valuable (the angelic side of the wilderness conception) and was a safety valve that allowed humans to mitigate their experiences of industrial society (McDonald 2001).

This background, with several writers, organisations and their both similar and varying perspectives – as well as several highly publicised conflicts at the time – supported the growth of the environmental movement and provided a framing for numerous conceptions and actors to unite around (McDonald 2001).[61] The transplantation of this wilderness thinking internationally was also supported by, among other things, the experiences of Americans abroad, including notably Theodore Roosevelt (US President 1901–1909). McDonald suggests that 'the experience of these sportsmen in Africa convinced them that unless preservation efforts were undertaken internationally, there would soon be no place on earth where one could experience wild nature' (McDonald 2001: 197). In relation, Roosevelt's 'New Nationalism' programme came to include notable conservationist elements 'aimed to create settings where Americans could mingle and share projects across class and other divisions, developing patriotic "fellow-feeling"' (Purdy 2010: 1157, cf. Young 2005).[62]

These types of multifaceted, varying and also widespread popular expressions regarding the value of wilderness – not least by members of the Wilderness Society – can be seen as the background to the enactment of the US Wilderness Act in 1964. Purdy notes that:

> [t]he 1964 Act emerged from eight years of congressional wrangling in which pro-wilderness Senators drew on the arguments that Zahniser and other Wilderness Society figures had developed in their internal debates. Senators introduced paradigms of this language into the *Congressional Record*. One key essay, Zahniser's 1955 *Our World and Its Wilderness* asserted that, through wilderness, Americans were "keeping ourselves in touch with true reality, the fundamental reality of the universe" and "our primeval origin, our natural home." Participants in the Senate debate sounded the same themes in their own voices
>
> (Purdy 2010: 1170)

Purdy describes, for instance, how the Senate debates 'echoed the Romantic-religious language of the early Sierra Club', 'continuing a canonical tradition of American nature prophets, in which they included Thoreau, Muir, and Aldo Leopold' (Purdy 2010: 1171, 1173).[63] As a result, the Act includes aims such as not only keeping existing 'wilderness' areas 'primeval' but also ensuring that disturbed land 'would be untrammelled and return to primeval condition in the future', with this accomplished 'by the removal of adverse uses to preserve, or where necessary to recreate, the supposedly pristine ecological scene as viewed by the first European visitor' (Lowenthal 2013: 14).

As a result of this development, Dowling concludes, Lockean conceptions of property were finally repudiated, resulting in 'deeply significant changes in national views on property rights', tellingly reflected in a court loss by a timber company that had cited Locke (Dowling 2002: 919). Dowling notes that, as a result of this, the emphasis shifted to the public trust doctrine of common law, originally traceable to Roman Law, in which the government is assumed to 'hold in trust' areas for public use (Dowling 2002).

However, despite this change, Lockean and frontier theory continued to impact the understandings that figured in conflicts surrounding conservation efforts, particularly the conservation of 'wilderness'. Conservation and preservation were to be the antidotes to resource exhaustion; however, while some first-wave environmentalists noted that use should not be higher than rates of regeneration (cf. Dowling 2002), major focus was placed on national parks or nature preserves as more pristine or untouched areas with reference to 'wilderness'. Lowenthal (2013) notes that the crucial phrase in the 1964 Wilderness Act was that land should be returned to a state 'as viewed' by the first colonialists, which implied the imagined 'empty' state of there being no indigenous or other inhabitants and resulted in evictions of both indigenous and local groups. In fact, the 1872 founding charter of America's first national park, Yellowstone, stipulated that 'all persons who shall locate or settle upon or occupy … shall be considered trespassers and removed therefrom' (Lowenthal 2013: 14, see also Spence 2000). Lowenthal goes on to observe the following:

> Previously settled denizens in newly designated wilderness were banished or forbidden to cultivate or forage, "often with detrimental effects, not just for the local people", but also for the "pristine" landscape
> (Lowenthal 2013: 14, with internal quotations
> from Olmsted 1990: 685)

Thus, it has been pointed out that despite the Wilderness Act's strict requirements to preserve pristine nature as 'untrammeled', the legislation contains a paradox as regards how this land is allowed to be trammeled: it may be caused only by 'man as a visitor', and in ways that serve to preserve the 'untrammeled' character 'as viewed'. The land is framed as a resource,

but now for visitors while excluding foraging or other local use, despite the fact that the land was in fact not empty of people to start with and that the early 'wildernesses' that American colonialists encountered were in fact already populated (Spence 2000). Similarly, the US Endangered Species Act of 1973, 'America's strongest piece of environmental legislation' (Callicott and Grove-Fanning 2009: 316), can also be seen as speaking to particular conceptions of wildlife management that reflect a situation in which use is not restricted within numerous balancing institutions and understandings (e.g. Rohlf 1991) but is subject to unrealistic notions in, and built on a contradiction between, frontier thinking and a mirror-image understanding of protection of 'unspoilt wilderness'.

The use of land, with a focus on economic uses such as tourism, was thus an underlying notion in preservation. Early national parks were often established to preserve scenic grandeur for recreational reasons or because they were economically worthless lands (Woods 1997; Lowenthal 2013). As Olwig notes:

> Superficially, this landscape ideal seems to represent a longing to return to a national country existence of the past – but the pastoral, Elysian nature celebrated in these parks is not that of the historical past and customs of actual rural communities. It is rather that of an ideal golden age that obliterates the memory of such communities
>
> (Olwig 2002: 202)

This, Jacoby notes, took place through the removal of not only native American populations but also rural populations at large, effectively severing on a large scale people's linkages to the environment instead of enhancing them. Jacoby writes:

> To achieve its vision of a rational, state-managed landscape, conservation erected a comprehensive new body of rules governing the use of the environment. … For many rural communities, the most notable feature of conservation was the transformation of previously acceptable practices into illegal acts: hunting or fishing redefined as poaching, foraging as trespassing, the setting of fires as arson, and the cutting of trees as timber theft
>
> (Jacoby 2001: 2)

Concepts clashing with practice

American conceptions of 'wilderness' thus inherently seem to continue the paradox of a frontier conception of environment: either it is entirely for use – and if so, a nearly unrestricted use as a resource for 'civilisation' – or it is for preservation in a state it was never in, as an ahistorical but historically developed conception of 'wilderness'. This means that a restricted use of commons is made near impossible – not because such use would be impossible

in general, but because it may be impossible in the American frontier conception. In contrast to the case in many other countries, the relatively unprotected nature of the common in the US relates to the fact that the US, unlike many other countries, has not had a 'legally recognized tradition of usufruct rights' (Jacoby 2001: 196). However, this did not mean that 'rural folk, in keeping with the supposed rugged individualism of the American frontier, did as they pleased with the natural world', which Jacoby identifies as the first myth about conservation (Jacoby 2001: 193). Rather, it means that a Tragedy of the Commons (depending on the exact definition and customary rights) is not necessarily a general problem, as claimed by Hardin and contradicted by Ostrom, but rather a consequence of seeing commons in frontier terms, that is, regarding the environment as inexhaustible and not recognising any previous common group-based institutions or their customary implications, for instance, through formalisation into law (cf. Hardin 1968, Ostrom 1990).

   This, however, does not necessarily mean that common use was not established in the US – as has been shown, the idea that frontier-bred individualism does not mean that cooperation has been disproven or that informal institutions did not exist (e.g. Nobles 1989, Jacoby 2001). Instead, it has been noted that long-established resource use (for instance, local fishing or other similar practices) relied on an 'understanding of "property" … swept away during the industrial transition between 1750 and 1850' (Callicott and Grove-Fanning 2009: 318). Callicott and Grove-Fanning point to the result of this distinction between nature and society:

> Older communitarian restraints—the web of kin, community, and reciprocity—that supported an economic order based on a combination of subsistence, barter, communal labor, and limited markets, gave way to economic individualism, wage labor, and market dominance. Wildlife was often a victim of this transformation
>
> (Callicott and Grove-Fanning 2009: 318–319)

Conclusions

The above has shown that the formalisation of ideas about the frontier took place long after frontier ideas were actually developed. These ideas also came to form the conception of 'wilderness' areas as 'primeval' and 'untrammelled' with the aim to 'return [these] to primeval condition in the future' (Lowenthal 2013: 14). Here we can see the foreshadowing of ideas on nature conservation even today as regards a pristine condition that is to be returned to instead of a cultural and human composition that may also be formed by human uses.

   This chapter has illustrated that these conceptualisations continue, in line with frontier thinking, to empower those outside the community, seeing them as inherently more 'progressed' and thereby skewing the assumptions of competence towards outside actors rather than those who are in fact working in relation to nature in any specific case. This type of conceptualisation thus also

bears a resemblance to the evolutionary theory prevalent in earlier historical periods that assumed stages of development from a 'savage' to an agricultural and, finally, industrial means of organisation (e.g. Ambjörnsson and Elzinga 1977). As a result, communitarian or non-state restrictions on use were not considered sufficient. Instead of being regarded as a part of nature, man was seen as a 'visitor' who was to preserve the 'untrammeled' character of land 'as viewed'. Land is thus continuously framed as a resource, but now for visitors, while foraging or other local use is excluded (Spence 2000).

Such conceptions thus distinctly separate not only man and nature but also exclude any type of use that is not directly related to the larger capitalist system (profit-making rather than personal use) conceptions. In this, the myth-based development of the American state thus legitimised a conception of nature use that perhaps manifested itself the most strongly here, but has in fact come to – in similar ways across the world – delegitimise the direct, local and naturalised linkage to nature.

6 Differences in the historical construction of development in Fennoscandian contexts

Introduction

In previous chapters, we have seen that frontier thinking myths did not match the reality on the ground in the US. If we instead look at areas where rural environments have been defined as integral parts of the country, we might expect to see different land-use logics emerge. Indeed, as will be shown below, such alternative perspectives largely account for the divergent logics found in different countries, including in a 'Western' context. For that reason, this chapter compares and contrasts the frontier conception with conceptions in cases in Fennoscandia, where, as a result of fundamentally different historical developments, rural areas are viewed more as lived-in and naturalised. While northern Fennoscandia could conceivably be seen as the 'frontier' of the more southern parts of these states, this has already been disproven as a 'myth' in literature on northern Norway for reasons including those discussed in this chapter (Aas 1998: 40, cf. Keskitalo 2004 for an overview of the debate). The basis of activities and integration may thereby not have been as divided from nature or from a larger 'society' as has been the case in countries where a recognition of usufruct rights has not been implemented or where those holding such rights have even been disenfranchised.

The historical basis of organisation and conceptualisation

In Fennoscandia, the ability to develop conceptions different from frontier thinking must be seen in relation to the historical roots and the existing power structures in the area, just as frontier thinking must be conceived of in relation to the power structures that existed in these cases. In Fennoscandia, on the one hand, the conceptions served particular material interests, networks and governing structures. The stronger linkage between 'rural' and 'urban' was potentially made possible by the relatively strong interlinkage between country and city, manifest today in the prevalence of second homes and in activities such as berry and mushroom picking and hunting, which provided a link to the land beyond any involvement in agriculture (cf. Keskitalo et al. 2017).

On the other hand, Fennoscandia, as part of the Old World, held traditions that developed over time even before the formation of the state, in which we

can see, for instance, the role of the state as a conception and power structure having great impacts on the development of the US, which took place both as a result of state expansion and in strong opposition to an existing state pattern. Fennoscandia, in contrast to many areas of the world, was not made an object of Britain's or other more remote states' colonial expansion. This means that the Fennoscandian conceptions, practices and policies may (and in fact can be found to) still exhibit some of the historical understanding of landscape and nature that predates that associated with the frontier. However, the enormous impact of frontier thinking – from about the 1800s in these areas, as the wave of frontier thinking associated with modern European colonialism swept the world – can also not be understated, and in fact, many shifts in understandings of ownership and individual and ethnic relations stem from this time.[64]

In relation to this, as Ågren (2001) points out, a common background is the strong role and relative normalisation of a relation to nature, not least in relation to property. The following observation pertains to Sweden, although similar examples can be found in Norway and Finland:

> From around 1000 to 1900, the basic economic unit of Swedish agrarian society was the peasant family and its farm. To an overwhelming extent the rural economy was in the hands of independent peasant families, many of whom owned the land they occupied. Any discussion about definitions of property [in these areas] must therefore start from the fact that landed property was mostly small-scale
>
> (Ågren 2001: 247–248)

What is more, Sweden as a country and its population were largely rural, with some evidence that rural areas fulfilled some of the functions of cities and towns, resulting in many people not seeing the need to move into cities or towns (Heckscher 1985).

The sparsely populated nature of habitation and linkage to nature thus meant that rural areas had a fundamentally different value than is the case in frontier thinking. This, of course, has to do with the protracted and early nature of the development of the state in this context. This factor constitutes perhaps the starkest contrast to frontier development, one from which all other divergences flow. A major distinction here from frontier development thereby lies in the character of development: that legal frameworks and bureaucratic organisations developed over extended periods, in relation to conflicts between numerous frameworks and groups, and were used for establishing norms – not least concerning resource use and different conceptions of property – among these groups in the absence of any strong established state. Cederholm reviews the period mainly between the late 1400s and the early 1500s, arguing that the state was relatively weak and decentralised, with 'Royal Union power relatively absent, something that provided state marshals (Swe. *Riksråd*) and later representatives (Swe. *Riksföreståndare*) with

substantial power, but also forced them to seek legitimacy among the people through different concessions and new forms of mobilisation' (Cederholm 2007: 51, my translation; see also Jonsson 2005 on later periods).[65]

Cederholm further notes that custom, *consuetudo*, as an unwritten law derived directly from the people and applied by peasant groups, had a strong directive role (Cederholm 2007). During much of the 1400s, continuous struggle took place concerning hierarchical relations built on protection, issues such as removing the freedom from taxation enjoyed by self-owning farmers and legislating and regulating the actions of those higher up in the hierarchies. In this context, Cederholm notes, 'during these years the King was seen as the farmers' protection against arbitrary or high-handed land-lords and their illegitimate demands' (Cederholm 2007: 142, my translation; cf. Hallenberg et al. 2008 on bargaining in later periods).

The development was thus historically relatively early and protracted over time, preceding the state system, and was thereby based on fundamentally different conceptions of land than on frontier thinking. Different forms of land/property ownership were acknowledged:

> not seldom was a collective, communitarian claimant or property prin-
> ciple … placed against landlords' demands for individual ownership of
> forests, for instance. The definition of ownership based on Roman Law
> that excluded parallel forms of land use was then seen as conflicting
> with other values such as subsistence, custom and the like
> (Cederholm 2007: 393, my translation)

These different claims were not discounted as they were in frontier think-ing; rather, they were juxtaposed in processes of negotiation. Thus, it has been argued that '[l]ocal and regional practice appear to have built on an advanced local negotiation culture' (Cederholm 2007: 306–307, my translation).

In this conception, the local community was thus not viewed as an unprob-lematic or peaceful one – contrary to assumptions regarding communities versus society that here have been seen as related to frontier thinking – but as a conglomerate of numerous interests that, crucially, share numerous arenas in which to put forward and negotiate their demands. The requirement for negotiation was not developed as a result of any inherent peacefulness, how-ever, but as a result of fragmented power, whereby the different actors thus had to negotiate with each other and were not individually strong enough to disregard the others (in the way the developed state power during modern European colonialism could dominate colonised areas, or indeed their own countryside, in cases in which a higher concentration of power was possible).

It also seems that the integration of new areas took place in ways that dif-fered from what was assumed under the wave of new European colonialism of the type described in previous chapters, that is, development drawing upon frontier-related conceptions. In the Swedish case, county law was subsumed under national law from about 1300. Following this, county laws would come

to be implemented in the northern parts of the Swedish state up until the later part of the medieval period (Tegengren 2015). This type of territorial expansion, colonisation – although in a markedly different meaning than that associated with modern European colonialism treated in previous chapters – and expansion of taxation have been seen as typical of state development in northern Europe throughout medieval times (Tegengren 2015), albeit varying considerably between areas in how it was developed. In Sweden in the 1300s, this expansion focused on northern Sweden and what is today Finland (as Sweden included Finland until 1809). While Sweden may have drawn upon models developed in other European states that had extended their territories earlier, much Swedish research sees the development as relatively endogenous given the small number of mainly regional decision-makers who were exposed to broader European ideas and the large peasant communities in Nordic areas (Tegengren 2015).[66] Thus, many early agricultural settlements in the Bothnian Bay area between present-day Sweden and Finland were a result of east-west migration (not in-migration from southern Sweden) (cf. Tegengren 2015).

While the role of property in relation to environmental resources per se in European state development was not negligible – in the Swedish case, it was central – unlike in the frontier context, it was thus not seen as being there for the taking; there was no frontier but rather, to a great extent, established interests on each level from individual to (emerging) state.[67] Development was also relatively naturalised in relation to multiple groups but was not necessarily conflict-free. Sheehan notes the following:

> European state makers, unlike their counterparts in China or Rome—or, for that matter, North America—did not expand from an organized center into a "weakly organized periphery". This meant that European state makers could not simply overrun and destroy their rivals; they had to absorb, subdue, or learn to live with them. From the start, therefore, establishing boundaries that defined and delimited spheres of power was a central part of the problem of sovereignty
> (Sheehan 2006: 4, cf. Tilly 1975)

While much settlement at the time in what is today northern Sweden and Finland is considered to have been based on a desire to secure territories for inclusion in the state, sparked by a fear of competitors, and to support taxation and trade, the fact that the potential competitor at this time, Novgorod, did not react negatively has been interpreted by some researchers as a sign that the areas were in fact already regarded as Swedish. Contrary to assumptions in frontier thinking, the areas were thus not considered 'empty lands'. Rather,

> [w]hat in older literature was seen as an unpopulated, isolated enclave between Norway and Russia has in modern research been shown to be

an area with an extensive cultural exchange and lively trade … before the Treaty of Nöteborg in 1323 [between Sweden and Novgorod], in other words, an autonomous area without political borders

(Tegengren 2015: 156–164, my translation, cf. Bergman and Edlund 2016)

Rather than being seen as a frontier – something that we can see was related to specific historical developments under different preconditions – northern Fennoscandia was thereby formed under fundamentally different conditions. Land was also conceived of differently, and the role of the individual could be seen as broadly, and over different time periods, conceived of within this system, through representation in political-economic bargaining systems either directly or through representation (cf. Gurevich 1995, Hallberg 2006, Alestalo and Kuhnle 1986).

Multifaceted understandings of land and people

Contrary to the distinction between 'wilderness' and 'civilised' land in frontier thinking, already the boundaries drawn in the Treaty of Nöteborg in 1323 were based on local boundaries for land use, known as *erämark* (Tegengren 2015). The term *erämark, utmark* or *erämaa* (Tegengren uses a Swedification of the Finnish term *erämaa,* combining the terms *erämaa* and *utmark*) was used in medieval times to designate a land and/or water catchment area, at some distance from one's settlement but utilised actively and with important functions for hunting and fishing as a crucial complement to agriculture and farming. Seen as a particular Fennoscandian concept (cf. Svensson 2016), it has been noted that:

"utmark" lacks a corresponding denotation in English terminology. The term denotes natural-geographical environments such as forests, moorland, mountains and coastal areas, and economic, social and cultural aspects of these landscapes as parts of agricultural systems, as a complementary component to the infield

(Øye 2005: 9)

or land directly adjacent to a farm. However, while in international literature such areas have often been referred to as 'marginal' or 'peripheral', they have been crucial to livelihoods and have played an important role in land use, a role obscured by such references (Svensson 2016).

This conceptualisation is relevant as it highlights a different understanding of areas that in frontier thinking were conceived of as 'wilderness', but which were thus given a different, social meaning here. The conception of property in this understanding was widely different from that in a Lockean conception in the labour theory of property, in which 'unproductive land was equated with land not privately owned and enclosed' (Whitehead 2010: 93). Contrary to such a conception, land rights based on *erämaa* or *utmark* uses were

acknowledged even in the delineation of national boundaries and, crucially, were regarded as populated even if the populace did not live there.

Utmark can thus not be understood in relation to conceptualisations of 'wilderness' or open-access land. As an exemplification, a debate on varied land use running counter to that in frontier thinking can be traced in the literature dealing with the concept of *utmark*. Inherent in its definition is the notion that such land is not 'empty', not 'wilderness' and not privately owned, but not 'marginal' either. While earlier chapters have illustrated that private, settled land being farmed was often distinguished from 'land free for the taking', conceived of as non-settled land, such dichotomies do not seem to have been established in Fennoscandia, either historically or well into the present. Lindholm even notes the following:

> It has been questioned whether the collective—individual dichotomy is sufficient as an analytical framework for examining property rights in prehistoric societies. … it can be argued that the dichotomy mainly reflects a debate of the 19th–20th centuries, which in general favoured private and state property
>
> (Lindholm 2013: 9)

What is more, as Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen (2010) show, this diverse use is not merely a remote historical one but rather one that has remained relevant into recent history and the present. Not only is the 'literature…rich in descriptions of different forms of cooperation and collective ownership in the later pre-industrial agrarian society of northern Sweden' (Lindholm et al. 2013: 5); '[a] pertinent part of the outland use was the shielings (Sw. *fäbod)* … [whose use] continued until 1921 … In places the use of *fäbodar* for other purposes continued until the 1960s' (Tuovinen 2011: 46).[68] What is today Sweden's northern areas also had a system for the organisation of land/property ownership, including collective as well as private use in different areas, with both types often applying to single farms (Swe. *gårdsgärdor*) before their incorporation under the Swedish Crown; numerous arenas for meetings and trade also existed (Tegengren 2015, cf. Marklund 2015).

In connection to this, rejecting assumptions that such rural areas and rural uses are in some way peripheral or less relevant, Anglert points out: 'the woodland has had its own culture, and in that respect cannot be characterised as a periphery or a margin' (Anglert 2008: 331). Taking this further, some even argue that *utmark* has provided areas for innovation. Svensson (2016) observes that the areas have functioned as innovation areas, where new technologies or technology uses, advanced working organisations and product development have emerged beyond hunting and fishing to span iron mining, cattle grazing, forestry and a wide range of other livelihoods (Risbøl 2008; cf. Svensson et al. 2008, Olofsson 2008).

Conceptualisations in Fennoscandia can thereby be considered to rest upon historical land-use patterns whereby the principal concept of *utmark* or *erämaa* has historically served to define land use (cf. e.g. Bladh 2002,

2008, Risbøl 2008; see also Moe 2004). To some extent prevailing today, these conceptions contradict assumptions related to a wilderness conception. Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen point out that:

> the Finnish word for wilderness "erämaa" suggests a positive landscape outside the dominating culture. "Erämaa" has traditionally referred to forest-covered hunting and fishing areas located away from village borders and neighbouring agricultural lands … In Finnish culture and traditions *wilderness has not been an evil or bad thing, an object to win, tame or change into something else*, as it has been in the Anglo-American heritage. Nor has it been only a source of aesthetic and bodily recreation and regeneration. Instead, it has been appreciated for its importance for survival and experienced as an inevitable part of everyday life
> (Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen 2010: 196, italics added; see also Lehtinen 2012, Hallikainen 1998)

Thus, Tuovinen concludes that, in comparison with Anglocentric thought related to the frontier, '[w]hen "wilderness" is used as the opposite of human settlement, to express something peripheral and free of human influence, the concept is anachronistic' (Tuovinen 2011: 21). What is more, Tuovinen deduces that the assumption of a dichotomy between so-called wilderness and social practices may have led to misapprehensions in historical studies of everyday life in the areas and 'probably even affected archaeological depictions and analogies … the academic depiction of peripheries or marginal regions in the past is bound to the modern urban culture and the scholar's own experience of periphery' (Tuovinen 2011: 21). Similarly, Tuovinen points out that while until about the 1970s the early nature conservation movement mainly embraced the idea of 'untouched "indigenous" nature', it has since been realised that many high-biodiversity areas developed in connection with traditional agriculture (Tuovinen 2011: 20).

Obscuring the social or, indeed, human uses of land is thus not only a caricature of history but also leads to the exclusion of land-use practices that support established biodiversity. This highlights the fact that land, seen neither as empty nor as wilderness, cannot be preserved as something it is not; instead, cultural impacts on the land and in shaping landscapes must be recognised without necessarily legitimising increased exploration in the process. Today, conceptions in conservation internationally are increasingly abandoning such categorisations, which can be seen as creations of influential Anglo frontier mythology, and instead recognising pre-existing assumptions about land as being neither 'empty' nor 'wilderness' (cf. Brown and Kothari 2011).

Contrasting the settler-indigenous dichotomy

Here, it is also important to know that the areas of present-day Norway, Sweden and Finland were never home to any one clearly identifiable 'settler'

or 'indigenous' group that could, in line with frontier thinking, be clearly demarcated from all others, with a date set for the arrival of 'settler' groups. Instead of developing in relation to frontier thinking and development, in which the already developed state is assumed to transgress on indigenous lands, here the settlement was protracted over long historical times, with land used in different ways by multiple groups (and not only indigenous or majority populations). The conception of 'settlement' as some kind of outside mass migration into areas only for the purpose of agriculture (as conceived of as the highest stage of development in the frontier-related development path conception) also did not entail the sole use of land, making the conception of 'settlers' even less relevant in these areas.

Historically, contrary to what frontier thinking might assume, the areas of northern Fennoscandia were instead home to various Saami- and Finnish-speaking groups of several different denominations as well as others, who were mainly connected east to west by river valleys and who practised livelihoods based on hunting, trapping and fishing. Extensive interaction between multiple Saami and Germanic language groups has been documented (Roslund 2016), and sometimes the term 'Lapp' (in more recent times applied to Saami) was used by outsiders to refer to varying groups (Korpela 2012). Tegengren points out that areas in the Torne River valley along the border between present-day Sweden and Finland, the location of a large strategic trade station, were called Kvenland already in the 1100s, a name referring to a Finnish subgroup residing in the area.[69] In addition, in-migration from southern Finland to this area as well as to the Pite and Lule river valleys in what today is northern Sweden can be identified as early as the 1000s, prompted by a search for arable land (Tegengren 2015).

Understanding this situation thus highlights the difference from frontier logics and frontier thinking to the conceptions in northern Fennoscandia, with relevance not only for 'indigenous' or 'ethnic' populations but also for 'majority' populations. Contrary to any conception of southern Sweden (an area that also developed based on conflict between numerous groups at this time) as the basis for a 'majority' population, the areas include a significant variety of origins that are not reflected by any implied nation-state. The development in the areas thus needs to be understood based on the fact that the states had not yet formed and multiple groups were present there. What is today Sweden and Finland was a single state for a long time, and for a time, Norway was also part of the Swedish state. This means that the present state boundaries separate groups that were not historically separated into different states. Groups are also largely interblended, not only as populations but also in their activities and culture, whereby large segments of groups that are today regarded as part of the 'majority' population may also be descendants of what are today seen as 'indigenous' groups.

The development in the areas also does not match with any conception of what groups undertake what practices – or with any assumption related to the four-step development theory that has been discussed in relation to frontier

thinking. Thus, in a summary from a large research programme regarding the development in northern Fennoscandia from about 500 to 1500, Bergman (2018) notes an understanding that strongly contradicts frontier mythology: not only were the lands not empty (and were not seen this way even by the Swedish state), but they also did not exhibit the types of land uses associated with the ethnic features frontier mythology would expect. A continuity in variations of resource uses and lands, with great similarities between coastal and inland practices, and a traditional rights system whereby collective rights to resources meant that land and fishing rights could not be sold can, as Bergman (2018) illustrates, be seen in the period 500–1500 in northern Fennoscandia. It is also likely that being multilingual during this period was more the rule than the exception, and that it was interaction rather than any type of removal of original populations that took place, as '[n]either the archaeological nor historical material shows any trace of an original population having been driven from traditional areas of habitation' (Bergman 2018: 86, my translation). Thus, multiple uses and languages seem to have been the norm (e.g. Lundmark undated a). In addition, different from what might be assumed in relation to the four-step development model, agriculture was already being practised along with other activities before about 1300. In connection to this, it has been noted that the Saami people – today normally considered the indigenous population of the area – may, like other groups, have cultivated land and thus did not follow 'purely hunter-gatherer or pastoralist subsistence strategies' (as later frontier mythology would assume; Bergman and Hörnberg 2015: 57, cf. Lundmark undated b).[70]

In another finding of note, recent research indicates that the number of people living in the areas already before and during medieval times may have been underestimated in previous work, and the areas may thus have had higher populations than is commonly assumed. Korpela argues that:

> [t]he supposed colonization and population growth of earlier studies can be easily explained by the notion that the building of the new administration registered the entire heterogeneous population of the forests as taxpayers and thus a medieval "invisible" population of the forests became "visible"
>
> (Korpela 2012: 252)

There were also not always clear ethnic or occupational divisions between all groups; instead, group division may have been impacted by norms and valuations that were sometimes externally based. Korpela continues:

> The change in the economic system meant … a change in the objective identity of the southern forest dwellers, because the sources began to describe them in a different way: they were no longer Lapps and outsiders to the scribes, but rather they were now members of the same society, peasants. Most probably it meant also a smooth change in their

subjective identity, because the people changed their way of life and religion and came in permanent contact with outsiders. They started to form a supra-local identity for themselves and to consider the last hunter-fishers of the forests as foreigners, the Lapps proper

(Korpela 2012: 253)

Of relevance in comparison with a 'frontier' conception of the areas, while some literature has argued that the northern parts of Sweden and Finland could be considered to have been integrated into the state much later, particularly Tegengren's and related research thus suggests that the formal introduction of the Swedish legal order in the country, including this already settled land with complex trade routes and multiple forms of ownership, can be seen as occurring as early as around 1335 (cf. Elenius 2002).[71] Other assessments take into account, for instance, the peace treaty between Sweden and Russia in Teusina in 1595, in which integration is also internationally acknowledged; Lundmark (undated) suggests that areas in northernmost Sweden were administratively integrated into the state in the mid-1500s. In Tegengren's assessment, however, Norra botten (today the northernmost areas of Sweden) was made subject to the administrative divisions set out in the Uppland Law in about 1335 and came to be administered from the village of Hiske (present-day Umeå, Sweden). Contrasting frontier conceptions that would argue for a distinction between 'civilisation' and 'wilderness', Tegengren shows that traditional boundaries, common land and *erämaa/utmark* demarcations were taken into account in this administration (Tegengren 2015).

While later domestic calls (in 1673 and 1695, as well as 1749) for increased settlement in northernmost Sweden have often been seen as efforts to increase agricultural settlement and are thus sometimes likened to the expansion of agriculture in frontier-developed areas, the records thus show broader historical and acknowledged delineations of multiple uses in the area, with the uses including agriculture (cf. Nordin 2009; Lundmark undated b). Rather than necessarily being related to frontier thinking, the calls for increased settlement were prompted by a need to increase resource extraction and infrastructure development to help finance ongoing wars. However, the relations between regions were such that those who lived inland had the right to hinder those living by the coast from using resources, as *utmark* was protected due to its use by defined villages (Lundmark undated b). At this point, it was argued that encroachments on Saami land were justified because, as opposed to coastal farmers, who were only allowed as much land as was needed for their livelihood, the Saami had very large areas (Lundmark undated b). Thus, while calls to increase agriculture and establish new villages conflicted with existing uses (Tegengren 2015), it has been noted that such processes were 'viewed in an international perspective … as relatively conflict-free' (Nordin 2009: 27, my translation). This was due not least to the relatively limited settlement that resulted from the calls for settlement and the fact that these were mainly answered by people already in the area or region, comprised of the

Swedish-Finnish population, the local population on the northern Swedish coast, and Saami groups (cf. Nordin 2009; Lundmark undated b).[72]

Many conflicts were also administratively managed in line with what could be called a general 'conflict community' orientation. In this, collective interests and the negotiation and dividing up of resource use rights could be seen as being in line with a broader 'conflict community' logic (cf. Cederholm 2007, drawing on Jan Peters's concept of *Konfliktgemeinschaft*). In this understanding, 'a local community of conflict in which functional conflict resolution on the everyday level becomes central' (Cederholm 2007: 42, my translation, see also Österberg 2008a, 2008b). In such a conception, institutionalised conflict over time between numerous interests with representation defines social development, for instance, regarding fishing rights along rivers. Thus, in the case of Saami tax lands (Swe. *Lappskattelanden*), for instance, groups including Saami (from several Saami areas) were represented early on at higher levels of decision-making, and the differentiation in use between new agricultural settlers and Saami living as nomadic pastoralists served to limit conflicts between groups (Hansen and Olsen 2013, Marklund 2015). Saami groups were also represented in conflicts between inland and coastal populations over rights of use; in this regard, Lundmark notes that the boundaries of Lappmark drawn in 1765 were intended to protect Saami and farmers living inland from land-use demands by the coastal population (Lundmark undated b). South Saami, one of the Saami languages, was used as a written language by the Church starting in the mid-1700s (Elenius 2016), and a 1751 document known as the 'Lapp Codicil' is 'generally viewed positively, and has even been described as the Magna Carta of the Sami' (Lantto 2010a: 544–546). Among other provisions, it granted the Saami free rights of movement between areas and defined them as a 'Saami nation' (Lantto 2010a, cf. Torp 2011). The Saami also played a prominent role in trade in the area in the 1700s, although they gradually lost this position as the trade infrastructure in the region grew (Kvist 1986, Lundmark 2007).

Thus, those who are today regarded as the indigenous Saami people comprise a combination of multiple Saami groups with different but related languages and historically varying occupations (Hansen and Olsen 2013, Hansen and Olsen 2004, Marklund 2015).[73]

Describing the role of those who were considered Saami and the occupations that were regarded as being linked with the Saami over time can particularly elucidate the variation within a simplified 'indigenous' category in frontier thinking. Instead, it rather shows how this type of thinking came to construct and delimit this and other populations, what they were allowed to do and with whom they were allowed to mingle over time.

Firstly, over time, the 'Saami' population retained only a small number of those of Saami – or, most often, mixed – origin, as over time, many settled Saami had come to be regarded as 'Swedish', 'Finnish' or 'Norwegian' in official statistics (Lundmark undated b, Kvist 1986). Historically, the population in these areas has remained largely a mix of multiple groups and has been

characterised by cross-border as well as multicultural identities across many groups (cf. Ylimauno et al. 2014).

However, from about the early to mid-1800s onwards, under international influences from frontier state mythology concerned with differences between races, development path progression and the like, Saami and Finnish-speaking populations outside Finland found themselves increasingly marginalised vis-à-vis the state. In conjunction with this development, reindeer husbandry increasingly came to be seen as the premier Saami livelihood, a facet of the assumption that the Saami were an 'indigenous' group and were thereby assumed to be 'nomadic pastoralists' (cf. Kvist 1986).

This is notable as, while reindeer husbandry is today a major focus in literature on the Saami, it did not become the primary livelihood of non-settled Saami groups until around the 1600s. At that time, due to decreased trade and increased taxes, many Saami changed over to fishing as a livelihood or opted for settlement, while the remaining Saami took up large-scale nomadic pastoralism. Large-scale nomadic pastoralism was thus relatively novel, given that many families had only had some ten reindeer, which were used primarily for transport (Lundmark undated b).

Thus, although reindeer husbandry – pastoralism, in line with frontier thinking an indigenous occupation – came to be seen as an occupation specific to the Saami, at the time it was, to some extent, integrated among other groups as well. Both, many who did and many who did not, regard themselves as Saami-owned reindeer that Saami managed, and there was considerable cooperation and mutual support among owners and herders (Swe. *Skötesrenar*) (cf. Nordin 2009). Bergman illustrates how in the 1500s reindeer were owned by great varieties of owners, ranging from priests to the king himself (so-called *konungarenar*, Swe.) (Bergman 2018), with reindeer husbandry practised in the Torne Valley as well. It is also suggested that reindeer husbandry, for instance, with coastal farmers owning *skötesrenar*, may have been common in the coastlands as early as 1000–1500 (Bergman 2018).

Reindeer husbandry, then, may have been more widespread among several groups, just like other occupations, and there is at least clear evidence of a great variety of owners and some differentiation in areas and herding communities. Some of this variation remains into the present time: while reindeer husbandry is considered a Saami livelihood in Sweden today, with some exemption in regard to the Torne Valley areas at the border to Finland where reindeer husbandry can be practised more broadly, in Finland it can be practised without requirements as to one's ethnic background (e.g. Keskitalo 2008).

The impact of frontier thinking based on international discourse

A strong division between groups (as well as within them, separating reindeer-herding Saami from other Saami) may thus have emerged in part with the imposition of frontier-related divisions on groups in northern

Fennoscandia. This development was also supported by increasing nation-alistic tensions between the states in the area, notably those stemming from Sweden losing Finland to Russia in 1809 and from statements by Russia about not considering the Lapp Codicil to be binding (Lantto 2010a). After the bor-der between Sweden and Finland was drawn at the Torne River, Finnish-speaking groups that had been living on what became the Swedish side of the Torne Valley (known as Torne Valley Finns) found themselves in an environ-ment where a different language was forced upon them (with, for instance, schooling being conducted exclusively in Swedish after 1888; Winsa 1996, cf. Lipott 2015).

With regard to the Saami groups, Lundmark points to a significant shift in new settlement regulations. While in 1673 and 1695, no hunting or fishing rights were granted to new settlers because these rights were regarded as belonging to the Saami, in the mid-1800s, as a 1922 state official investi-gation concluded, the Saami's 'ancient right seems to have been forgotten' (quoted in Lundmark 2006: 1, my translation).

Similarly, Lundmark observes that '[a]round 1800 general ideas about inferior cultures reached Sweden' (Lundmark 2007: 13). Hansen and Olsen (2013) and Marklund (2015, for Forest Saami) see the turning point as being the last half of the 1700s; Lantto (2010a) mentions the period after 1809 or, more broadly, the 1800s as the turning point; and Uppman (1978) notes that accounts reflecting what here have been seen as frontier-related descriptions of the Saami date mainly from the period 1860 to 1920. Thus, it was 'not until the 1800s that Saami started to be seen as a single category, based on "race" or "culture"' (Lundmark undated b:4, my translation).[74]

As a result of this, the Saami thus came to be considered 'indigenous' (a different race) inhabitants rather than simply a different, threatening 'nation-ality' (such as the Kven and Torne Valley Finns), and consequently became objects of heavily distorted descriptions, as the logic described in previous chapters would suggest. Lundmark observes that:

> [a]round the end of the nineteenth century, most of the Saami fall into a big, dark hole. The following decades are a dark time for both the Saami then and historians now. Farther south in Europe, an idea grew that nomadism was a weak and inferior form of culture that would soon vanish if one just let history take its course
>
> (Lundmark 2006: 3, my translation)

Similarly, Lantto claims that 'if some Sami herders would be forced to shift to a sedentary lifestyle following a border closure, this was regarded as pro-gress, as a necessary modernization of the area and its population' (Lantto 2010a: 547).

Later, the Saami, then defined as a solely nomadic group, would be denied interaction with other groups, and these groups similarly denied engagement

with the so-defined Saami. The aim was that the Saami group, defined as a unitary group in this way, would remain nomadic reindeer herders, with this to be their primary indigenous characteristic, regardless of the facts that the herding system only really began robustly developing in the area after the 1600s and that there had been interaction between different groups for centuries (cf. Lundmark 2007).

Thus, Saami rights to Saami tax land and the associated hunting and fishing rights began being revoked after the 1800s, resulting in changes that can be found in legislation still in force today (Lundmark 2006, cf. Hansen and Olsen 2013, Marklund 2015, Arell 1979).[75] In the early phases of this development, while there had always been interaction between groups and the varied Saami groups had made their living in multiple ways, 'many herders left the [reindeer husbandry] industry to become fishermen, some moved to Finland, while a large group became Swedish citizens' (Lantto 2010a: 547), these changes suggesting a relatively limited distance between groups. Nevertheless, on this novel basis, an assumption was emerging that interaction between groups in the areas should be restricted so that the remaining nomadic or migratory reindeer-herding Saami, now considered a uniform population, would not be influenced by other groups. Interaction between the thusly defined Saami and other groups should thus be prohibited, settlement of the Saami should be prevented, and Saami engagement in livelihoods beyond nomadic pastoralism (only prominent since the 1600s) should not be acknowledged, thereby erecting and enforcing strict barriers between groups in the areas (Lundmark 2007). In the 1886 Reindeer Husbandry Act, contrary to earlier descriptions, the Saami were regarded as a group in 'economic and moral decline' (Lantto 2010b: 37, my translation). The Act also formally terminated the *skötesren* system in much of Sweden (Lantto 2010b), whereby several different groups had been involved in reindeer husbandry, and restricted non-Saami reindeer husbandry in the country to Norrbotten and certain areas in the Torne Valley close to the Finnish border. This notwithstanding, interviews in the 2000s still reveal cases in which people in northern Sweden who live outside the Torne Valley area and are not members of the administrative Saami reindeer husbandry unit acknowledge that they keep *skötesrenar* – something that speaks to the very long lines of tradition beyond legislative delimitations (Keskitalo 2008).

These developments, partly built on assuming specific identities among 'indigenous' people (a facet of frontier thinking), thus fundamentally legislatively impacted organisation in the areas: they might well have increased rather than decreased nomadic pastoralism as it became seen as the preeminent expression of 'indigeneity'; hunting and fishing rights became more conflicted; and the Saami practice of reindeer husbandry was simultaneously assumed not only to disappear but also to be emblematic of a Saami frontier-style 'indigenous' identity, as reflected in the expression 'a Saami shall be [i.e. remain] a Saami' (Swe. *Lapp ska vara lapp*) (cf. Lundmark 2007). Both

the Kven/meänkieli and Saami languages were repressed, either as 'dying lan-
guages' (Saami) or as a threat to the state (Kven) (Elenius 2016, cf. Nordberg
2015), which contrasted sharply with an earlier (pre-about 1800, Nordberg
2015), more integrated and also naturalised relation among the many varying
and often also blended groups.

   As frontier-oriented concepts began spreading to Fennoscandia, they could
thus be seen to contribute to dividing up what had been relatively natural-
ised, varied and mixed populations, livelihoods and decision-making systems
into separate populations and livelihoods under new and specific regulative
forms. The application of these concepts gave rise to many of the conflicts
and divisions that are inscribed on Fennoscandia today, although they never
corresponded to any reality implied by the concepts (cf. Nyyssönen 2013).
Despite conceptualisations brought on by frontier ideology losing influence
after the 1930s (Lundmark 2007), conflicts surrounding reindeer husbandry
rights – now considered the premier indigenous land use – thus hark back
to decisions on reindeer husbandry in the 1800s, that is to legislation that
was enacted in this very specific context (Torp 2011, Lantto and Mörkenstam
2008). As Lantto and Mörkenstam state:

> The constructed system of Sami rights has – in and through legislation –
> institutionalized a homogenous Sami identity deviant from the Swedish,
> maintaining a hierarchical order, at the same time as it explains and
> justifies an exclusion of the majority of people of Sami origin. The ques-
> tions why the Sami should be treated differently, how the system of Sami
> rights should be designed, and to whom these rights ought to be granted,
> have by the definition of the Sami people and its "true" and "authentic"
> indigenous culture received a given answer, which has implied a policy
> difficult to change
>
>   (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008: 41)

   In addition, it is unlikely that the types of actions undertaken in later peri-
ods with the rise of increasingly nationalist conceptions (forced migration,
schooling and other cases among all populations identified as non-national)
could have been developed the way they were without this type of underpin-
ning that allows for a devaluation, particularly of groups who are seen as
related more to nature than to 'civilisation'. Any conception of what is today
northern Fennoscandia in relation to frontier thinking thereby belies a highly
complex reality comprising multiple groups and possibilities of other nature
relations than those assumed in frontier thinking.

Conclusions

This chapter has shown that the development of cases in northern Fennoscandia
diverged from frontier development, with the conception being not one of
a clear frontier beyond which existed only wilderness and those associated

with it, but rather one of a gradual integration for purposes of taxation, among other things. This does not mean that this history does not include conflict or that the state fundamentally did not profit from, or intended to profit from, formal expansion; rather, it is clear that this was a foundational aim. What it does illustrate is the diverging development lines that differed from a frontier conception.

The descriptions in this chapter illustrate a markedly different course of development up to this time compared to what would be assumed in frontier thinking. A key element in the process is bottom-up development within 'conflict communities', which, rather than being idealised community types, are institutionalised means for claims and for resolving or managing conflicts in different constellations and among multiple different groups. What is more, rather than assuming that areas were empty or recognising only specific types of habitation, the numerous existing populations and the distinctions between them, as well as different types of ownership and use, were acknowledged by drawing boundaries as well as through (tax-related) designations of different lands.

What this also reveals is that given the early development of the Swedish state, or at least of the integration of these areas under Swedish administration, the concept of 'indigenous' is not applicable in the same fashion here as it is in frontier-related development, which clearly distinguishes 'settlers' from 'indigenous' inhabitants (as discussed in earlier chapters). In what is today northern Sweden and Finland, numerous groups were present early on, resulting in significantly blended populations with potentially multiple claims regarding origin; these groups included the Torne Valley Finns or Kven groups speaking Finnish dialects, Saami groups and Finnish groups, as well as other denominations (Bergman 2018, Niemi 2002, Törnqvist 2014, cf. Lundmark undated a, Elenius 2002). Moreover, there were not necessarily strong distinctions between the various groups in the area; in fact, people were often linked through historic migration between groups (and later, from about the mid-1800s, through the religious revival movement Laestadianism, cf. Larsen 2016).

This chapter has thus illustrated the pervasiveness of categorisations in frontier thinking and how such organising logics can thereby also impact existing institutions and practices. This means that we need to be on watch for how frontier thinking categories may impact yet other areas of everyday life or organisation. We should also be open to identifying potential integrating features in different contexts, features that may illustrate other ways of organising across and within groups, the constructedness and variation among groups of all kinds and other ways of relating to nature. The logic of discourse is pervasive because discourses are often assumed rather than identified and assessed. However, this also means that pre-existing well-developed institutions, making new logics not seen as socially applicable, can hinder the spread of discourse. Meanwhile, where new logics come to be applied – for instance, as they support an understanding among

groups in power or are seen as part of 'progress' – they often become pervasive, as they themselves set the form in which succeeding developments are read and understood.

The following chapter will further discuss the ways in which the introduction of terms related to frontier thinking came to influence different areas as this discourse came to be increasingly internationalised. The following chapters, however, will also take up examples of contrasting cases or pockets of organisation that differ from what is assumed in frontier thinking.

7 Consequences of frontier thinking – from state to individual levels

Introduction

The previous chapter illustrated not only distinctions in development from frontier thinking assumptions but also the impact and consequences that frontier thinking may result in. This chapter continues along this line, illustrating the consequences across examples in varying areas, from what can be seen as consequences in the US to consequences involving assuming specific content in relation to society, community and individual, as well as consequences involving imagining people either in relation to – or apart from – territory. Taken together, these examples thus continue to illustrate the impact – not only historically but in the present – of assumptions in frontier thinking.

Consequences in the US

As it moved into the present day, the US was almost universally regarded as a highly peculiar type of state. Scholars in the field of American Political Development (cf. Orren and Skowronek 2004) have recently invested much effort into theorising and understanding the development of the American state on this basis. In a celebrated volume, Skowronek dates the establishment of the American state as a *state structure* to as late as the 1800s and early 1900s. In the book, which focuses on the period 1877–1920, Skowronek argues the following:

> The problem of American state building in the industrial age was rooted in the exceptional character of the early American state. This preestablished governmental order was so peculiar that many have refused to consider it a state at all. At base, however, early America maintained an integrated organisation of institutions, procedures, and human talents whose specific purpose was to control the use of coercion within the national territory. Rather than allowing the peculiarities of this organization to pre-empt consideration of early America as a state, it would seem more appropriate to treat these peculiarities as distinguishing marks of a particular state. The exceptional character of the early American state

is neatly summarized in the paradox that it failed to evoke any sense of a state

(Skowronek 1982: 5)[76]

This view of a limited US state is common in the literature, albeit with notable exceptions, such as Rockwell (2010), who highlights the highly organised federal administration seen in the Indian Office, which he equates with 'big government'.[77] Skowronek, instead, having noted the limited 'state-ness' of the US, sees state-building in the period 1870–1900 as 'patchwork' and, later, in 1900–1920, as 'consolidation', with this latter stage, which focused on civil administration as well as army and business regulation, being particularly crucial to recent US state-building (Skowronek 1982). Other authors have emphasised the role of business in the US as an actor that became instrumental even for welfare – a position, as Clemens sees it, in which business sought to gain civic influence outside the business class but came to control much relief work in the process (Clemens 2010, cf. Tichenor and Harris 2002).[78]

Taken together, scholars have thus also highlighted the patchwork or *intercurrent* nature of the US system. The claim is that there are 'many *parts* of the state, each with its own internal purposes, culture, and rules [and that] different parts of the state will therefore frequently conflict with one another, each pursuing different aims at the same time' (Lucas 2017: 341, italics in original; cf. Orren and Skowronek 2004). Or, as Skowronek argues, 'American exceptionalism has not been transcended by twentieth-century state building; it has only taken a new form' (Skowronek 1982: 288).

We thereby see a particular American conception of individualism and liberalism, which links the two but without emphasising state or social organisation beyond the market and individual level, building upon a frontier logic that has been extended to other spheres. Dobbin makes the following observation:

During the nineteenth century nation-states developed institutions for organizing economic life that paralleled those they used for organizing political life. The American polity located sovereignty in a series of autonomous community governments under a weak federal structure dominated by the courts. Industrial policy situated economic sovereignty at first in community governments, which practiced active stewardship of growth, and later in an adjudicative federal structure that made Washington the referee of a free market

(Dobbin 1994: 2, cf. Ward 1977, Tulis 1988)[79]

Given the role the US played during the twentieth century, a great deal of scholarship points to the enduring legacy – and continuous redeployment – of many of the components of the country's foundational myth (cf. Slotkin 1998, Nash 1982). Notably, it has been argued that the individual and the state, as they are conceived in the highly particular US context, cannot be assumed to

coincide with conceptions of individual or state that do not rest on this specific basis. As Lukes notes in a classic work on individualism worth quoting at length, it is only in this context that the:

> element of individualism … [conceives of] individuals … abstractly as given, with given interests, wants, purposes, needs, etc.; while society and the state are pictured as sets of actual or possible social arrangements which respond more or less adequately to those individuals' requirements. Social and political rules and institutions are, on this view, regarded collectively as an artifice, a modifiable instrument, a means of fulfilling independently given individual objectives; the means and the end are distinct. The crucial point about this conception is that the relevant features of individuals determining the ends which social arrangements are held (actually or ideally) to fulfil, whether these features are called instincts, faculties, needs, desires, rights, etc., are assumed as given independently of a social context. This givenness of fixed and invariant human psychological features leads to an abstract conception of the individual who is seen as merely the bearer of these features, which determine his behaviour, and specify his interests, needs and rights
>
> (Lukes 1973: 73)

Here, in the individualist view of political representation as the representation of individual interests, considered to date mainly from the early nineteenth century, Lukes observes:

> Just as the free market was assumed to lead to maximum benefit for all, so also would the reformed political system (with electors and representatives all pursuing their individual interests) maximize the aggregate satisfaction of men's separate individual interests. The "invisible hand" worked in politics, just as in economics
>
> (Lukes 1973: 83)

However, as stated above, Lukes also notes that such a political system protects mainly 'individuals' who, while they were mainly middle class, were framed in universal terms (Lukes 1973), each an everyman.[80] This approach, as Love similarly states, fails to recognise that individuals are not interchangeable: 'any given *individual* will have multiple and shifting viewpoints, each of which is situation-dependent. These cannot be fused into a single independent, unified narrative of Individual' (italics in original, Love 2008: 441). Neither, Love continues, can the isolation into which the individual is placed in the American context – outside social structures – create anything other than ontological insecurity: 'this isolation can only perpetuate existential anxiety—as *in*dividuals become increasingly isolated they lose that which is most essential to the continual creation of individuality: interaction' (Love 2008: 443, italics in original).

The development of the 'West' in the US must thus be understood as based not on the actual development of a frontier but rather on frontier thinking. The role this has played in economic development and the way the environment is conceived of in relation to this can hardly be overstated. In a market framework, the individual could gain their centrality due to their metaphorical coherence with a society-less conception of 'frontier'. Turner's (1921) conceptions, as many have noted, can be seen as encapsulating not what the frontier actually was but rather what the developing American polity, based on ideas of the time – and, more broadly, colonialism or imperialism – understood it to be (Slotkin 1998). Furniss contributes the following view:

> The symbol of the "pioneer", the "empty wilderness", and even "the frontier" are classic examples of mythic icons. Their power, thus, lies in their ability to convey certain myths of history intuitively and indirectly in such a subtle manner that often lies beyond our critical awareness
> (Furniss 2013: 30)

While Turner and Webb thus argued that frontier development was crucial to the US and modern European colonialism, their mistake was perhaps to assume – or pretend – that the descriptions and coherent metaphors they were provided through numerous channels in any way reflected how things were rather than how people wanted them to be; that is, to see description as detached from power. Instead, to some extent, these mythic icons convey dreamscapes, simulacra, one example being a 'wilderness' devoid of people that conveys untrammeledness in the face of visitation (e.g. Lowenthal 2013).

By creating the underpinning for unbridled colonial resource use, even to the point that this imagery became integrated into the national identity, frontier thinking spread worldwide, with the US serving as an archetype for this, and has since created problems. It has created a need for a 'conservation' of 'wilderness' that is entirely related to the removal of previous resource rights among necessarily different interests in the areas, but at the same time aims to preserve a fiction rather than recognise the need for constraints in all systems. It has also simultaneously failed to acknowledge the numerous types of institutions, including common law systems and organising mechanisms, that may, in alternative conceptions, express other means of socio-environmental organisation relevant to nature.

Consequences of imagining people and territory together

The myth complex analysed in this work has wide implications. With reference to the international level, Mickelson in particular has pointed to the potentially severe consequences of simplifications:

> In *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud asserted that "the principal task of civilization, its actual *raison d'être*, is to defend us against nature."

… Given that this understanding is deeply embedded in the structures and principles of international law – including international environmental law – could one argue that international law constitutes an elaborate façade that justifies a war against nature?

(Mickelson 2015: 85)

In such an understanding, the very assumption that nature lies outside, rather than being integrated with, human society, would be a cause of the environmental problems that exist today (perhaps, as aptly put in economics, an 'externality'; see Wicks 2012).

Given its likening of natural features to low-ranking human features, frontier thinking both impacted social organisation and greatly influenced conceptions of nature. A closeness to nature figured in frontier thinking as a reason for devaluing people (even if the underlying reason was to appropriate their resources). This created a specific understanding of nature as an element external to civilisation. Indeed, perhaps the main impact of frontier-oriented concepts has been that they provide justification for direct resource exploitation. Natural resources (or, more generally in many cases, 'land') came to be defined as 'empty', 'wilderness' and external to, not associated with, the defining entity (cf. e.g. Davison and Williams 2017). Nature is thereby devalued, seen as detached from human experience and imagined as either savage/ignoble or romanticised/noble, with the humans residing in that 'space' or 'wilderness' similarly devalued by association.

A crucial part of this assumption is that in this context, humans and territory are imagined together and as related to each other in terms of valuation or devaluation. In line with descriptions that centred on ethnic or other assumed essential characteristics and that in fact underlie the model of progress whereby people living closer to nature were devalued, nature was explicitly seen as being able to influence culture. The implication was that 'people living under a certain environment could be expected to act as they did' (Glacken 1967: 709).[81] Thus, the environment was considered to be linked to human disposition; for instance, 'Darwinians … were inclined to trace … differences [within mankind] to biological, rather than environmental, determinants' (Baumer 1977).[82]

This idea, again, like all the other concepts treated in this chapter, can be seen to be echoed both very early and disturbingly late in history. For instance, as late as the 1970s, particularly in northernmost Canada (Hamelin 1978), in trying to describe 'Arctic' areas, an assumption was made that the Arctic was 'determinable by nature of its *northernness*, rather than restricted to and resultant of Canadian development and organization' (Keskitalo 2004: 137, italics in original). Such an essentialist understanding, or 'spatial positivism' (Smith 2003: 38), taken to its extreme, would effectively view any regional or other development concerns as springing from the region or area itself and thus relieve the state or any other social system or authority from responsibility for shortcomings in development or support. In a broader context,

imperialism could thus exonerate itself from the responsibility of carrying 'the white man's burden' in civilising empty lands even as colonising countries reaped the benefits of appropriating their resources.

These broad ideas – pure nature as either savage or innocent and therefore an object of resource use or of Romanticism, nature as beneficial to man and nature as an influence on culture – have existed and been invoked during highly varying historical periods. However, like other ideas in this chapter, they were drawn together and extended globally during modern European colonialism.

Like all the broad concepts explicated earlier in this chapter, these concepts seem to be factors that facilitate cognitive simplification, which means that we need to be on guard against them even today, rather than characteristics inherent in specific groups. This should caution us against embracing conceptions that assume essentialistic characteristics at the level of organisation as well as at the level of groups or individuals – and that misdescribe nature in relation to these.

Consequences of dividing people in general from nature while continuing to imagine the indigenous as related to nature

Assuming that people gain their characteristics from nature can be regarded as an aspect of essentialistic thinking. Nevertheless, this type of thinking remains to this day. Many varied but interconnected ways of conceiving of humans, human organisation and nature were expressed and came together, with potency, in the frontier thinking underlying modern European colonialism. The developments that emerged at the time were not neutral but rather came to divide up and understand the world in highly specific ways, and they continue to influence what logics are deemed acceptable or even assumed. To this day, they continue to have an impact around the world on how we conceive of phenomena, factors and individual as well as group processes these assumptions impinge upon.

The social consequences of frontier thinking are of course evident in areas where frontier thinking has been the strongest, that is, where related conceptions have been institutionalised under modern European colonialism. In examples from Alaska, constructed as part of the US frontier, and from Canada, where frontier thinking can be seen as part of 'Arctic' development, it has been pointed out that the idea that rurality can be measured is still causing misconceptions (Sherval 2009, Keskitalo 2004). Thus, even today, Sherval argues that the labelling of much of the Alaskan state as 'remote rural' 'continues to reinforce and sustain the much recognised "rural-urban divide" and, in turn, influences top-down policy decisions, which in Alaska tend to stereotype and pigeonhole regional development, rather than recognize reinterpretations of it' (Sherval 2009: 425, cf. Qviström 2013). In this light, Sherval goes on to observe:

> We still find places such as Alaska for example, constructed and labelled as: "the Land of the Midnight Sun", the "Last Great Wilderness" or "the Final Frontier" … reminiscent of many of the established frontier myths

that valorise "wilderness" and exclude all previous human presence in their depiction … cast in a negative or derisive light, described as "distant" or "on the frontier", "on the margin", or even "on the periphery" … [in] seemingly unchanging places

(Sherval 2009: 426)

Sherval further points out that such privileging has very real and measurable consequences, with the federal government placing more land outside development than in other states and thereby denying Alaska's dynamism and growth in favour of a conception of the state as 'rural' (Sherval 2009). Instead, it becomes a 'wilderness', an area that is assumed to be unchanging and devoid of human presence, even evoking a past before human habitation or management (Nash 1982; Lowenthal 2013).[83] In connection to this, in regard to his Russian case, Shubin observes:

The same ideas can be found in popular (lay) discourses associated with socio-modernisation debates. Rural people acknowledge that their decision to move out of the village is usually taken on the basis of its marginal position in the modern society

(Shubin 2006: 433)

Another example of the same type of dynamic is taken from Australia, about which Carter and Hollinsworth state:

We argue that natural resources institutions in rural Australia demand an "authentic" performance of Aboriginality that is framed within orthodox and stable constructions of an Indigeneity associated with the remote category. Dominant representations of remote Aboriginal people living on traditional homelands and engaged in "traditional" environmental protection are assumed to hold for all places and transposed when natural resources institutions satisfy compulsory Indigenous engagement

(Carter and Hollinsworth 2009: 414)

As they suggest, this results in a situation in which '[c]rude systems of classification oversimplify the rural-urban continuum, denying these underlying relational networks that transcend urban and rural space and their resulting hybrid mixes' (Carter and Hollinsworth 2009: 414, cf. Taylor et al. 2012). Prout and Howitt observe that similar conceptualisations, reflecting a frontier orientation, exclude 'subpopulations that are not neatly accommodated within the persistent and powerful meta-narrative of the rural idyll' while at the same time 'the discourse of "authentic Aboriginality" privileges mobilities as natural practices for Indigenous people but only those that adhere to the interpreters' perspective of authentic or traditional Indigenous movements' (Prout and Howitt 2009: 396, 402, cf. Gill 2013, Brown 2005).[84]

Examples can also be taken from, for instance, critical discussions of tourism, in which it has been claimed that 'the greater the distances travelled

and the more remote the places travelled to are, the further back in time they are imagined to be', a notion echoing the four-stage development theory described above (Howard 2016: 106). Indeed, even today, tourism subjects are 'perceived to live an "idyllic life" that is socially integrated, non-materialistic and in tune with the cycles of nature' (Howard 2016: 111, cf. Schilar and Keskitalo 2018). In tourism, actual contexts and realities are thus suppressed, and images of the primitive (nature and humans) are produced as locked in time and history. Interestingly, this conception is also presented as *authenticity*, for it represents what the tourist, through the processes and myths described in this volume, can expect to see (cf. Büscher et al. 2017).

What is more, it has been asserted that such 'dichotomies of nature and culture tend to be reproduced within the program of environmental history' (Asdal 2003: 60). It has also been argued that this type of 'dreamscape' has regained emphasis 'relatively recently in reaction to industrialization and urbanisation … [as] a refuge from modernity' (Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen 2010: 195), and is sometimes seen as related to '[t]he domination of "urbanism as a way of life" in the 21st century [as this] derives from industrialization' (Byrne 2002: 279–280).

Here, the 'indigenous' role – as in its prototype 'the savage' and later related concepts such as the rural – is constrained in that the privileging of voice requires people to remain as expected and adhere to certain modes of expression, ones for which they are empowered. For 'indigenous' groups, it is often an argument that links 'true' knowledge of 'the land' to the aboriginal, requiring the aboriginal – and only the aboriginal – to take on a certain role, both constrained and empowering, that is rooted in 'a place-based understanding of "community" [which] serves Western ways of framing policy and delivering services' (Taylor et al. 2012: 99). However, one would do well to note that these conceptualisations include additional forms of discrimination: they often describe indigenous, rural or settler cultures as uniform and apply the settler-indigenous dichotomy as a given, even where it might not apply (Gill 2013). The discourse privileges 'settler spaces' and differentiates 'settler' and 'aboriginal' as two distinct concepts, avoiding all else and invoking dichotomies such as nature-culture and market economy-subsistence economy. In the process, it also enforces such assumed differences and prevents interaction between categories, persons or practices.

To break from such assumed essentialist categories, what needs to be recognised instead is the way in which dichotomies have been historically constructed and deployed when talking about development in rural versus urban areas, an example being the foregrounding of 'nation' through the nation-state framework. Thus, as Watt and Watt note, the 'need' to express in relation to stereotypes of indigenous, settler or traditional categories should not be assumed but rather avoided:

> [w]e feel no obligation to drive horse-drawn carts because that was the limit of transport technology in the time of our great-grandparents. We

don't feel a duty (or even an inclination) to wear kilts, eat haggis and listen to bagpipe music, because we have Scottish forbearers. This conviction that people ought to keep to their "natural" traditional lifestyle is usually aimed at other people. Especially Aborigines, in spite of the fact that the traditional Aboriginal way of life was made impossible in most areas generations ago

> (Watt and Watt, 2000: 20, quoted in
> Prout and Howitt 2009: 402)

The conceptions thus come with several negative aspects: not only the historical limitation involved in actually attributing nation to territory and dividing people up by ethnicity (as a common cause for war), but also the fact that this distinction – like frontier thinking in general – assumes that all association with nature is devalued, that it is not a part of 'civilisation' (or associated concepts such as the centre or urban, as will be discussed in the following chapter), and that relation to nature is thus not a claim that is possible to forward among people in general.

This is one of the consequences of frontier thinking that – although it may be misread to misconstrue 'only' indigenous groups (as a smaller proportion of the population) – in fact misconstrues people at large. If you have no clear relation to nature or no right of access to land for foraging or other resources, for instance, you can ask yourself – with this book as a basis – how this came to be.

Consequences of assuming disconnectedness to follow scale: the distinction between society, community and individual

In line with many frontier and community studies conceptions, it thus often remains an assumption that:

> [m]odern society is alienating, while primitive societies promise a return to our lost unity and natural wholeness … In this view, the search for lost authenticity is essentially an exercise in retrieval, as we harken back to our pre-modern past
>
> (Potter 2010: 63, quoted in Howard 2016: 103)

Assuming some kind of developmental direction and applying it to present social life in urban areas in the West can be seen to preface much work on alienation, the risk society (e.g. Beck 1992) and the like, while excluding possibilities for community from discussions of the often unstated urban and otherwise 'Western'. Today, expressions such as these – perhaps focused on belonging and a perceived lack of belonging rather than anything else – feature prominently in work on social organisation and similarly assume that these characteristics are lacking in contemporary types of organisational units.[85]

Given the basis in a conception of 'society' and 'community' as differentiated, in which even relatively contemporary fields such as 'community' and

'rural' studies seem to have been constructed based on criticised metaphorical categorisation systems, numerous criticisms have thus been voiced concerning these concepts. They are seen as removing anything 'small-scale' from being a given part in 'larger-scale' categorisation, instead displacing what is small-scale in time or place, making such organisation by definition uncharacteristic of modern societies and something to be 'progressed' beyond. Such constructions, Alleyne argues, 'obscure … the social construction which goes into building and sustaining human collectivities, because it may be allowed too easily to become an explanation rather than something to be explained' (Alleyne 2002: 608).[86]

The socially situated *assumption* regarding what something is is thus taken to describe it, with major consequences for those described in this way. Thus, Goodwin notes that: 'Ruth Glass, in asserting that studies of community rarely clearly define community, argued that the "Community Studies tradition" amounted to little more than "the poor sociologists substitute for the novel"' (Glass 1966: 148, quoted in Goodwin 2012: 53). Similarly, Philip et al. (2013) point out that a number of authors have regarded the tradition as elusive, vague, rarely defined and full of ambiguity and assumptions, coming to constitute a focus for multiple contradictory and mutually exclusive understandings. At the same time, it also engenders strong emotions, which, together with 'its malleability and fluidity make it both powerful and problematic' (Philip et al. 2013: 175).

Studies criticising this line of assumption instead highlight that communities cannot ex ante be differentiated based on their location, such as rural or urban, or whom they are comprised of. There are many different types of 'communities' that are not limited to specific small-scale contexts but may rather be large in scale or even mediated by the Internet, for example (e.g.Weaver 2011). Similarly, Philip et al. point out that simplified assumptions about small-scale communities risk simplifying the processes of change within them and the way multiple interests may exist in all settings: 'the grassroots nature of "community"-driven change, which relies on local perspectives, knowledge, priorities, and skills, is often idealized as more sustainable, relevant, and empowering than change initiated by outsiders' (Philip et al. 2013: 176).[87]

Having to situate themselves in opposition to these simplifying descriptions of community versus modern civilisation and rural versus urban categorisations, studies thus instead 'show communities, particularly in inner-city areas, as being vastly different from this model', for instance 'comprising highly individualised personal networks, elective and autonomous collections of friends, partial and functional solidarities, fluid, constructed, overlapping, and plural collectives, which, when layered over each other, go to produce the "total community"' (Glackin 2015: 26). Similarly, in some cases, it has been shown that 'communities have transcended notions of "group" and "locality" in a shift towards networked interaction that is inherently individualized … socializing towards individually specialized "partial

communities"' (Goodwin 2012: 58). Philip et al. (2013: 176) note that 'the affirming associations of "community" promote the tendency to discount tensions, divisions, and struggles within "communities"', and that '[a]ssumptions about the familial and nurturing quality of "community" "conceal power relations" among members and erase important differences in the interests and needs of constituents based on age, class, caste, ethnicity, religion, gender, and more'. A dividing line is also often imposed on what is assumed to be a group in relation to a locality, thereby disallowing that local groups as well may be constituted by people who are not present (full-time) in an area or that characteristics may be formed by capacities other than local residence (e.g. Keskitalo et al. 2017).

Thus, it has been pointed out both that communities that do not align with Tönnies's understanding can exist everywhere and that their markers of difference are socially constructed. 'Communities' can be of vastly different forms and even geographically varied. Assuming 'community' to be pre-modern may thus lead to inaccurate or even damaging and injurious analyses and has implications for assumptions concerning what large-scale modern societies can be and provide, for the role of the individual in them, and for our assumptions about what rural and urban life are. Not least, under present levels of globalisation, the possibilities for 'community' and 'society' – and their relation to nature – may thereby need to be reconsidered.

Conclusions

Much has been written about the 'development trap' (related to entirely different areas than those treated here but drawing on the same type of Anglo-centric discourse), which is no doubt, to some extent, a product of pervasive assumptions regarding who 'does' development (cf. Ambjörnsson and Elzinga 1977). The present study shows that such constraints on development apply not only in clear cases but also, in fact, wherever this type of thinking, which privileges those who do not live in the areas in question, is connected to resources and thus links ideas and materiality. One could interpret this linkage as discourse in practice, whereby these understandings empower some locations to the exclusion of others.

The elaborations of these notions of development, which, as noted earlier, were brought together in modern European colonialism and Anglocentric thinking, achieved their present compass through unprecedented global development at the time. The Anglo norm enjoyed the support of 'liberal' ideas that ascribe to nature a value peculiar to a highly specific mindset. Accordingly, in development led from cities – and cities that are far away – powered by this type of discourse, nature and the rural become concepts betokening the 'other'. It is conceived of as a dreamscape or resource rather than a 'home' to which people are attached and which they want to preserve – under, not despite, conditions of use; it is a home of humans in nature with a wide range of uses.

Thus, development path theories, which assume a set, essentialistic and specific course of development but provide no real evidence for their assumptions, should be looked upon with doubt. A development path indicating that we have lost 'community' in the meaning of belonging cannot be considered valid, either as part of any verified folk theory (Kashima 2011) or in any scientific sense. Conceptualisations of 'community' that describe this type of belonging as falling outside the realm of the modern state or society are thereby not a given. Regarding environment, their suggestion that a relation to the environment and a way of organisation that is not 'modern' and 'large-scale' should be 'progressed' beyond all but excludes possibilities for a given relation to nature. Instead of going along with such assumptions, we should ask why theories like this are developed and what exercises of power they may entail. In this, one of the most notable implications is that of defining rural and urban as separate conceptions, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

8 Consequences of frontier thinking on conceptions of the rural – historically and in present day

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the general consequences of frontier thinking that remain to this day. But one of its largest impacts can be seen in areas that we may not often think about in relation to a frontier conception: the construction of a rural in opposition to an urban, which impacts all areas of the world that are affected by the internationalisation of frontier discourse.

This chapter can thereby provide another clear illustration of the need to consider frontier thinking even in our everyday and to problematise what logic the conceptions we encounter are construed in relation to.

Constructing the rural

In line with the general logic associated with frontier thinking as described in previous chapters, two conceptions of rurality can be identified in the Anglocentric literature: one holds that the rural is positive and romantic, while the other considers it backward, mirroring a conception of nature/the savage as either noble or ignoble.

Reflecting the first part of this dichotomy, Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen have noted that '[i]n the Anglocentric literature rural idyll has usually been defined as a positive and mythical image surrounding many aspects of rural lifestyle, community and landscape' (Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen 2010: 195). The rural idyll, or Arcadian ideal, is seen as being linked to 'pastoral' sentiments. Swaffield and Fairweather trace the history of such sentiments: 'First expressed in the bucolic poetry of classical Greece and further developed and elaborated by Virgil, the "pastoral" expresses an ideological contrast between city and country life' (Swaffield and Fairweather 1998: 112); it is then considered to connote rural peace, relaxation and pleasure, 'social stability and harmony in contrast to the political uncertainty of the city' and the 'honest simplicity of rural dwellers' (Swaffield and Fairweather 1998: 112–113).[88]

In these descriptions, we recognise elements of both the imagination and simplification associated with 'community' and of images relating to the Noble Savage. Swaffield and Fairweather sum this up aptly: 'The mythical Arcadia is thus a "dreamscape", a state of wish fulfilment' (1998: 113).

The flipside of this conception is that associated with the Ignoble Savage. In early community studies, attempts were made to define the 'real' and 'authentic' countryside or the rural as 'open space', but also to 'conquer' or 'overcome' it and understand it as an increasing wildness or even risk. As Belov writes: 'the [space of] nature started right after the door. However, the further from the door, the more independent and untamed nature became' (Belov 1984: 176, quoted in Shubin 2006: 424). In many cases, typologies and indices of rurality were developed based on statistical data; Shubin points out that in Russia, following international (Anglo) examples, these were designed to define 'the *truly* rural as "the typological unit with the average values of major indicators"' (Shubin 2006: 427, with internal quote by Fuks 1982: 33, italics added) – that is, as 'visible but fixed mental constructs used as shorthand to organise and manage complex rural spaces' (Shubin 2006: 427). In the corresponding Canadian context, as discussed in the previous chapter, Nordicity indices were built on an assumption that human development could be related to latitude (Hamelin 1978), thereby linking human traits to specific environmental factors. Given that these classifications assumed rural areas to be similar, or in the Canadian case, categorisable based on latitude, such conceptions have of course been heavily criticised, not least for their essentialism (e.g. Keskitalo 2004). In fact, criticism was presented as early as the 1960s (cf. Shubin 2006). Describing the general case, Hidle et al. note: 'Rurality as resource structures what we may call a national, global and market-oriented spatial order. Rurality is placed within a regime of knowledge that asks for exactly what resource is, namely substance, quantification, values' (Hidle et al. 2006: 195).

The argumentation concerning rurality can thus be seen as reflecting components of frontier mythology, including assumptions regarding stages of development (e.g. Ambjörnsson and Elzinga 1977).[89] It expresses the idea that rural areas are somehow similar, creating conceptions of areas that are based more on assumption than reality. The consequences of this type of discourse can be illustrated using, for instance, the example of Alaska, as discussed previously, regarding which Sherval has observed the following:

> Frequently, these perceptions tend to visualise all rural spaces as remote, frontier-like and often peripheral to a specific core. Many of the stories and legends that are told about these places tend to have a life of their own, and on retelling, the links between what is perceived as real and what is fiction, become blurred. Much of the reality of the landscape, its cultural and social significance, its economic potential and the lived experiences of the people who reside and work in these spaces become imagined or exaggerated and in the absence of truth, what remains is often a stereotyped, construction of reality. Rural spaces, particularly those associated with arctic, subarctic, desert and wilderness locations are most often seen through this lens. Even when incorporated into

contemporary globalisation discourses, these metaphors remain central to folk wisdom and contemporary belief systems

(Sherval 2009: 426)

Overall, the argumentation thus continues to be built on the premise that the rural is something other than and distant from the urban and that it needs to be understood and classified in terms of this generality and implicit comparison: as a resource for remote populations in 'centres', not as lived-in places. Also, at work is an assumption that the 'rural' *is* something specific in value terms (valued for leisure or devalued in general, for instance), not only that it is different things to different people or a naturalised context to life.

Defining rurality

In relation to a basis in frontier thinking, 'rurality' continues to be described as a singularity, referring to areas where 'Others' – unspecified as to the group they may belong to or their location – can be included or excluded (cf. Keskitalo et al. 2017). As already Raymond Williams, who highlighted many of these tensions in the English case in the classic *The Country and the City*, pointed out, the term 'country' derives from *contra* – that is, *against or opposite:* 'the original sense of land spread out over against the observer' (Williams 1973:307, cf. Darling 2004).

However, as in previous examples of frontier mythology, descriptions serve to privilege and sustain the groups doing the describing. One might add that, as much as it is expedient to devalue people in faraway countries whose resources one wants to take, it is advantageous to make country dwellers think they should supply the cities. In fact, of course, cities are dependent on rural areas for food production (cf. Badersten 2002); if rural areas were to control the resources, this would be dangerous for cities and their inhabitants.[90] Thus, statements defining 'centre' and 'periphery' must be seen as arrogations of power by the former and may well be constructed to hide the fact that 'centres' need the 'periphery' more than so-called peripheries need centres; after all, most resources are located in 'peripheries'. As a result, the focus on the 'rural' could be expected to increase as cities grew. This has been noted, for instance, by Byrne: 'the dominance of the urban was and is consequent on industrialisation and the assembling of huge populations to engage in industrial production' (Byrne 2002: 279–280).

Similarly, in line with assumptions that the valued and advanced state of organisation is deficient in comparison to an idealised earlier or farther removed stage of development, Macnaghten and Urry observe that 'while the countryside came increasingly to be desired because of its visual qualities mediated through the representation of space via the notion of landscape, the industrial town was seen as thoroughly polluted' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 165–167). The town or city falls into the established pattern of a corrupted

but valued, normalised and peopled civilisation, while the countryside, considered to exhibit qualities that are general to a rurality or nature – that is, resources defined mainly in relation to urban use – is seen as similar, although classifiable into various steps (e.g. Hamelin 1978, Shurbin 2016, Nash 1982). On this basis, it is often viewed in the literature as surprising, or at least noteworthy, that diversity, of the type one might expect in a city, is also present in rural areas (cf. Glackin 2015, Hidle et al. 2006), particularly where they do not fit neatly into conventional frontier thinking-related classifications.

Rather than diminish over time, these tenets have largely remained, instead contributing to the proliferation of classifications that largely agree with rather than depart from those in frontier thinking. Thus, as noted in previous chapters, as more and more people became disassociated from rural realities, the possibilities (and perhaps the need for cognitive simplification) grew to imagine, control and preserve nature in its positive imagined state as a 'wilderness'; this notion amounted to a rural without its human element and obscured the land use that was foundational to all resource exploitation. Thus, in the 1880s, at the height of industrialisation and what at the time was unprecedented resource use, there emerged landscape preservation movements in Great Britain, France, the US, and Germany, 'as a form of cultural politics that articulated educated middle-class … anxieties about their national identity, the pace and scope of industrialization and urbanization, and the aesthetic deterioration of the rural countryside' (Lekan 2004: 4).[91] Macnaghten and Urry note that it was at this time that '[t]he term "the countryside" first came into wide usage' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 165–167). As part of the impetus for preserving the countryside and in line with categories readily recognisable in frontier thinking, this:

> preservationist movement highlighted "nature" as the "unspoilt" other,
> as embodied in the relics, customs and mystery of the … countryside …
> vulnerable, threatened by urban growth and industrial expansion, and
> in need of the state for protection in the collective interest
> (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 44, cf. Marx 2008)

Nature was thus conceived of as isolated from human impacts; indeed, it was ultimately regarded as 'empty' and devoid of even 'devalued' people, and as valuable to 'preserve' in this form.

Macnaghten and Urry view this development and the way it took shape in England as linked to several factors, one being English Romanticism and another being the development of the English countryside with 'landscaped estates, capitalist agriculture, concentrated wealth and rural leisure pursuits' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 168), by which particularly the southern English countryside was romanticised and its perceived values imposed on the rest of Britain (Macnaghten and Urry 1998).[92] With reference to the mainly wealthier classes to whom the countryside appealed, Murdoch and Pratt describe this as the '"England of the mind" … for the lived experience was a country where

four-fifths of the population were located in urban areas' (Murdoch and Pratt 1993: 416). Similarly, Williams describes it as '[a]n idealisation, based on a temporary situation and in a deep desire for stability, [which] served to cover and to evade the actual and bitter contradictions of the time' (Williams 1973:45, cf. Darling 2004).

Unlike in some other cases, actual rural populations thus seemed to have little impact on this understanding, which Macnaghten and Urry (1998) explain in terms of those who influenced the decision-making in regard to these areas. This group often included only large landowners, whose identities were essentially urban and in only a very narrow sense rural. This being the case, rural, nature and the countryside were defined as Other even in relatively nearby locations, not only in faraway countries. This exemplifies what has become known as the close-to-home version of 'wilderness' (cf. Wiliams 1973, Marx 2008, Darling 2004). As Cronon elaborates, this enables:

> the fantasy of … urban folk for whom food comes from a supermarket or a restaurant instead of a field, and for whom the wooden houses in which they live and work apparently have no meaningful connection to the forests in which trees grow up and die
>
> (Cronon 1996: 16–17)

Cronon continues:

> Only people whose relation to the land was already alienated could hold up wilderness as a model for human life in nature, for the romantic ideology of wilderness leaves precisely nowhere for human beings actually to make their living from the land … Worse; to the extent that we live in an urban-industrial civilization but at the same time pretend to ourselves that our *real* home is in the wilderness, to just that extent we give ourselves permission to evade responsibility for the lives we actually lead
>
> (Cronon 1996: 16–17, italics in original)

'Rural planning', its linkage to frontier and rural thinking – and its critics

The fact that these conceptualisations live on to this day can be seen as linked to an institutionalisation whereby the frontier myth came to be embodied in public and private organisations, including research centres. Playing a crucial part in classifying and institutionalising the rural was the use in planning of indices and other criteria that had been developed to 'define' 'the rural'. In the case of England, Macnaghten and Urry note: '[a] very significant figure in this was Abercrombie, whose vision of a rigid distinction between town and country was to prove highly influential' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 45–46). They refer here to Abercrombie's statement in his influential 1933 book on town and country planning: 'the town should indeed be frankly artificial,

urban; the country natural, rural' (Abercrombie 1933: 18–19, quoted in Allanson et al. 1995: 1801, see also Murdoch and Pratt 1993, Macnaghten and Urry 1998). This supported planning development that defined 'countryside' in terms of agriculture and forestry (with farmers seen as guardians), recreation or aesthetic landscapes to be conserved; at the same time, certain other uses of land that were permitted in cities were excluded from 'the rural' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998).[93]

One feature that allows these conceptions to exert influence even today is the way in which they have informed particular conceptions of spatial development that have become institutionalised in planning as well as influenced thinking about, determined, and circumscribed development priorities for 'rural' regions. As Morrison et al. observe: 'Regional development planning is widely taken to mean rural regional development' (Morrison et al. 2015: 1602). If one probes a bit further, this conception of regional planning can be regarded as being linked to that of bringing vast areas under control, one of the aims motivating frontier thinking. Linking these sweeping developments, Morrison et al. (2015) note:

> Australia and the USA, along with Canada and New Zealand, are the Anglo part of … the "neo-Europes" – English-speaking settler societies in which colonisers and their heirs dispossessed and almost exterminated the Indigenous inhabitants in the quest for territorial acquisition, state-building and economic development … In that quest, rural landscapes were seen primarily as sites for the high-intensity production of one or a few primary commodities … *Rural regional planning emerged within that milieu.* The early purposes of rural regional planning in post-settler societies were to manage primary resources such as soils, forests, minerals and water so as to … supply the food, fibre, lumber, minerals and other primary commodities essential to developing the national economy; and … provide permanent occupations, homes and communities in rural regions
> (Morrison et al. 2015: 1602–1603, italics added)

While previous chapters have discussed frontier thinking in general, it needs to be underscored that rurality, as it is depicted here, is a variation only in strength, not in type. Thus, places that cannot fall under the categorisation of the more explicit types of frontier thinking – perhaps as they are more close to 'home' for the observer – may instead come to be seen as quaint, idyllic 'countryside'; however, still under the same types of logics of reification, simplification and ultimately purpose of control over areas (again, different only in strength, not in type, as it all follows from the dominant metaphor of the frontier) (cf. Macnaghten and Urry 1998).

In line with frontier thinking, rural and regional planning thus largely depicted areas as similar and possible to classify and zone for specific allowed 'rural' uses, often connected to the perceived needs of a city-dwelling

population, that is, resource extraction or recreation. Not only indices and classifications but also planners' training were counted among the tools used to support such blanket uses, viewing areas as 'rural' rather than considering their local character and uses. The heyday of such practices can be seen as lasting until well into the 1970s, but they influence planning even today (Morrison et al. 2015).

Morrison et al. ascribe the decline in importance of rural regional planning that began in the 1970s not to the limitations of the concepts but rather to several trends. Among these were the contradictions between productivist and preservationist goals for the countryside (i.e. the countryside as either wilderness or a place to exploit for resources), an increasing focus on more global as well as more local scales of decision-making, and an accompanying emphasis on participatory or communicative approaches whereby planning was opened to an increasing number of actors. In the description by Morrison et al., an additional contributing factor was that:

> the industrialisation of commodity production disconnected rural communities from the socio-economic benefits of the production of food, fibre, lumber and other commodities that had formed the basis of rural regional planning up to then. The severing of commodity production from the economic base of rural communities and the political clout of the environmental movement led to a rethinking of the human uses of rural space
>
> (Morrison et al. 2015: 1604)

However, while a lesser need to control resource access at the regional level led to a decrease in the viability and desirability of rural regional planning, the core assumptions underpinning the discourse and the main metaphorical complex underlying it persist in numerous cases to this day, perhaps because of the cognitive simplification they provide most of the world's population, who now live in cities. It has proven difficult for rural studies to rid itself of these assumptions, and they have continued to structure both planning practice and broader policy development. Thus, despite a relatively general acknowledgement today of what could be called a rural-urban continuum with no clear given division between areas (e.g. Buciega et al. 2009, Keskitalo 2017, ed.), rural planning – or regional development planning and perhaps even rural studies – continues to be criticised for not recognising or planning for specific and varying areas (except with the use of broad, index-like parameters) but rather making rural or nature areas seem the same and attempting to fit them to a specific mould. It has also been noted that '[f]or a while rural studies came to be associated with the analysis of agriculture and this seemed to offer another lifeline to those who wished to maintain the urban-rural distinction' (Murdoch and Pratt 1993: 419, cf. Murdoch and Pratt 1994, Philo 1993).[94] Similarly, for instance, Qviström observes that while regional planning often claims to have superseded binary rural-urban assumptions, it often

'revert[s] to a visual and static conception supported by the nature-culture divide' (Qviström 2013: 1567).

In line with examples in previous chapters, this has resulted in a plethora of cases exemplifying how an incorrect – frontier-based – assumption regarding rural areas may lead to incorrect decisions.[95] Scott summarises the consequences in a contemporary case study as follows:

> Planners favoured residential development in towns rather than rural areas, due to economic efficiencies of concentrating development; Planners lacked understanding of local needs and issues; Sustainable development has been an "abused" term, used to favour environmental protection; Planners often applied urban sustainable development principles and urban solutions to rural problems; Planning policies were "top-down"; Urban centres were viewed by planners as the sole development motors for the local economy; Landscape protection policies were aimed at visitors and tourists with little consideration of local people
>
> (Scott 2008: 26–27)

On the whole, this quotation reveals a focus on development and planning in and based on cities and, correspondingly, on top-down blanket solutions (seeing rural areas as similar). It also expresses a focus on environmental protection rather than development in rural areas and on the value of such areas for external users, in line with conceptions in frontier thinking.

Similar conceptions have been identified in large-scale planning frameworks, such as those applied by the EU and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which both occupy a meso-level role between the local and the global and play prescriptive roles in both classifications and policy. Thus, while it has been noted that regional strategic planning has declined since the 1970s, the development of the EU as an organisation with regional scope may have led to its drawing on and thereby extending available, but limited, approaches. Scott demonstrates that the early 2000s saw unprecedented European-level interest in the formulation of spatial territorial development strategies, with a view to competitiveness, the positioning of Europe in relation to other regions, and an assertion of European identity as part of European integration (Scott 2006). Similarly, Johansen and Nielsen (2012) argue that the OECD and other large-scale organisations may today see a need for overarching planning and supporting data, but at the same time show that they cannot deal with the multifaceted realities of rural areas. Johansen and Nielsen conclude:

> The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition of rurality is … not capable of dealing with local and community definitions of rurality, which vary from study to study. In everyday life, physical planners, rural policymakers and local rural actors need

a consistent definition of rurality. The reason is that structural reforms have led to larger administrative units that have less experience-based knowledge about the individual rural communities within a municipality than do local authorities

(Johansen and Nielsen 2012: 781)

Criticism of such large-scale frameworks has included statements such as '[u] rban and regional development studies tend to focus on the urban as driving innovation and growth, with surrounding areas cast in a passive, residual role. As a result, rural and urban development debates are often conducted separately' (Ward and Brown 2009: 1237). It has also been argued that EU policy development (the ESDP) has shown a 'strong urban bias … [where] cities are constructed as … motors of regional development' while constructing 'non-urban areas … as areas of agriculture, green tourism and environmental protection' (Scott 2006: 815, cf. Hadjimichalis 2003, Richardson and Jensen 2000) and simplifying the complex structure of the countryside, including smaller rural towns. In addition, in an argument speaking to the difficulty of changing conceptions of the rural as they are enforced in line with frontier thinking, it has been claimed that the ESDP policies in fact made cities and regions the principal units of general policy implementation (Scott 2006). For rural areas, on the contrary, del Mármol and Vaccaro observe that 'many European policies (such as the CAP directives or the Leader Programme) have shown a preference for post-productivism' (del Mármol and Vaccaro 2015: 30), with the EU Leader Programme, while not exclusively focused on tourism, being developed from the outset to promote rural tourism (del Mármol and Vaccaro 2015).

Similarly, it has been noted that conceptions of a post-productivist countryside, with tourism, leisure or amenity as a major focus, could be seen as following this pattern of assumed uses of a countryside by an external urban actor; contrasting with these would be uses informed by a complex and multifaceted understanding of any specific rural area. It has thus been suggested that:

post-productivist countryside … can be interpreted in terms of the shifting valuation of rural land and resources. In particular it can be seen to relate to the devalorisation of land and building with respect to agricultural capital and its uneven revalorisation with respect to other capital networks

(Phillips 2000: 5–6, quoted in Darling 2004: 200)

In light of the economically diminishing role of the European or Western countryside for capital networks under global production, Darling and others thus illustrate how new ways of valorising or augmenting the value of the countryside for urban areas are under development. Examples include gentrification, or lifestyle migration to the countryside for amenity values

(cf. Nelson et al. 2010), the extension of tourism as a supplementary sector of income in rural areas (subject, however, to the difficulties inherent in tourism also noted in other chapters), and also a tourism-environmental protection cluster, which has attracted considerable criticism for adding to environmental concerns due to the implications of long-range tourism (cf. Büscher et al. 2017). These criticisms are in line with both a development and a criticism that would have been expected based on the identification of frontier thinking as a logic for development.

Conclusions

As in previous chapters, delving into the origins of conceptualisations seems to provide insights into the needs expressed in human thinking for a clear development path or indication of progress, and the distinctions that can be made to accomplish this. All of these, of course, relate to the issue of power and who the describer is, which is inherent in description: the describer to whom this type of thinking makes sense is not neutral but rather situated and conditioned in specific ways. For these reasons, perhaps it is most important to be aware of the tricks our own thinking, conditioned by frontier thinking, may play on us. In parallel with discussions in previous chapters, 'societies' do not need to be limited with regard to 'community' as a sense of belonging; they have just been imagined that way. In fact, entire national mythologies can be regarded as having been constructed this way. Thus, this chapter has seen, for instance, Murdoch and Pratt describe the '"England of the mind" … for the lived experience was a country where four-fifths of the population were located in urban areas' (Murdoch and Pratt 1993: 416). The describing groups included large landowners, whose identities were essentially urban. This being the case, rural, nature and the countryside were defined as Other even in relatively nearby locations, not only in faraway countries. As Williams describes, this exemplifies the close-to-home version of 'wilderness' (cf. Wiliams 1973, Marx 2008, Darling 2004).

   This is also in line with the situation described in earlier chapters, with Turner's (1921) seminal work on the frontier in the US highlighting individualism – largely seen as a result of the 'anti-social' struggle with the wilderness – as a defining trait of the frontier. Later discussions in the US have greatly underscored this myth of the solitary, lone actor detached from any social context (cf. Chapters 4 and 5). However, what we have seen in this chapter is that it is the social context that defines the actor, who is not solitary and lone except in myth. Descriptions of urban and rural are, instead, made for purposes of community and interest. This, of course, also means that countries and cases in which descriptions are made in other ways reflect other lived experiences and interests, which is something we turn to in the next chapter.

9 Alternative conceptions of rurality in present-day Fennoscandia[96]

Introduction

In the description of the frontier myth above, we have seen that the construction of the rural can be linked to constructions of the frontier, with nature and culture regarded as separate domains and defined from the standpoint of 'culture'. Urban areas have historically been developed as centres of power (Smith 2003), as components of the political, economic and organisational infrastructure and as populations to influence in a single location in order to expedite governing. In frontier thinking, this development has been separated from that of 'rural' areas, which, in keeping with frontier logic, are considered less modern, have less voice and constitute entities for which urban areas need to be 'centres' and for which these urban areas then have to 'plan' (Morrison et al. 2015, Scott 2008). This implicitly excludes nature from established and recognised social practice and accentuates a nature/rural-culture/urban dichotomy, expressed, for instance, in rural studies literature as it emerged as an area of specialisation from about the 1960s (cf. Murdoch and Pratt 1993, Murdoch and Pratt 1994, Philo 1993).

In contrast to this, much literature in the Fennoscandian case can be seen as a counterpoint, as it proceeds to illustrate and then challenge the conceptualisations inherent in rural studies (see e.g. Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen 2010 on Finland; Cruickshank 2009 and Hidle et al. 2006 on Norway; see also e.g. Sørensen and Stråth 1997 [eds], Witoszek 1998, 2011, Kettunen 1999). Here, we can thus see that the population structure and historically based development paths continue to influence fundamentally different conceptions of nature and interrelations between humans and the environment than those in frontier thinking.

Thus, this chapter outlines this literature and the different conceptions of the rural that are often still expressed here as relatively naturalised. In line with the international impact of frontier thinking through English language literature, this expression is often voiced in contradiction to the assumed frontier conceptions that have been outlined in previous chapters.

Northern European, or Fennoscandian, conceptions of the rural

Writing from a Norwegian perspective, Cruickshank makes the following observation, with a somewhat surprised air regarding the Anglocentric logic:

> What characterizes this discourse [of rurality] the most … is the way in which … the modernist view of the world suppresses many of the links between production and culture in rural places. Culture and value creation are not brought together locally, or to be more precise, they seem increasingly to be joined together in a fundamentally non-local way
>
> (Cruickshank 2009: 101)

Cruickshank links this feature of the discourse particularly to processes of constructing the rural in Britain, whereby the 'armchair countryside' became something other than the real countryside; that is, a narrative for consumption and leisure, a product for urban dwellers (cf. Keskitalo 2004). He goes on to point out that, despite these developments in Anglo discourse,

> rurality in Norway did not become the idyllic pendant to rural production, as in Britain. This is due to an alternative discourse that emerged, offering an alternative way of making rurality meaningful … [as] the economic motor of Norway
>
> (Cruickshank 2009: 102)

Here, Cruickshank (2009: 103) follows Witoszek (1998) in noting that 'the elite who constructed the basis for the national awakening in the nineteenth century, the people who therefore to a large degree took part in the shaping of modern Norwegian culture, did not have a romantic relationship with nature'. He describes this as a fact that led to a more integrated conception of the rural or countryside, rather than a conception of it as other. He elaborates on this point as follows:

> They [the Norwegian elite] spent most of their lives in the countryside and they had their belonging and their roots in rural Norway. Even if we take into account that they were rapidly being urbanized, the yeoman that the elite elevated to a national icon was hardly an alien creature. For the radical Norwegian elite, nature and the primitive people that they cheered and chanted, were not relics of the past, but a foundation wall to build upon
>
> (Witoszek 1998: 62, quoted in and translated by Cruickshank 2009: 103)[97]

Thus, it is also notable for the distinction that Fennoscandian cases have included multiple types of rurally based land uses and an interrelation between rural and urban populations. To this day, it has been noted '[e]ven though the

share of agricultural workers is very small nowadays … many workers still have farm or other rural origins' (Alestalo and Kuhnle 1986: 20). Norway, Sweden and Finland alike also remain rural countries to some extent. As Sommestad notes in the case of Sweden, '[a]s late as 1910, 70 per cent of the population resided outside the towns and boroughs' (Sommestad 1998: 107). Even today, much of the population has a link to rural areas, often through second homes; in all three countries, it can be observed that half of the population either owns or has access to the use of a second home (Rye and Gunnerud Berg 2011, Rye 2011, Ellingsen and Hidle 2013, Back and Marjavaara 2017, Pouta et al. 2006, Keskitalo et al. 2017, cf. Chapter 6).

The role of majority culture in relation to nature

This situation in the cases in Fennoscandia has the result that the foundational elements of a relation to rural areas are already challenged with regard to the patterns of land use and habitation that are implicit in rural studies literature. Thus, while in the UK owning a second home – often in a rural location – is the privilege of a very small portion of the urban population, in Fennoscandian countries it has been noted that it is more the rule than the exception (if ownership and access are taken together). This, Ellingsen and Hidle note, 'can be rightly described as a part of the Nordic cultural heritage' and as 'an expression of links between the urban and rural … a way by which to connect several homes and to connect the feeling of belonging to several locations' (Ellingsen and Hidle 2013: 251, 256). They go on to submit that '[m]ore than a ritualized pact with nature with national connotations, second-home mobility belongs to a lifestyle that is commonplace, taken for granted and natural' (Ellingsen and Hidle 2013: 264).[98] Similarly, Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen note the following for the Finnish case (using the conceptions of wilderness that may be recognisable to the international reader):

> Second homes are believed to have a central role in the maintenance of Finn's special connection to nature. The ancient wilderness-related traditions are seen as an integral part of cottage life. For example, fishing and picking berries and mushrooms are among the most popular outdoor activities of second-home owners
> > (Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen 2010: 196,
> > cf. Lehtinen 2012, Hallikainen 1998)

Contrary to the case in many other countries, access to a second home in these cases is thus available not only to the affluent but also to groups that may largely be similar to or part of local populations. As second homes are often inherited structures and are also often located outside rural centres or specific built communities, they are typically not found in specific leisure settlements (e.g. Hiltunen and Rehunen 2014). This means that conflicts between 'locals' and 'non-locals' that have been noted in international cases in so-called

'holiday villages' may not exist in the same way here (Pitkänen et al. 2014). These situations may also make rural lifestyles more possible despite people having to work in city areas, as the fact that old dwellings remain in the family or that land to build new ones is available, taken together with the culture and lifestyle, may make retaining or purchasing a second home both financially within reach and culturally appropriate (cf. Keskitalo et al. 2017).

The fact that lifestyle orientations may continually support this type of lifestyle, thus continually supporting links to rural areas for a large part of the population – including but far from limited to those in decision-making positions – is noteworthy in itself. In fact, contradicting the more exclusionist character of rural amenity use that is expressed in Anglo literature, discourse in Sweden has highlighted the fact that second-home owners and, for instance, small-scale forest owners with a house on their property may spend as much or even more time at the 'second' home as at their 'primary' residence. This is because the definition of a primary residence is in place mainly for work and taxation reasons, and the official statistics on this thus say nothing about how much time is actually spent at either location. As a result, Pitkänen et al. note, 'second home owners … are not "newcomers" in terms of how they use rural areas … Rather, what is new about the second home owners is their mobile way of life, sharing life between multiple locations' (Pitkänen et al. 2014: 161). Similarly, Lehtonen et al. note that 'multi-locality' is 'common among Finns', seeing it as related to rural identities, access to second homes, an affinity for activities there and possibilities for telecommuting (Lehtonen et al. 2019, cf. Keskitalo 2017, ed.). For these reasons, Lehtonen et al. (2019) assume that the role of second homes will increase rather than decrease in the future.

Another example of how rural lifestyles remain present among broader populations as well and have been institutionalised through present practices and legislation is the right of public access (for instance, Swe. *allemansrätten,* Fin. *jokamiehenoikeus),* based on customary local usage and perhaps for this reason incorporated into law relatively late (cf. La Mela 2014). In relation to this, Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen state that:

> ancient wilderness-related traditions are still rooted and highly appreciated in Finnish and Nordic culture-nature practices. The popularity of these is made possible by the wide public rights of access in Northern countries. The "everyman's right" allows free access to the land and waterways, and to the collection of natural products independent of landownership. The right is eagerly taken advantage of and it has contributed to the continuity of many traditional pursuits
> (Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen 2010: 196, cf. Lehtinen 2012, Hallikainen 1998)[99]

There are further examples of this type of extensive nature use, ones that in fact link the environment with multiple social uses instead of seeing it as

'wilderness'. Forest in Fennoscandia is typically planted (rather than 'wild' or 'natural'), and about half of all forest in Sweden is owned by small-scale family forest owners, who, even when they do not reside on their land full-time, often have a second home there. Berry and mushroom picking is common, often in connection to rural or second homes, and in Sweden, it has been estimated to constitute two-thirds of the non-timber value of rural areas (Mattson and ChuanZhong 1993; see also Turtiainen and Nuutinen 2012).

Nature areas are also used for hunting, a well-integrated social feature – historically even a 'majority culture' – that is practised in Sweden today by about 300,000 people or 3 per cent of the population (von Essen et al. 2015, cf. Ljung et al. 2014). Hunting is presently conceived of within a framework of 'wildlife care' in which it is seen as a means for game population management (Swe. *viltvård*, von Essen et al. 2015).[100] In addition, wildlife populations are not restricted to particular environmental protection areas but are a feature of the broader landscape and multiple-use forests. Explaining this in the international literature, in comparison to a supposed assumption to the contrary, Thulin et al. note that:

> a feature of Swedish wildlife is the widespread distribution and proximity to public life, i.e., most wildlife species, herbivores, and predators alike are not confined to specific national parks or wildlife refuges but rather may be observed close to all major cities, on public, as well as private land
>
> (Thulin et al. 2015: 652)

The extensive availability of public fishing rights at relatively low cost, with no requirement of formal prerequisites other than the purchase of a fishing licence, also makes this activity possible as a widespread use of nature (Thulin et al. 2015).

Reindeer husbandry is another example of a practice that may seem as if it can be understood only through being traditional and indigenous, but in fact is practised by various groups and integrated into the context within which all inhabitants of a 'modern' state find themselves, as also noted earlier. In Sweden, reindeer husbandry is a right not only of the Saami population but also of people living in 'exception areas' in the Torne Valley. In Finland, it is the right of all the population in the reindeer herding area, and the respective ways the Finnish and Saami practise reindeer husbandry are often considered different with regard to, for instance, how reindeer are kept and fed. In all areas, however, reindeer husbandry is today marked by the use of technologies such as trailer truck transport, snowmobile or even helicopter surveillance, and supplementary feeding (to higher or lower degrees), as well as by having several homes in order to enable the reindeer husbandry (akin to the second-home phenomenon). Meat is typically commercially sold, i.e., integrated into a market economy (Keskitalo 2008). These are thus factors that may differ from delimitations made in other areas in making 'indigenous' practices

purely indigenous or even forcing a traditional subsistence-only character by disallowing sale or restricting practices to reserves (which incidentally do not exist in the Fennoscandian cases; rather, population settlements are relatively blended). In all these countries, reindeer herds also migrate over all the areas designated for reindeer husbandry, which in the Swedish case encompasses almost half the country's land area (akin to the fact that large game populations roam large areas, cf. Thulin et al. 2015). There are thus relatively extensive land uses that interact over the same areas and across populations who may be involved in several different uses. Even the delimitations that have been set by the Swedish state regarding who is allowed to practice reindeer husbandry may also, in practice, be transcended, as local people otherwise not involved in reindeer husbandry noted as late as in a 2008 study that they helped out in husbandry due to owning reindeer even if they were formally not herders (the phenomenon known as having *skötesrenar*, Keskitalo 2008).

A feature common to nature areas in this context could thereby be seen as being their managed and integrated social, rather than only 'natural', character, necessarily seen in the context of a modern state, and whereby areas that an onlooker might see as 'wilderness' in fact constitute lived-in areas with multiple practices.

Sweden has also been seen as characterised by specific outdoor recreation cultures (Swe. *friluftsliv*), practised by a majority of the population (Margaryan 2018). Here, with reference to the Swedish case, authors have even argued that it is not possible to comprehend this through English-language terms such as 'outdoor recreation', as *friluftsliv* includes environmental awareness, making an attachment to nature a feature of Swedish culture – and Fennoscandian culture more broadly (Beery 2011). In particular, such an environmental attachment has been noted by authors such as Thurfjell, who have highlighted nature as the naturalised religious counterpart for many among these relatively secularised populations (Thurfjell 2020, see also the well-known work of Norwegian nature philosopher Arne Naess, for instance, Naess 2008, Witoszek 1998). As a result, in his study of *friluftsliv*, Beery concludes that 'given enduring cultural elements in Norway and Sweden's wild places, nature may be better perceived as evolving a culture-based rhythm' (Beery 2011: 42). In relation to any assumptions concerning these types of use as 'wilderness tourism', however, it should also be noted that this access to and use of nature areas is made possible by the fact that areas are far from being 'empty wilderness' and are instead subject to relatively well-developed infrastructure (road, air and telecommunications). This not only enables relatively easy access but also divides up nature areas and may result in disturbances to wildlife as well as some nature uses, particularly as populations grow. Nature uses, including tourism, are thus highly reliant on these existing infrastructures for easy access that would not likely exist in actual 'wilderness' but are nevertheless part of what enables international 'wilderness' tourism (e.g. Margaryan 2018). In such cases, areas are thereby constructed as 'wilderness' for international touristic consumption, as they may otherwise, as noted here,

be construed by those living there in other ways or with other connotations than the terms that may be used internationally to describe areas.

Consequences in rural-urban political organisation

Taken together, these types of values in practice, as institutions as well as concurrent experiences, can also be seen as structuring the present policy environment, making regional policy notably different from that in many other contexts, including the policies criticised earlier in this chapter for being related to frontier thinking. Hidle et al. point out that working against rural-urban migration, for instance, through '[t]he goal of maintaining the settlement pattern has gained a distinguished position in Norway, compared to most European countries where rural policies are occupied with industrial and commercial development' (Hidle et al. 2006: 190). It has also been noted that Norwegian national policy suggests 'that the regions should also be permitted to call in a certain economic rent from making the most of regional resources, and possibly also receive some economic compensation for securing national natural resources' (NOU 2004:19, 2004: 135, quoted in and translated by Cruickshank 2009: 104, cf. Hidle et al. 2006).[101] This argument, Cruickshank suggests, 'is made possible by a discourse where rural culture and the way to create values from natural resources cannot be separated' (Cruickshank 2009: 102).

Tracing a number of policies, Cruickshank thus concludes that (for Norway, but potentially also relevant to Sweden and Finland), '[t]he resistance towards reducing nature to simply an input factor in a value chain takes many forms, and all of them reject the clear distinction between nature and culture' and the 'modernist split between man and nature, between ideas and reality' (Cruickshank 2009: 104). He goes on to discuss the implications of this conception:

> Instead of one-sidedly being occupied with how people add value to nature, this approach takes for granted that "nature also adds value to culture". The property of a natural resource, then, be it fish, water energy or milk, is not its price on a market but its ability to produce culture and rural settlement. The policy implications would be to reduce the focus on lowering the costs of processing or adding values to natural resources and instead focus on the effect of the distribution of the margin of profits and the right to exploit natural resource
>
> (Cruickshank 2009: 104)

In this vein, and in relation to the discussion on the construction of rights to land in a northern Fennoscandian context, the case of the Finnmark Act, covering Finnmark county in northern Norway, can also be considered instructive.

Earlier chapters have shown how Swedish conceptions of indigeneity, in line with the introduction of frontier thinking, resulted in misdescriptions of

northern populations as well as an acknowledgement of rights in relation to such conceptions. This has resulted in a logic of separation that is still impacting the debate in Sweden today.

Norway, on the other hand, has managed to develop what can be seen as a 'third way' by instituting the Finnmark Act, which neither nationalises nor separates populations but instead relates to the reality of the largely blended and varying populations. While the Finnmark Act was institutionalised largely due to ethnic reasons, in order for Norway to fulfil the ILO (International Labour Organization) convention on indigenous peoples, reviews on how to implement legislation illustrated the impossibility of setting up an ethnic boundary or clear ethnic distinctions for land rights, given the blended populations with long historical lines across many groups. As a result, the Act is ethnically neutral and instead acknowledges the right to land use in Finnmark for all of the county's population. It also advances the possibility for largely varying groups to submit claims for resource use to a governing board (Pettersson et al. 2023).

The Finnmark Act can thus be seen as an example of the possibility of reflecting varying constructions of the right to land use in varying populations based on a logic of place.

Conclusions

This chapter has illustrated that how relations and practices are fostered is crucial to the meanings, connotations and assumptions associated with 'city', 'rural' and 'nature'. The use of terms drawing upon a frontier logic legitimises a use of nature, as well as the people in it (rural areas), that requires the finding of new 'wildernesses', which, if nothing else, are unregulated or under-regulated areas or 'new frontiers'.

Taken together, this and the previous chapter illustrate that Anglo-American constructions of 'rural idylls' and the like cannot be understood as separate from the understanding of rural areas within the British context or that of the colonisers from those areas. While rural planning reflecting international, largely Anglocentric, influences has also emerged and attracted criticism in Fennoscandia, the criticism, unlike in other regions, has in many cases been able to draw on well-established alternative conceptions of nature and the countryside. In what is today the UK and in countries that developed subject to the influence of the frontier myth, rural inhabitants' lesser access to power may have sustained a frontier-related conception of rural areas. Fennoscandian countries, on the other hand, have historically featured very large rural populations with dispersed patterns of property ownership, decision-making linked to rural areas, and a conception of people's relation to nature that is relatively – but as shown in earlier chapters, far from entirely – undisturbed by frontier thinking.

Here, it may be that Fennoscandian populations and decision-makers succeeded in avoiding many of the simplified assumptions underlying frontier

thinking because they themselves were too close to the 'rural' or 'northern' to embrace such thinking, i.e., that many in descriptionary positions did not benefit from them, with their own conceptions already well institutionalised in systems that remained largely unchallenged. With relatively small and dispersed populations, the countries also never really encountered the same strong separation between rural and urban groups and also did not have the same strong power centres to govern and determine rural populations (cf. Smith 2003). Moreover, as part of the Old World, they were not subject to the assumptions that drove English imperial expansion and its frontier-oriented conceptions – other than in terms of the influence from international discourse, which has been impactful in later centuries. However, this impact can be seen particularly in cases in which terms in frontier discourse were clear and directly distinguishable to make them directly applicable for the international benefit of being 'modern'; that is, particularly in separating groups and practices along an assumed clear indigenous distinction. However, frontier logics were never per se about indigenousness but rather means of exercising power over population, regardless of ethnicity or background: frontier logics, manifested in urban-rural relations, disenfranchise all those who could otherwise claim rights to resources by proximity by devaluing their linkage to nature and rights to land.

Thus, as '[t]he world that is coming into emergence in the 21st century … [is] pre-eminently a world of cities' (Scott 2012: 15), one could start questioning whether the problem of the 'rural' and 'environmental' is not the disassociated 'urban', which is created by frontier conceptualisations. Cruickshank describes the situation as follows:

> The fight between modernists and traditionalists is therefore essentially a fight that is structured within the modernist discourse itself. In Britain, for instance, pastoralism and modernism are regarded as two contrasted perspectives and sets of values that still co-exist, constantly in conflict with each other. The discursive fight between them is producing a differentiated countryside. However, in the Norwegian case I will claim that this is not the end of the story
>
> (Cruickshank 2009: 104)

10 Conclusion

What is the social, and what do we base our policies on?

Introduction

This work has focused on lasting and varied historical legacies that are passed down through institutionalisation in discourses, practices, organisations and literature. These legacies are argued to account for, at least in part, the substantial differences in conceptions of what seem like unitary features but only nominally stand for the same thing: understandings of nature, community, society, state and the individual. These have been shown to be fundamentally different things in long-established, historically predominantly rural Fennoscandia than they are in regions steered by frontier thinking, in which binary distinctions are posited between nature and culture and between rural and urban.

   This work has illuminated two distinct contexts. In the one related to frontier thinking, strict distinctions between artificially distinguished spheres are maintained in scientific literature and practice and result in dislocations of nature from culture, the social from the economic and the social from the state. These, in turn, lead to the individual being imagined as a solitary, non-social being from whom a wide range of needs and understandings are defined away or detached. These conceptions of separation are largely founded on theoretical constructions of ideas about humans, society and nature rather than on organically developed, socially embedded conceptions of in-environment livelihood and use.

   In the second, one sees the integration of the same sectors based largely on their historical development and prolonged contestation among multiple groups in organically developed contexts in which no single actor has had the strength to overpower the others (as the colonial state under frontier thinking had). Organisation thus has its foundations in broad social forms of interaction that, far from assuming non-conflictual environments or communities, instead see them as places where conflicts are rather continuously played out among multiple interests. The Fennoscandian cases can illustrate some development towards this type of organisation but are hardly to be considered a model per se; instead, they can be seen as examples of how frontier thinking does not hold true, allowing us to instead imagine alternative forms

of organisation. Rather than representing an end of history or an ideal type, society, community and state are continuously contested structures in which merely the fact that multiple organisational interests continue to defend their interests, roles and land use would in that case play a crucial part in preventing other interests from taking over. Such a conception thus also mirrors reality: while we would like to pretend that a given conception or path can ensure 'development', the fact is that 'development' is always the result of social strife in an institutional context. What is utterly crucial to understanding 'development' in such a context is an awareness of the institutions and organisations at work and of how it is these that form not only the existing environment but also the future one. What it does is reveal fundamentally different assumptions that not only underlie the design of different systems but also continue to influence and drive them. With organisations relying on social development rather than on a theoretical – and neat – construction of separation, institutions may allow for complex interlinkages between different uses, mirroring the way these play out in reality.

Nature and the rural: integrated or separate?

Whether a society views nature as integrated into or separate from itself has significant ramifications. Nature that is defined as a separate entity or realm – as something other than what is recognised as human – detaches humans from their environment and minimises the possibilities for deep, in-use linkage to a particular environment or its use. What such an assumption in fact does, in keeping with frontier thinking, is to justify the expropriation of natural resources by whoever owns them at the time; frontier theory does not set any boundaries on or associate any concerns with the use of nature, which is defined as other than human. The favoured, indeed only, actor to be seen in frontier thinking is 'man', or humankind, defined as 'other than nature'. This agent represents culture, civilisation and progress – at increasingly resource-intensive stages – and is considered to be increasingly more advanced the further removed from nature it is. Coupled with archetypal individual property ownership, seen as allowing the individual to do whatever he or she wishes to with property – indeed, arguing that this is the only proper way to act – this set of assumptions places no internal constraints on how nature is used.

   The flipside of this, an attempt to conserve nature in its non-human state as 'wilderness' or to 're-wild' landscapes, is ahistorical in that it requires that one ignore the actual human uses that have shaped nature for millennia as well as removing any existing human use. At the same time, such efforts also limit the possibility of any meaningful in-use linkage between people and the environment: while 'wilderness' is assumed to gain much of its human value from its scenic properties as an object of tourism (Lowenthal 2013, Cronin 2004, Woods 1997), the type of environmental education this can lead to has been seen both as more limited than in-use values (leading to lower

actual value being placed on nature than when it is central to one's liveli-hood) and as obscuring and externalising the environmental effects of tourism (e.g. Fletcher 2015, Büscher et al. 2017). Thus, the focus on a tourism-wilderness preservation juncture may at worst dislocate, or be seen as con-flicting with, existing uses of nature, which may well reflect long-term local in-use values, such as those seen in the case of reindeer husbandry, hunting, fishing and berry and mushroom picking (for instance, regarding the Finnish case, see Puhakka et al. 2009). It would also be contrary to an in-use con-ception, which does not pretend that human use of the environment or even elements of human use can or even are to be transcended (e.g. Nadasdy 2016) but rather recognises the existence of locally and institutionally based practices.

These perspectives have only recently come to the fore in relation to con-servation, however, which reflects the predominance of what here has been called frontier thinking. Recent orientations include institutional understand-ings of tourism (Puhakka et al. 2009) that recognise, for instance, farmers' and not only indigenous peoples' attachment to land (e.g. Trigger et al. 2010, Gill 2013). Significantly, these then proceed from *institutions* to understand *development* rather than ahistorically assuming a specific type of develop-ment without attention to the institutions assumed to underpin it.

However, even today, the primacy of the social in understanding environ-mental change and the possibilities for responding to it struggle with assump-tions that having more knowledge is enough or that offering decision-makers suggestions as to specific developmental paths will result in political change (e.g. Keskitalo and Preston 2019, eds.; Keskitalo 2023). The alternative to an ahistorical conception of socio-environmental systems is accepting and tak-ing as foundational – as also noted in much conservation work (e.g. Brown and Kothari 2011) – societies where the use of nature has developed in a vari-ety of institutionalised forms, among which none is assumed to be the sole or best option. The literature has nevertheless very often focused on general 'local' or 'indigenous' use without a clear recognition of, or conception of, its institutional or even regulative underpinnings. Moreover, scholars may fail to acknowledge that institutional or regulative bases may lie in, rather than dif-fer from, national regulation and practice (e.g. Pretty et al. 2009, Pretty 2011, Shultis and Heffner 2016).

In contrast, this work has shown that land-use regulation with a local and regional basis has influenced national regulative patterns. Land can be owned on an individual or a shared basis through conceptions that dif-fer from international discourse, and it can be protected or used as such on either of these bases. Land is more than mere property, contrary to the exter-nal and economic understanding of it that is promoted in frontier thinking. Rather, land may entail a sense of belonging and a great variety of uses, all of which may be based on access. In such an understanding, the rural is not something that is defined externally; instead, the lived reality of rural areas as well as decisions about them may be determined by people who do not

view them as outsiders with a view to resource appropriation but rather see them as the places where they live. In other words, rural is not intrinsically separate from urban (if 'urban' is understood as being akin to the 'civilisation' of frontier mythology); rather, 'rural' can carry the same connotation as 'civilisation' – that is, the place where people live and work.

It follows that maintaining rural societies may be a goal in itself (as noted in, e.g., Cruickshank 2009, Hidle et al. 2006). The rural may be a location where decision-makers live, have their (primary or secondary) residence and spend much of their time. They may know it intimately as more than merely a site for leisure or 'post-industrial' activities and, unlike those with the frontier mindset, may not dismiss the activities of those who live there as 'subsistence'. Indeed, 'subsistence' is not necessarily a relevant term in this context, given the connotations that have often been associated with it: firstly, the use of areas seen as having a subsistence economy may in fact be diverse, and residents may earn parts of their living in different ways, including employment elsewhere; secondly, the salient practices in an integrated use of nature are not necessarily irrelevant to majority populations. Rather, people may use the environment just as they use the social – in an integrated way – hunting, fishing or picking mushrooms and berries, with no distinction between this as a 'pre-modern' vis-à-vis 'modern' city life. Indeed, there is no inherent need to draw distinctions between the two realms to justify the existence of either or to impart on either of them values such as those associated with frontier thinking.

Conceptions of community

This study has also illustrated the limitations of frontier thinking in assuming a conception of community as necessarily relating to 'pre-modern' characteristics – something that would mean that 'modern' life, in units larger than pre-modern ones, is seen as necessarily doomed to alienation and disunity. This type of conception has significant implications for the potential sustainability of both 'societies' and 'communities'. Seeing community as unproblematised, non-negotiated and without conflicts of interest is not a far cry from viewing the pre-modern state as an Arcadia, a place where people live unproblematised lives as 'noble savages' without such conflicts. On the flip side, when rural communities – as 'pre-modern' communities – are instead considered squalid, this is an artefact of a similar binary reading: they are regarded as being populated by 'ignoble savages' – as areas where, in Hobbesian terms, life is 'brutish and short', and as lacking any social or cooperative mechanisms.

Communities in the real world, however – as noted in much critique – cannot be assigned either of these dichotomous identities, nor must larger units necessarily preclude any assumed – although, as always, necessarily qualified – community. Communities are socially constructed in their context – they do not preclude but rather assume ongoing social strife. Rather

than assuming that a community is necessarily or *a priori* lost in a larger-scale social organisation, the extent of perceived community will depend on how larger-scale social organisational units are constructed; community can be constructed on various levels.

In fact, real-life conceptions of community can be developed in what has been described as a 'conflict community' – one which is not premised on a conflict solely between the state and individuals (cf. Skinner 2002b) but on bargaining and negotiation between numerous groups in creating and recreating authority (cf. Cederholm 2007, Reinholdsson 1998, Trägårdh et al. 2013). This is one in which the conception of community is not all-encompassing or primordial but rather rooted in common assumptions about how to resolve conflicts in relation to legal frameworks and is at best one that does not exclude major groups of population but is continuously recon-structed and invoked to provide possibilities for contestation. In short, such a community would operate under what is seen today as a major principle for governing: democracy. As we have seen in this work, however, democracy is not practised separate from but rather in relation to an institutional underpin-ning; it may even include conceptions of organisational forms from proto- or conglomerate state formation, and organisational and institutional underpin-nings may in fact be central to the conceptions of democracy or different organisational units, up to or even beyond state level today.

The need to denaturalise the assumption on the 'frontier'

Some rather recent work has begun highlighting the role of historical devel-opment and the legacy of the frontier state in the present. In their examina-tion of 'frontier states', which they define as 'countries that in recent centuries have extended rule over new territories adjacent to their core regions', Foa and Nemirovskaya explain that the differences in 'frontier zones' lie in the fact that 'the formation of strong social institutions among settlers leads to resistance to attempts to impose governance over frontier regions, and to "select for" lower fiscal capacity and lower provision of public goods' (Foa and Nemirovskaya 2016: 411). Foa and Nemirovskaya thus explain 'frontier development' largely in terms of an individualist orientation, often reflected in frontier thinking; par-ticularly in the US, where it parallels a focus on private property. However, such an explanation fails to take into account the broader power dynamics, covered in this volume, that may include reluctance on the part of the centre to integrate 'frontier zones', whose use may have been motivated primarily by the resources there (see also literature on frontiers, resource frontiers and border-lands, e.g. Rasmussen and Lund 2018, Barbier 2010). Thus, rather than being a result of 'settlers' 'selecting for' lower fiscal capacity, the areas' status may be explained in terms of numerous factors relating to dichotomous depictions of the urban and the rural and, even more, to descriptions of frontier zones as having a supply of resources disproportionate to investments in the areas (e.g. Keskitalo 2004, on Arctic development in Canada).

Whereas examples such as Foa and Nemirovskaya (2016) seem to take for granted the US in particular but also other frontier experiences, assuming that the experience itself would create individualistic settler types, this work has illustrated that such a characterisation is one that is constructed rather than to be assumed. In much the same way as this book has illustrated the role of frontier-related conceptions in directing practice in rural and colonial areas alike, the formation of the US state and the role frontier thinking played in it followed a thought model – one that was not descriptive of reality but instead created its own reality.

As the archetypal frontier state with great economic, cultural and political influence on other areas as a historically great power, the US has played a considerable role into the present in continuing to promote elements based on frontier thinking. This thinking can be regarded as having drawn upon what, at the time, were contemporary conceptions in the British Empire, for whose spread many of these ideas were formed. In other words, the US experience and development are not given but are rather the result of a very strong frontier mythology and its interpretation in a specific context of interests and actors (or positions). These then came together to create the American state and its frontier legacy, with its associated assumptions about what the environment, society and the state can be and what their roles are. Myth created reality, and we need to be both aware and cautious in how much we assume myth to hold true.

Society, the state and the individual

The limited conceptions of community found in frontier thinking necessarily reflect the failure to see the social context as social in this mindset. Frontier thinking, as we have seen, has no conception of society as individuals working in concert, and by extension, it also has no clear conception of the state as related to society. Instead, frontier thinking – particularly in its American development – conceives of the individual as a pre-social or non-social being, as a lone figure conquering nature. This construction of individualism, however, is a social fiction; no person forms his or her interests as an individual entirely alone or lives isolated from all social interaction, from language or from meeting and being shaped by other people. Only a *theorisation* that assumes that no 'social' exists can assume full manoeuvrability and internal 'rationality', since it assumes that there are no 'external' social or systemic factors to influence the isolated individual. In addition, since there is no social in such a theorisation, other people may well be noble or ignoble savages; having no conception of the social gives free rein to the imagination, leaving it untempered by reality.

Differently, where the individual is conceived of as part of society and assumed to be socially constructed within it, it becomes crucial to maintain society so as to sustain the individual and the conditions for his or her development. Society here is not an artificial, imagined thing; it is made up

of what humans make it and is created by what they have historically and collectively developed, internalised as norms – for instance, agreed upon in legislation and regulation – and enforced as practices. What is more, without knowing all this, in fact and in practice – for example, if not the letter of the law, then at least its implications for everyday life as well as other norms and institutions – an individual would not be deemed competent; he or she would not know how to behave, what the established means and potential goals for action are, or what is rewarded and what is not.

As this social context is actually developed by humans, who do not live in isolation apart from one another, this nature of the social is a reality everywhere. Moreover, it is always simultaneously economic and political and, in fact, impacts all other spheres of life. If these settings – ones in which individuals can develop – are omitted, there is nothing that such a society needs to do to enable individuals to better participate in it; it will be up to the individuals themselves to develop and act as they see fit, with successes as well as failures judged on the individual level.

If, on the other hand, the individual is seen as part of society and a society is made up of individuals in configurations of cooperation, organisation and conflict, there is reason to ensure that individuals and groups have a say in society, maintain it and create and uphold the organisations that make their engagement possible.

In such a conception of state or community, there is thus not a given contradiction between 'collectivist' and 'individualist' conceptions of the nation (cf. Nederman 2009). In consequence, this work would argue that one cannot understand the design and importance accorded to a state by its inhabitants if one tries to assess it in terms of modernist categories; these categories would assume that the state should contribute to each individual's short-term economic gain to provide itself with a raison d'être, that is, support by each individual at all times (e.g. Kumlin 2002). Instead, it is crucial to review how and for whom, and building on what categorisations, myths and organisational forms, authority is developed. For instance, the container of the state can be different things in different contexts – insofar as it is not assumed to be the same everywhere.

Understanding models of thought

It has been suggested that we today gain our understandings of the world around us through an 'ecology of screens' (Thrift 2005: 233, quoted in Della dora 2007: 304). However, the upshot of this is perhaps that we do not recognise simulacra for what they are: representations without reality. Instead, we may increasingly conceive of *representations as reality* without considering what the socio-environmental implications of any choice or lifestyle are, for instance, one that disconnects us from the resource reality of our lives. This, of course, was an undergirding notion of frontier thinking: the idea that the environment is there for the taking and that, while essential to 'civilisation',

it was destined to be overtaken and eventually exhausted. Looked at realistically, however, the fact of its running out requires not necessarily new but rather institutionally founded conceptions of how we can live as part of our environment.

The way in which frontier thinking has been embedded in much international Anglo-American development, which continues to play a strong cultural, political and economic role throughout the world, may require us to further question conceptions that have been developed in specific cases but are in fact now part of international development or theorisation.

It may thus be crucial to consider not only what images and assumptions are drawn upon in globalisation and other economic, cultural and social processes, which are not separate or detached from but rather part of the international spread of frontier thinking. As this work has shown, models of thought and the assumptions they promote may vary significantly depending on the reasons for which they were created and the situations in which they have been applied. As a result, both science and policymakers need to carefully consider the implications of their 'theory' choices.

One may thus need to consider the assumptions or principles behind rural planning and models of conservation or restoration, as well as specific conceptions of indigeneity, civil society or the state. As Lubatkin asks, examining a detailed case are social science assumptions of self-interested opportunistic agents controlled by principals 'suffer[ing] from a made-in-the-US bias' (Lubatkin et al. 2005: 867)? Such a bias might, as traced through this work, relate not only to the US but more broadly to the spread and motivations of frontier thinking. If we recognised these historical tracks in many of our assumptions about development today, we might be better placed to question them and also to question the factors that have gone into assumptions in all the areas discussed in this work – in any global, national or regional context or perspective.

Final words

As Latour stated, 'We were never modern' (Latour 1993), and in fact, this is what this work illustrates. Here, as it has been established that the categories of frontier thinking were brought together as part of modernist development, it has become clear that neither historical nor present development can be understood without taking an approach that transects these categories; indeed, they are constitutive of each other, and separating them into different conceptualisations only supports an obscuration of the major power they exercise.

Thus, the argument has been that we may be unable to comprehend complex institutions that exist today without understanding them in terms of the multiple dimensions that reflect people's continuous development and understanding of these institutions. Understandings of the world are often constructed on multiple levels, with conceptions of state, society, community

and individual – and not least the environmental resource underpinnings of these – metaphorically linked rather than separated. In addition, we are unable to understand the conceptions that continue to guide our actions without understanding that they cannot have formed detached from these multiple dimensions; they do not, for instance, stand separate from the individual but are rather historically developed and constitutive of the individual in his or her place in society, in the state and in relation to nature and his or her location in the world, including the global environmental and social context.

Indeed, even theories that have no clear conception of society come to construct society and the individual, as well as our conceptions of what it means to be at this time and in this place. In this, and in realising that we were never modern (cf. Latour 1993), it is crucial to acknowledge the extremely short time span within which we typically assess our context, as if assuming that it can be conceptualised of for purposes conceived only here and now; however, in fact, it has historically developed to some extent in order to steer these very questions of what we can conceive of and in what ways. Particularly the time span since the bringing together of components of frontier mythology in modern European colonialism is historically extremely short; it is no wonder that 'states' are still shattered after this event, as well as when confronted with the task of having to create social structures from scratch or, as it were, from imagined foundations, while corresponding processes in other cases may have long been under way. Thus, the *longue durée* of historical paths is illustrated by the fact that, in the present, we are still exposed to frontier assumptions, to the detriment of much more complex realities in areas around the world. Many issues can in fact be identified as consequences of those rudimentary conceptions, from why certain policies are more difficult to develop in certain places than others, down to detailed events and how they are described.

How a specific system, including a state, is maintained and developed may thus depend on multiple factors, such as which actors are organised and able to claim power within a system and on what grounds (not just as in the assumption that 'war made the state', cf. Tilly 1992). The decisions taken, including declarations of war, and the type of organisation chosen for these systems are dependent on both external and other factors, such as which organisations are considered legitimate in relation to each other, the balancing of power between the groups of actors and who the actors are. Our understandings of nature, environment or social organisation are here too important to sacrifice in the name of progress or modernity; we need to instead reassess different conceptions or institutions that may exist in different parts of the world and how these contradict frontier thinking.

While no social structures exist without continuous change and challenge (e.g. Kettunen 2012), we should thus try to make sure we know what we are replacing, what we are accepting and why – and what tenets or assumptions we might be embracing in the process.

Notes

1 In addition, Dirlik notes the following: 'Modern colonialism did not merely impose Euro-American domination over the world but also spread globally the ideologies of development generated by capitalism; that colonialism then became the obstacle to the realisation in the colonies of the aspirations to development it brought with it was a major factor in fueling anticolonialism. Modern colonialism also brought with it the ideology of nationalism, which not only made it intolerable but also fostered aspirations for identity with deep cultural consequences. Postcolonial criticism has called into question the very system of values associated with modernity for its complicity in colonialism. It has also created an urge for the discovery or assertion of native values to overcome the alienation from the self or native culture that was the result of colonialism. It is ironic, of course, that that very search and its faith in the existence of such values, usually lodged in national imaginings, is itself a product of that very same colonialism' (Dirlik 2002: 439–445, see also Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2018).

2 As Dirlik observes, '[s]imilarly to terms such as globalization or hybridity, colonialism is in some ways trivial in its generality. In a fundamental sense, all history is colonial history, and all human beings have been colonists of one kind or another as they have spread over and settled around the world, transform[ing] the identities of the colonized, so that even claims to precolonial national identities are products of colonialism' (Dirlik 2002, cf. Pearson 2002). Thus, 'not every case of invasion of one people by another lends itself to description as "colonial"; as in the case of the successive waves of tribal peoples who invaded China, and even came to rule the empire, who were ultimately absorbed into Chinese society. Perhaps most importantly, there is some question as to whether colonialism should be viewed as a "totalistic" phenomenon, which erases other kinds of social and political relationships, or as an "add on", an addition to existing social and political relationships, which may reconfigure the field of social and political relationships while being subject itself to their dynamics – much like globalization these days. Colonialism has differed historically according to not only the colonizer, but even more importantly the colonized. It did not lead to the same consequences everywhere, and, within individual societies, different classes, genders, and ethnicities felt its effects, and related to it, differently' (Dirlik 2002: 439–445, see also Veracini 2013, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2018).

3 The term 'Anglo-Saxon' has also sometimes been used to highlight a similar broad understanding: it does not assume that there was ever one specific Anglo-Saxon people in England but rather recognises blended populations. Reflecting broad usage, the term refers to 'the people living within the bounds of England [as well as in cases] … a vague brotherhood of English-speaking peoples throughout the

British Isles and the world', and it is acknowledged that at the same time in the US it was used in an even more imprecise way to describe white people of British and particularly English descent in the US (Horsman 1981: 4).

4 This, Lakoff and Johnson state (again in a Foucauldian vein), does not mean subjectivity but rather acknowledgement, 'just as we often take the metaphors of our own culture as truths, so we often take the myths of our own culture as truths' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 186); it 'does not mean that there are no truths; it means only that truth is relative to our conceptual system, which is grounded in, and constantly tested by other members of our culture in our daily interactions with other people and with our physical and cultural environments' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 193). Lakoff and Johnson thus caution that we should not fall victim to '[t]he myth of objectivism [which] is particularly insidious in this way. Not only does it purport not to be a myth, but it makes both myths and metaphors objects of belittlement and scorn: according to the objectivist myth, myths and metaphors cannot be taken seriously because they are not objectively true' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 186).

5 Similarly, Smith points out that 'space, defined as the relationships between bodies, forms, and elements, is a product of negotiations between an array of competing actors with varying practical capacities to transform these relationships. If spatial relationships are established within social practices, then inquiry must go beyond formal description to understand the physical space of the environment, the perceived space of the senses, and the representational space of the imagination as interconnected domains of human social life' (Smith 2003: 72).

6 This is defined in relation to the concept of governmentality, extending Foucault's more general work on discourses as thought and practice systems that structure behaviour. Invoking the concept of governmentality places the focus particularly on the explicit governing or steering measures of different actors or groups of actors or, as Foucault defined them, subject positions; they cannot be seen as actors independent of discourse (Foucault 1991).

7 As Bartelson argues, '[s]ociopolitical concepts are like sponges: they are able to soak up and contain a variety of meanings as a result of being used in different contexts for different purposes. It is this sponginess that makes concepts increasingly ambiguous, and it is the resulting ambiguity that sometimes makes concepts constitutive of discourse. … Practices of definition and usage are never innocent. They invariably reflect underlying presuppositions about the sociopolitical world and the conditions of its intelligibility' (Bartelson 2000: 181–182). Political culture studies have also been used in various cases by historians referred to in this book, among others; however, the use of such a concept comes up against prevailing definitions of culture, both ontological and epistemological – definitions that differ from those used here and have highly varying conceptions (Formisano 2001).

8 Thus, for instance, Koch notes: 'my point is not that "critical area studies" requires only extended ethnographic research—but rather a form of deep listening that pushes beyond commonplace metanarratives about certain parts of the world, or the trendy theoretical line of inquiry of the day' (Koch 2016: 811). In his study of the British Empire, Armitage has similarly pointed out that the purpose was not to identify specific assumptions and determine whether they were true or false, but rather to 'show the ways in which the constitutive elements of various conceptions of the British Empire arose in the competitive context of political argument … as part of a wider European dialogue within which … various empires were defined and defended' (Armitage 2000: 4–5).

9 Similarly, Smith states that '[t]he concept of the regime … is used in this study to stand in for the host of implied structures and poorly articulated forms typically addressed under the rubric of urbanism. Comparative anthropology has shown that urbanism is not in itself a universal feature of complex polities; furthermore,

there is such dramatic variation in city form within urbanised polities that it is truly impossible to speak of "*the* city" as a single historical space. By "regime" I mean the spaces defined by political and social elites with a direct interest in reproduction of structures of authority in concert with broader coalitions supporting authoritative rulers. Regime thus incorporates the spaces created both by the horizontal circuits of prestige, influence, and resources among elites and by the vertical ties (kin, ethnic, religious) that extend down to grassroots levels. As a number of recent studies have suggested, many of the places that we define as central to urban environments arise out of the practices of such regimes' (Smith 203: 27, italics in original).

10 Or, similarly, to take an administrative-historical perspective, reviewing 'a state's public administration development as part of the political process and illustrating the present order of power at different points in time' (Tegengren 2015: 1, my translation).

11 For his case, Smith further notes: 'Thus, the political here describes a flexible set of public relationships that organize practices of domination, governance, and legitimation. In other words, what is at issue in an examination of politics in early complex polities is the constitution of authority' (Smith 2003: 104–105).

12 By now, the conception of states and other units as constructed is relatively widely accepted. For instance, as Crofts Wiley (2004: 82–83) argues: 'Historians have denaturalized the nation, demonstrating its social construction as an imagined community (Anderson); as an invented tradition (Hobsbawm & Ranger); as a modern linking of centralized political authority, mass education, and print capitalism (Gellner); and as a reworking of premodern ethnic identities (Smith)' (Crofts Wiley 2004: 84–85). However, as Crofts Wiley also observes, '[m]any authors here seen the nation state as having "achieved global dominance as a political and cultural form in the context of European colonial expansion", largely technology-driven and as a way to "export modernity"' (Crofts Wiley 2004: 84–85).

13 Thus, for instance, Gärtner and Prado argue: 'If we recognized that causation runs both ways, we would open the door for a dynamic view of trust in which institutions, trust, and inequality interact' (Gärtner and Prado 2016: 58).

14 As Quentin Skinner notes, 'To recover the nature of the normative vocabulary available to us for the description and appraisal of our conduct is at the same time to identify one of the constraints on our conduct itself' (Skinner 2002a: 174).

15 Ertman, similarly, points out that '[s]tate infrastructures approximating the Weberian ideal-type of the modern bureaucracy first made their appearance in Europe prior to the French Revolution, though they were only perfected in the course of the 19th century. … However, proto-modern bureaucracies were to be found not only in absolutist Germany and Denmark, but in constitutional Sweden and Britain as well, though the latter also possessed remnants of proprietary office-holding in certain government departments such as the Exchequer and the royal household' (Ertman 1997: 9).

16 As a result, it must be realised that '[t]he powers of the state, and hence the exercise and impact of state power are always conditional and relational' and that there are 'many different subsystems, and even more centres of power' (Jessop 2006: 247–248, cf. Acemoglu and Robinson 2016).

17 This variation, it is argued, is a major reason why we have so many forms of 'states', their great variation masked by the use of the same term: 'a nation-state, and in particular its background institutions, also shapes a "nationally-bounded governance heritage"' (Lubatkin et al. 2005: 872). However, it has been observed that these types of interlinkages related to '[l]egitimacy [do] not appear in Tilly's or Giddens's definition [of the state], presumably because of its normative implications. The obvious question is: Legitimate for whom?' (Thomson 1994: 8). In

this work, of course, legitimacy is seen as the product of social strife, and always as bounded: the fact that nation-states or states can hold together even in the face of limited legitimacy (with governing almost always delimited to specific perspectives and groups) is strongly related to the workings of discourse in developing assumptions about any governing arrangement that may be assumed rather than necessarily directly contested.

18 Indeed, they can even be seen as largely formed to remove resources from those in the closest physical proximity to them, for instance, often disparaging rather than valuing a direct relation to the environment, as will be discussed in the following chapters.

19 Here, as Skinner notes, 'a genealogy of the state [can] free us to re-imagine the concept in different and perhaps more fruitful ways' (Skinner 2009: 326, quoted in Lane 2012: 81).

20 Thus, as Smith notes, any reference to a territorial unit should entail 'an inquiry into how, in varying sociocultural formations, an authoritative political apparatus came to gain varying degrees of ascendancy over all other social relations. This is what we should mean when we refer to states, if the concept is to have any utility: those polities where a public apparatus holds the legitimate power to intercede in other asymmetric relationships in order to mark itself as the authority of last resort' (Smith 2003: 108–109).

21 Similarly, Latour notes: 'We have never left the anthropological matrix – we are still in the Dark Ages or, if you prefer, we are still in the world's infancy' (Latour 1993: 85).

22 Similarly, '[t]he idea of wilderness as remote pristine environments with little or no evidence of human habitation owes a debt to colonial narratives of *terra nullius* … At once sacred and scientific, the figure of wilderness is also a powerful expression of a cultural ambivalence' (Davison and Williams 2017: 19).

23 Such a theory can be described as follows: 'a theory-like generic knowledge structure about society and its change over time. People typically believe that a society undergoes a natural course of evolution from a traditional community to a modern society … the traditional and modern forms of sociality are seen as ideal types of social organization, and it is assumed that there is a single pathway for a traditional community to "develop" into a modern society' (Kashima et al. 2011: 698)
Kashima et al. further note that some studies have shown that 'people tend to extrapolate from this, and project the same trend into the future' (Kashima et al. 2011: 698).

24 Locke wrote: '*Land* that is *common* in England … is left common … by the Law of the Land, which is not to be violated. And though it be Common, in respect of some Men, it is not so to all Mankind, but it is the joint property of this Country' (Locke 1994: 292, quoted in Jahn 2013: 126).

25 Delanty points out that in the 'year of the "discovery" of America … the foundations had been laid for the formation of a new myth of European identity: Europe's Other shifted from the "Muslim barbarian" to the "primitive savage"' (Delanty 1996: 99).

26 Again, reminiscent of the broad brushstrokes with which we have painted community studies, Ambjörnsson and Elzinga argue that while in Lamarck's understanding of development, the human was valued the most highly, Spencer instead valued the modern industrial liberal state as the highest organisational form, within which the freely developing industry could constitute the basis for a new solidarity (Ambjörnsson and Elzinga 1977).

27 Rich continues: 'Toynbee, Hodgson and Braudel have each been concerned with trying to develop a more universal notion of "world civilisation" that is robust enough to encompass rival political and cultural interests on a global basis. They

have not been by any means completely successful in this regard since, as this paper has sought to show, their reading of world history remains in many ways strongly Eurocentric in orientation' (Rich 2000: 349).

28 As Newman notes for the case of border studies, 'The sociological categorization of borders is expressed through a series of binary distinctions which highlight the border as constituting a sharp edge and a clear line of separation between two distinct entities, or opposites. These have been expressed in a number of ways, such as: Here–There Us–Them Include–Exclude Self–Other Inside–Outside all reflecting the idea that borders exist in almost every aspect of society, categorizing humanity into those who belong to the group (compartment) and those who do not. The border demarcation consists of precise criteria for determining on what side of the border you are located' (Newman 2006: 176).

29 Or, as Slotkin notes in his work on American frontier thinking: 'the fable of redemption through immersion in the wilderness … lies at the heart of the Myth of the Frontier' (Slotkin 1992: 246).

30 The frontier definition of nature as 'pure', like other components of frontier thinking with unclear origins, is in line with other facets of frontier thinking in that it perhaps appeals to a human predilection for cognitive simplification. As Macnaghten and Urry point out with regard to parallel ideas of the Noble or Ignoble Savage as a part of nature, '[m]ythologies of an original state of nature … have been ambivalent, based on a tension between nature as a state of innocence (nature as the state before the fall), and nature as the wild, untouched and savage places metaphorically outside the garden (the fall from innocence as a fall into wild and savage nature)' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 19–20).

31 From the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on, nature was also sometimes conceived of as a machine (Macnaghten and Urry 1998).

32 Ward points out that '[t]he frontiersman's second function, which became more important with the growth of imperialism towards the end of the nineteenth century, is well exemplified in the work of Kipling and a host of lesser popular writers like G.A. Henty. The importance of juvenile literature in building the myth of the "noble frontiersman" can scarcely be exaggerated. Writers like Ballantyne and W. H. G. Kingston in England, Edward S. Ellis in the United States, or Mary Grant Bruce in Australia have implanted in whole generations of young minds an attitude towards the frontiersman, much of which persists subconsciously in adult life, even though the conscious mind may have long disowned romantic fancies. From our viewpoint men like Kipling were concerned chiefly with popularizing the noble frontiersmen of the Empire conceived of as a unit, just as Paterson popularized the romantic figure of the bushman for city-dwellers in Australia. The spectacle of Kipling's soldiers and civil servants, selflessly bearing "the white man's burden" in far places, showed beyond all doubt that empire was good for the governed' (Ward 1977: 303–304).

33 As a basic description of definitions of community and society, Farole et al. present the following: '"Community" is used, variously, to refer to diverse forms of associational life ranging from primordial groupings of people around ascribed traits and shared cultures to acquired practices or chosen common interests. In the contemporary literature, communities often, but not always, refer to direct or indirect interpersonal ties between people, including "bonds" and "networks". These bonds may be formal or informal, but they are always excludable – i.e., they are not open to all individuals, at least not without some pecuniary, temporal, cognitive or emotional cost. Communities represent meso or intermediate levels of association. They operate as institutions by shaping the actions of individual agents in several ways: by structuring preferences, by mediating interpersonal exchange, and by serving as a basis for collective action. "Society" is used, for the most part, to refer to formal institutions operating over wider

spatiotemporal scales. The emphasis is on "rules" that structure large-scale, relatively anonymous and transparent relationships between people. "Markets", "laws", "constitutional design" and the "state bureaucracy" are among the most commonly recognized societal institutions. …. Society is generally considered to operate at a higher spatial scale than that of community; there is often an implicit assumption that communities are more "local" than societies' (Farole et al. 2010: 61).

34 Alleyne explains that '[b]y the late nineteenth century the community/society split, understood as evolutionary, had come to assume great significance in the way educated Euroamericans understood themselves … Perhaps the most distilled cultural significance of these ideas of individual ascendancy becomes clear when we consider that it is on precisely this question – that of generating individualism from individuality – that the difference between the modern West and its own past on the one hand, and the contemporary non-West on the other, was, and is, seen to turn. "We" (in the West) have individuals in society, while they (the Rest) have community (of course, "we" once had community as the dominant form of social organization, but "we" dropped it on the way to modernity)' (Alleyne 2002: 611). It has further been argued that this concept, due to its focus on displacement, cannot be seen as separate from the identity of those developing and using it or their perception (or myth-making and continuous co-construction of myths) of the world around them. This was a world constructed by and for white, male, upper- or middle-class urbanites to explain their privileged position as moderns and as thereby more developed and able to study non-Western, rural or working-class subjects as supposedly more pre-modern or less advanced (cf. Alleyne 2002).

35 Similarly, Glackin cites a number of contemporary authors who 'stress that contemporary life is fast, fluid, dynamic, and largely based on the strengths of the individual, over that of the community, providing individual freedom on one hand, but a fractured, unsupportive, and largely dysfunctional society on the other' (Glackin 2015: 25).

36 In some of these cases, with regard to characteristics that are easy to perceive and thus easy to take as criteria defining a 'community' or grouping (an ethnic community, or men and women), Alleyne observes: 'The ethnic community is constituted on criteria of naive visibility at the level of human collectivities … Foucault (1977) has drawn our attention to the historical fact of governing agencies exercising power over target individuals and groups by, in the first instance constructing categories of normality vs. abnormality, and then drawing boundary lines. The policing of these boundaries then becomes a major project of public policy; along the way social and juridical identities are brought into being, "communities" (on to which "races" and/or "cultures" can be mapped, in this case) and their members are constituted, as are relations among them. Underlying the whole process is the will to power, if we follow Foucault's schema. … We … must break with the tendency to assume that community is the basic container of difference, that community is the frame through which we understand issues of ethnic culturation and structuration' (Alleyne 2002: 622).

37 For instance, Philip et al. point out that 'four criteria must be attended to when the term community is used: (i.) members' mutual investment, (ii.) member diversity [to not only include for instance family groups], (iii.) situated membership [in terms of being multiple and intersecting], and (iv.) selfdetermined purpose' (Philip et al. 2013: 176).

38 Young, for instance, notes: 'In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, explorers and colonists departed from their homes in western Europe … Explorers and naturalists established new systems in order to understand the environment and the role of humans in nature. Exploration marked the first step in the development of environmental science' (Young 2005: 1).

39 It has also been noted that this type of argumentation should be understood in relation to a broader array of Scottish Enlightenment authors; see, for instance, the discussion in Hamowy (1979).

40 Whitehead notes that 'Locke here is following existing legal usages of waste-land in the sense of land being left unused, a category introduced into English common law in the thirteenth century to curb the rights of tenants to do any-thing they pleased with rented land, and to disallow them from leaving it idle' (Whitehead 2010: 85)

41 Or, as White has pointed out: 'Anglo Americans in the West thought the Indian's fate was the price of progress; it was the Indian's problem and none of their own' (White 1991: 237).

42 Thus, 'In this theory the Indian way of life was a model for those human condi-tions which the modern state had overcome thanks to laws and the creation of a political order' (Borsboom 1988: 425–426).

43 As Jahn further notes: 'Locke's own investment in, and involvement with, the slave-trading Royal Africa Company, the Company of Merchant Adventurers to trade with the Bahamas, and the East India Company draws attention to the fact, first, that these private actors played a crucial role both for the development of liberalism within Europe itself and for its impact far beyond the borders of individual European states. Indeed, it was these companies that paved the way for the subsequent establishment of colonial empires; and it was these compa-nies, too, that did not only employ but also inspire later writers such as James and John Stuart Mill' (Jahn 2013: 181). Thus, Jahn argues, 'liberalism … is … a political project pursued right from the start by private actors whose success led to the transformation of existing political communities – the establishment of modern states – and with them the establishment of the modern states system' (Jahn 2013: 185). Thus, Jahn points out, and as has been noted throughout this work, 'recognizing this temporal fragmentation as a core dynamic of liberalism draws attention to the co-constitutive nature of "development" and "under-development", "modernity" and "tradition"' (Jahn 2013: 184). Jahn adds: 'the very attempt to identify what can, or cannot, be attributed to different origins is based on the liberal assumption that politics, economics, culture, domestic and international, time and space constitute separate and separable spheres' (Jahn 2013: 191).

44 The frontier concept thus came to, and continues to, play an important role in US history. However, many have pointed out that, in that case, it also obscures the highly varying situations. For example, Wellenreuther observes the follow-ing: 'the study of [a Moravian mission settlement in what was later to be called the state of Ohio] … raises the question of the nature of frontier settlements. Historians generally assume that frontier settlements are ethnically monolithic, characterized by proximity to Native American settlements, are outside the reach of formally-constituted European-style administrative structures and bent on sub-jecting the wilderness to European-style agriculture. This neat concept does not square with the results of my analysis … The differences in agricultural terms were not that one was taming nature while the other was living off nature but that the one was doing it in rectangular fenced fields while the other was sat-isfied with oddly-shaped fields. Similar differences pertained to administrative structures: both were distantly related to centres of authority. The authority of Zeisberger and his Indian helpers on the other hand mirrored that of the chiefs and councils in the Delaware settlement. These analogies can be continued into the religious field: chiefs played important roles in native American cults and were crucial for parties to retain their religious identity, in the same sense as David Zeisberger, the missionary, was crucial for the Delaware Christian con-gregation to retain its religious and confessional identity. In short, a closer look dissolves neat concepts and definitions. The frontier as envisioned by Frederick

Jackson Turner and his predecessors did not really exist in the eighteenth century' (Wellenreuther 2016: 272; see also Rockwell 2010).

45 The conception of the frontier, like any concept able to gain strong leverage in justifying politically expedient and beneficial actions, was strengthened by multiple supporting conceptions. For instance, White points out that '[t]he phrase "manifest destiny" was the product of a New York newspaperman named John O'Sullivan', and was coined particularly at a time when, as he notes, many Americans had started questioning unbridled expansion. Here, manifest destiny was taken to imply that '"[t]he American claim is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federative self-government entrusted to us. It is a right such as that of the tree to the space of air and earth suitable for the full expansion of its principle and destiny of growth.… It is in our future far more than in our past or in the past history of Spanish exploration or French colonial rights, that our True Title is to be found". The basic ideas here were not ones open to rational argument. They relied not on past experience, but on a future destiny' (White 1991: 73).

46 In this interpretation, '[t]he source of anger was not so much parliamentary taxation without representation [that caused the inception of a struggle towards independence] as it was the sudden realization that the British really regarded white colonial Americans as second-class beings, indeed, as persons so inferior from the metropolitan perspective that they somehow deserved a lesser measure of freedom.… Like the anonymous writer of a piece … asking the embarrassing question, "Are not the People of America, BRITISH Subjects? Are they not Englishmen?"' (Breen 1997: 29). As Grey summarises it, the inception of the revolutionary struggle for independence occurred in 1764 following British attempts to impose a sugar tax and soon thereafter a stamp tax (Grey 1978). This sparked discussion in the American colonies of the notion that, since Americans were not represented in the British Parliament, such taxation violated their rights (Grey 1978). Arguments followed on the US side that defined Britain as an empire rather than a sovereign state, meaning that its power should be limited and not extend to taxing the colonies; British writers of course rejected such a divided sovereignty (Bailyn 2017). The drafting of the Declaration of Independence was also preceded by a long string of political conflicts in which the British government was considered corrupt (Wood 2011). The reasons for these different types of argumentation can be described as follows. In Britain, an earlier medieval representational system in which each an elected member was to speak for a single constituency had over time been replaced with one in which all members of Parliament were assumed to represent the entire nation. This made it possible for the British Parliament to state that it represented the American colonies even though there were no representatives from America. By contrast, Americans, who as Bailyn (2017) notes had largely autonomous towns and counties, 'like their medieval counterparts', and were by then little invested in the state, instead argued for representation as attorneyship. Bailyn elaborates on the American practice as follows: 'The Massachusetts town meetings began the practice of voting instructions to their deputies to the General Court in the first years of settlement, and they continued to do so whenever it seemed useful throughout the subsequent century and a half. Elsewhere, with variations, it was the same; and elsewhere, as in Massachusetts, it became customary to require representatives to be residents of, as well as property owners in, the localities that elected them, and to check upon their actions as delegates. … In England the practice of "virtual" representation [that each elected representative should represent all of the country and not only parochial concerns] provided reasonably well for the actual representation of the major interests of the society, and it raised no

widespread objection. It was its opposite, the idea of representation as attorneyship, that was seen as a new sort of political doctrine strenuously enforced by modern malcontents. But in the colonies the situation was reversed' (Bailyn 2017: 162–166).

47 Bailyn further observes: 'As English law in America became better known in the eighteenth century through the work of an increasingly professional bar, and as governmental and judicial processes became stabilized in the colonies, the original need that had given rise to these documents faded. Except where they were embedded in, or protected by, crown charters, they tended to drop from prominence—but not from awareness. In some places surviving intact from the settlement period to the Revolution, well remembered in others where they had been eliminated from the statutes, and everywhere understood to be reasonable and beneficent, these documents formed a continuous tradition in colonial American life, and drifted naturally into the thought of the Revolutionary generation' (Bailyn 2017: 187–188).

48 Discussing this development, Slez and Martin (2007) point out that the Constitutional Convention of 1787 spanned nearly four months, leading up to continued negotiations. Slez and Martin further observe: 'Because the Constitution settled questions regarding representation and slavery for at least the immediate future, these issues did not become pivotal for the emerging party system. When they eventually *did* become unsettled, they provoked a constitutional crisis that led to a civil war' (Slez and Martin 2007: 64).

49 Bailyn adds: 'On such fundamental issues—representation and consent, the nature of constitutions and of rights, the meaning of sovereignty—and in such basic ways, did the colonists probe and alter their inheritance of thought concerning liberty and its preservation. To conceive of legislative assemblies as mirrors of society and their voices as mechanically exact expressions of the people; to assume, and act upon the assumption, that human rights exist above the law and stand as the measure of the law's validity; to understand constitutions to be ideal designs of government, and fixed, limiting definitions of its permissible sphere of action; and to consider the possibility that absolute sovereignty in government need not be the monopoly of a single all-engrossing agency but (*imperium in imperio*) the shared possession of several agencies each limited by the boundaries of the others but all-powerful within its own —to think in these ways, as Americans were doing before Independence, was to reconceive the fundamentals of government and of society's relation to government' (Bailyn 2017: 227).

50 Following the establishment of the state in two ways, the parties developed broad mechanisms to provide 'procedural unity' (Skowronek 1982: 25–26) to the state; however, in the process they did not draw up detailed programmes that might also shatter unity within what were highly diverse parties, but only 'the most general policy preferences' (ibid.). In this situation, corporate charters were subsequently developed to 'promote and channel private economic ventures', with the courts controlling protection of the public interest as 'the American surrogate for a more fully developed administrative apparatus' (Skowronek 1982: 27–28). However, as Stillman notes, continuing resistance to the colonial British state in opposition to which the US identified itself, '[t]he American Constitution was a product of this unique background. So was the administrative state, which was forced to evolve more or less separately in order to compensate for *the* extreme decentralization of power. … Budgets, civil service, and staff arrangements were examples of such administrative innovations that were invented, or so to speak, slipped in "by the backdoor" largely in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, based mostly upon British models' (Stillman 1990: 157). Stillman argues: 'The story of America's peculiar inability to create a clear place for administration

within its constitutional governing framework is deeply rooted in a complicated and peculiar confluence of (1) republican ideas, (2) tudor institutions, (3) crises of events of the 1780s, and (4) "myths" behind the U.S. Constitution that created "the first new nation"' (Stillman 1990: 158, cf. also Skrentny 2006 on the role of the legal system). Some of these influences could be traced back to ancient Roman ideas about the republic; earlier British institutions that were considered better or more original than the despised British colonising state and that focused particularly on balancing different groups against each other and on the rule of law; specific events; and myth (Stillman 1990). Thus, even after independence and the development of the Constitution, accomplished through war with Britain and the states throwing off British government (the American Revolution) as well as reorganising themselves, this union also remained rather uncertain. Murrin points out the following: 'Jefferson, like the other Founders, considered the Union a means to an end, a way to achieve and perpetuate the other accomplishments of the Revolution, such as liberty, equality, and small government. But because Federalists had different goals, everyone understood that the Union was fragile and could fracture, perhaps along an east-west line through the War of 1812, or into northern and southern confederacies from the Missouri crisis on. … Yet he sometimes suggested that his American nest, from which the whole continent would be peopled, might evolve into friendly "sister republics" rather than a single nation. He meant, I think, that a single American Union would be less essential to the triumph of the Revolution once all parts of the continent had embraced his own republican values' (Murrin 2000: 23).

51 As Bailyn observes: 'Adams then argued that while a second chamber was necessary, direct assembly of the whole population was out of the question, and so the first step was "to depute power from the many to a few of the most wise and good" who should form in their assembly "an exact portrait of the people at large … equal interest among the people should have equal interest in it"' (Bailyn 2017: 259–260).

52 White notes that 'expansionists retained Jefferson's old vision of an "empire of liberty," for the imperial republic would remain a republic of white freemen who made their living farming the land and trading in agricultural products, but they added to it new rationales aimed at changing conditions. Operating in a sectionally divided America only recently recovered from a deep economic depression, expansionists argued that expansion provided a cure for both America's political and economic ailments. Expansion, they claimed, would provide the key to economic stability and prosperity while simultaneously cooling sectional conflict by solving the dispute over slavery' (White 1991: 74). In addition, to support this conception and the right of freedom from England, 'Jefferson's "empire of liberty" had sought to reconcile imperialism with republicanism, and later expansionists made the same attempt. They argued that American imperialism differed from European imperialism because, as Thomas Ritchie, a leading journalist subsidised by the Polk Administration, put it: "Our government is not extended by the sword. By its own merits it extends itself". To make such claims expansionists had to ignore wars against the Indians, two attempts to take Canada by force, and many filibustering expeditions, but they often made them nonetheless' (White 1991:81).

53 As a result, 'the important liberty in the Whig ideology was public or political liberty. In 1776 the solutions to the problems of American politics seemed to rest not so much in emphasising the private rights of individuals against the general will as it did in stressing the public rights of the collective people against the supposed privileged interests of their rulers' (Wood 2011: 61).

54 With the already strong emphasis on inequality as a given, developmental traits of people, and assumed development paths – and the pervasive (in the US) issue of race – Social Darwinism (the application of Darwin's strictly

natural science-based ideas to humankind) found one of its many strong breed-
ing grounds. Significantly, Spencerianism, as one of many schools of Darwinism
thought, gained a 'near-cult' following in the US (Ceaser 2006: 55, cf. Hawkins
1997). Ceaser summarises the situation as follows: 'Developmental biology and
developmental History pervaded most fields of human knowledge. There are
many statements of this position. Perhaps none captures it better than a retro-
spective pronounced by Charles Francis Adams, a notable historian, who helped
to establish the professional discipline of history in America: On the first day
of October, 1859 [the publication date of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*],
the Mosaic cosmogony finally gave place to the Darwinian theory of evolution.
Under the new dispensation, based not on chance or an assumption of supernat-
ural revelation, but on a patient study of biology, that record of mankind known
as history … has become a unified whole—a vast scheme developing to some
result as yet not understood…. History, ceasing to be a mere narrative made up
of disconnected episodes having little or no bearing on each other, [became] a
connected whole' (Ceaser 2006: 53–54).

55 Fevre observes that this is not unrelated to the ways of thinking that would
emerge and have an impact later in history: 'The warnings Spencer gave in MVS
[*The Man versus The State*] about socialism's inability to resist militarism and the
unimaginable horrors of communism would help Americans gird their loins to
defend their utopia for generations to come' (Fevre 2016: 105).

56 It has also been suggested that the extensive historically developed network of
assumptions underlying this mentality perhaps 'goes some way towards explain-
ing why so many employees of relatively modest means showed their support for
neoliberal politics at the ballot box' (Fevre 2016: 17, cf. Young 1999).

57 Thus, Fevre points out: 'Far from finding the main source of neoliberalism's
authority in Adam Smith, we ought to consider Spencer the main source of neo-
liberalism's authority for *contradicting* Adam Smith' (Fevre 2016: 115).

58 Fevre argues that '[w]hen applied to the state in the last quarter of the twentieth
century, this argument provided the rationale for what became known as New
Public Management' and also that other of Spencer's arguments also supported
avoiding welfare payments as this 'thwarted the purpose of the evolutionary
"struggle for existence", thereby resulting in specific assumptions about those
receiving welfare' (Fevre 2016: 120). It has also been pointed out, perhaps in
connection to this, that the historian John Higham in 1974 'argued that America
had a particular affinity for technical unity which societies like the UK could not
share. Not only could Americans think of themselves as cogs in the machine;
they also liked and embraced all kinds of technologies which extended human
control, from machinery to social statistics … increasing professionalization,
bureaucratization, testing and standardization, Taylorism and modern manage-
ment techniques' (Fevre 2016: 133).

59 Ward makes the following observation: 'The American historian F. J. Turner's
"frontier theory", the germ of which he summed up in the conclusion of an
early article: "What the Mediterranean was to the Greeks, breaking the bond
of custom, offering new experiences, calling out new institutions and activities,
that the ever retreating Great West has been to the eastern United States directly,
and to the nations of Europe more remotely"' (F. J. Turner, *Early Writings of*, etc.
ed. E. E. Edwards, University of Wisconsin, 1938, p. 83, quoted in Ward 1977:
284). Similarly, 'Turner's new approach to American history was first clearly out-
lined in his paper "The Significance of the Frontier", delivered on 12 July 1893,
in Chicago, the old "capital of the West". For many years afterwards his teach-
ing generated mounting enthusiasm, for two reasons. The approach was new,
even revolutionary, casting much light on aspects of American history which had
previously been unnoticed rather than misunderstood; and the spirit of the new

gospel was at least thoroughly consistent with all the most popular and powerful beliefs of the time' (Ward 1977: 285).

60 Critics of Turner's thesis have further noted that religious and political traditions hailing from Europe, as well as the foundational commercial interests present from the start, were important in shaping America, and that its development cannot be painted as singularly as Turner depicted it. The fact that these particular developments were created and interpreted in a specific way – in relation to frontier thinking – rather than being taken as given as a result of interaction under 'frontier conditions' can be seen, for example, in a comparison with the development in Canada. Redclift compares the Canadian and US experiences, drawing attention to, among other things, the rapid advancement seen in the former case: 'In constructing a civil society in Canada, most immigrants sought to reproduce elements of social order with which they were already familiar at the level of communities and localities. … within a few decades the British immigrants had created the nucleus of a national community in Canada, and one that wanted to preserve strong links with the motherland.… The migrants to Canada were more socially homogeneous than the much larger migrant populations that flowed toward the United States in the same period. They settled in rural areas, rather than cities, and pursued their own ambitions of independence through the acquisition of land' (Redclift 2007: 89–90; see also Keskitalo 2004 for a discussion). Similarly, Lipset notes that '[f]undamental distinctions [between the US and Canada] stem in large part from the American Revolution … reinforced by variations in … religious traditions, political and legal institutions, and socioeconomic structures.… the colonists' emphases on individualism and achievement orientation were important motivating forces in the launching of the American Revolution. The crystallisation of such attitudes in the Declaration of Independence provided a basis for their reinforcement throughout subsequent American history. Thus, the United States remained throughout the 19th and 20th centuries the extreme example of a classically liberal or Lockean society, one that rejected the assumption of the alliance of throne and altar, of ascriptive elitism, of mercantilism, of noblesse oblige, of communitarianism' (Lipset 1990: 8).

61 For instance, it has been suggested that '[e]cological restoration in the United States had its origins in the 1930s as midwestern ecologists realized that almost all of the tall grass prairies in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and neighboring states had been turned into agricultural land or urban space' (Gross and Hoffmann-Riem 2005: 271).

62 Thus, Young noted that '[w]hile ecologists organized their profession and established new concepts and methods for their science, the potential utility of ecology also expanded. For decades, Americans heard the promise of scientific expertise and rational management touted from the highest levels of government. President Theodore Roosevelt and his chief forester, Gifford Pinchot, had based an entire federal program of land and resource management on the premise that insights from science and technology would improve and transform nature from a wasteful wilderness to an efficient source of raw goods' (Young 2005: 109).

63 However, it should be noted that there are also differences between these thinkers. For instance, it has been noted that 'In Muir, and much of the environmentalism premised on Muir's model of action, the human is often looking in upon nature, not an integral participant within the larger community. Leopold's philosophy of action, on the contrary, depends on the recognition of the biotic community, which includes humans as equal participants in a wider web of connection' (Goralnik and Nelson 2011: 187).

64 Also, this does not mean that there were not expressions or proponents of frontier thinking in these countries, even relatively early on in international development; only that they were not manifested as strongly in the national context. For

instance, Swedish scientist and theologist Swedenborg was regarded as 'one of the first to develop the concept of the "noble savage." The natural man, he taught, lived the satisfactory, unselfish life in a co-operative society' (Hawley 1937: 208).

65 Similarly, Njåstad (2003) illustrates the relatively weak state power in Norway as well as that of its Church, which had to act largely based on the power of local communities and provide the state with a legitimacy that was the basis for increased power being given to the state in early modern times.

66 Similarly, Østergård (2004) discusses the Danish 'peasant farmer' identity.

67 Thus, it has been noted, Sweden does not follow Barrington Moore's 1966 'famous conception about the central position of the lord and the peasant in the making of the modern world' (Alestalo and Kuhnle 1986: 5). The fact that there was no elimination of peasantry and no revolutionary break seems to have crucially furthered rather than impeded development (Alestalo and Kuhnle 1986, Heckscher 1985). To some extent, while earlier literature has typically portrayed peasant societies, as opposed to large manors, as resisting change and the swift adoption of novel agricultural methods (e.g. Heckscher 1932, Olsson and Svensson 2016), later research has shown that 'the rising productivity among peasant farmers was a cornerstone in the emerging industrialization of Sweden' (Olsson and Svensson 2016: 68).

68 Some international literature, e.g., that on transhumance, also invokes such concepts; see e.g. Rodríguez Pascual (2004).

69 See also Lundmark (undated a) and Elenius (2002) for detailed discussions on the various groups that may have been described as Kven.

70 Similarly, in his Forest Saami case, Marklund (2015) provides evidence of partly settled Saami populations that migrated within specific residential areas for hunting and fishing. In addition, while Bergman notes that women are largely invisible in much of the historical material drawn on, she also notes that this may have been more the result of official bookkeeping practice than a reflection of women's role locally; there is evidence, for instance, of women being active in fishing and hunting (Bergman 2018).

71 Elenius observes that the birkarlar, a group often regarded as being linked to the Kven or other Finnish-speaking groups in the area, 'were, for example, used as experts when the boundaries were staked out in the Treaty of Nöteborg in 1323 and the Treaty of Teusina in 1595, a process in which the area of Bothnia was definitely put under Swedish supremacy' (Elenius 2002: 111).

72 Nordin, for instance, notes that 'in the year 1873 the doctor and ethnographer Gustaf von Düben stated that, among "farmers in Arjeplog and Jokkmokk, almost all are descended from Lapps [Saami]"' (Nordin 2009: 28–33, my translation).

73 These illustrate the variations in what is today regarded as one Saami group, including, for instance, conflict over land between the Forest and Mountain Saami and varied livelihoods between groups in different areas (e.g. Hansen and Olsen 2013, Marklund 2015, Nordin 2009).

74 Earlier, sockenlappar was also a denomination used for a separate group of often farm workers that had little interaction with migratory Saami groups and later came to be regarded as part of the 'Swedish' population (Lundmark undated b).

75 However, it must also be pointed out that claims including 'time immemorial' were contested from this point on not only for Saami but also more broadly, partly because land was becoming scarcer (see Ågren 2001).

76 Similarly, Skowronek points out: 'In America, the modernization of national administrative controls did not entail making the established state more efficient; it entailed building a qualitatively different kind of state. The path that had been traveled in the development of early American government did not anticipate the need for a strong national administrative arm' (Skowronek 1982: 4).

77 Rockwell makes the following observation: 'What we find in the nation's first century and a half is what is today called big government. Big government in

the American context is the combination of (1) national, programmatic social, economic, trade, and regulatory policies touching the lives of millions; (2) the bureaucratic capacity, discretionary authority, and administrative autonomy to plan, to innovate, and to effectively implement policies and programs; and (3) an awareness, a sense of the state, seamlessly and inextricably woven into the fabric of everyday life and never far from the consciousness and activity of American society. Understood in these terms, "big government" characterizes the United States long before FDR and the New Deal, long before the Progressives, and long before the Civil War. Even long before Andrew Jackson' (Rockwell 2010: 26).

78 Moore notes that later, 'public private partnerships were central to the management and expansion of the American imperial state' (Moore 2011: 54).

79 Here Ward draws the conclusion that 'the Australian labour movement has been, and continues to be, much more collectivist in outlook as well as much stronger, relatively, than the American' (Ward 1977: 293–296), and, similarly, Lukes argues that 'the lack of a socialist tradition in America is in part the consequence of the very pervasiveness of individualism' (Lukes 1973: 28). Commenting on the same development, Tulis points out: 'Why is it, asked scholars from both the left and the right, that viable socialist movements have never taken root in America? Why has American politics been less ideological than that of other industrial nations? These sorts of questions have inspired recent studies, but exceptionalism more broadly understood has a much longer legacy' (Tulis 1988: 549).

80 As has been noted, at that time, these values largely discounted women, who were instead seen as representing a subculture based on 'self-denial and collectivity … typify[ing] an anti-market (if not anti-masculine) individualism' (Brown 1990: 6).

81 Glacken points out that 'climate was a favorite explanation for inebriety or sobriety of whole peoples' (Glacken 1967: 709, albeit noting that nomoi such as customs, government and religion were never completely forgotten as influencing forces). 'In the modern period, continuing a trend noticeable in the ancient world and culminating in Hume's essay, theories of environmental influence have had strong affiliations with national character; more often than not they have encouraged monolithic summation: the Germans, the French, the Arabs, could be characterized in a few sentences' (Glacken 1967: 709).

82 Baumer continues: 'In line with Herbert Spencer's thought on the subject, Darwin and Wallace saw an ensuring mental and moral competition between races … In the most recent stage of history, "best endowed" obviously meant Homo Europaeus, just then carving out empires all over the world' (Baumer 1977).

83 To these areas, then, today, just like '[a]lready in late antiquity, wilderness romance attracted literate urban elites: long-distance pilgrims sought out remote hermitages, and famous solitaries, like Thoreau or Muir in a later era, ran rude hostels for receiving visitors' (Adler 2006: 27).

84 They note: 'As a consequence of persistent frontier imaginings, expressed through various policy eras, Indigenous Australians face a number of disciplining discourses, whatever their location or practice in space. If they live in the "wilderness" and engage in mobile lifestyles (for traditional reasons), they may be judged "authentically Indigenous", but unwilling to embrace modernity and the mainstream of Australian life. By polemic contrast, if Indigenous Australians live settled, productive, urban existences, the above authenticity discourses would render them assimilated and perhaps, no longer truly Indigenous. They are in essence, perpetually out of place' (Prout and Howitt 2009: 402).

85 Thus, for instance, Glackin (2015) asserts that the focus among authors such as Putnam (e.g. 1995) on 'the theoretical focus on the negative aspects of contemporary social organisation, namely the lack of traditional communities', can largely be 'attributed to romanticised notions of community, as typified

by Tonnies' … dual notions of gemeinschaft (rural relations based on kinship, long-term relationships and intimate knowledge of the lives of others) and gesells-chaft (urban social relations based on legality, transience, and non-committal)' (Glackin 2015: 24).

86 Similarly, it has been observed that '[l]ike community, culture is a concept whose utility is matched by its slipperiness … Culture, however conceived, is always implicated with power, and by implication so too is the community which is constituted by and in turn constitutes culture. It is often in the interests of the powerful to believe that culture is somehow natural, given. It is often a source of comfort to the dominated to share this belief. Unreflexive notions of community often serve to hide the constructedness of culture, and the culture of community construction' (Alleyne 2002: 615; see also Barnes 2005 on conceptions of cul-ture). Barnes also points out that '[o]rganizations are cultures that are propelled more by rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes and myths than by rules, policies and managerial authority. The symbolic frame seeks to interpret and illuminate the basic issues of meaning and faith that make symbols so powerful in every aspect of the human experience, including life in organizations... [and] religious orders' (Bolman and Deal 1991:15, 244–245, quoted in Barnes 2005: 969). As a result, Barnes suggests that 'for a given event, what is most crucial is not what happened, but rather what it means to the human actors involved. Such organi-zations may contend with conflict due to varied intra-group meanings for the same event, ambiguous events and difficulty assessing productivity and recon-ciling problems. In addition, challenges arise when cultural stories, rituals and ceremonies lose their meaning and ability to influence' (Barnes 2005: 969).

87 Similarly, they argue that 'overlooking within-group diversity often leads to sim-plistic framings of "communities" as either a single problem to be solved, or as an idealized source of uniform resistance to oppressive practices and structures' (Philip et al. 2013: 176).

88 As is the case with the general observations in the previous chapters, it is difficult to find an origin for this type of statement: classical Greek philosophy and the Western history of ideas down to Lefebvre have emphasised a link between city life and philosophical thinking (Badersten 2002). However, as above, we must note that such statements are in no small measure used to provide cities or towns with a superior hierarchical position, importance and role in relation to the rural areas upon which they are dependent.

89 For instance, Ambjörnsson and Elzinga note that even today, underdevelopment is linked to what is basically evolutionary-based liberal analyses (Ambjörnsson and Elzinga 1977).

90 Byrne elaborates: 'It was the development of a world founded on the indus-trial production of commodities through capitalist employment of wage labour (including state capitalist) which transformed the primary human experience from that of being a peasant growing food, most of which was consumed by its growers, into that of being a waged worker making things which were sold to others —the things including signs and services as well as material commodities. In the early 21st century this point cannot be overemphasised in any scientific consideration of cities and their futures' (Byrne 2002: 279–280).

91 Lekan further asserts: 'Their concerns were not "ecological" in a modern sense … instead, they interpreted environmental destruction through a nationalist lens, arguing that nature's aesthetic "disfigurement" (*Verunstaltung*) would surely erode Germany's distinctive national character, destroying the balance of nature within its borders and leading to its population's moral decline … Such evi-dence of national longevity was especially important to Germany, the so-called belated nation, which had been unified only since 1871' (Lekan 2004: 4). It was also in opposition to this unbridled development, but still operating within

the categories of it, that landscape preservation and conservation movements developed, 'Initiated by Romantic individuals in the early nineteenth century and then "mass produced" between 1880 and 1914', a period that 'Eric Hobsbawm has characterized … as the "heyday of invented traditions", a time when Europeans reinvigorated or even created new dynastic lineages, ancient rituals, and time-honored festivals' (Lekan 2004: 5). With regard to conservation, these invented traditions were largely 'motivated by nationalist concerns about urbanites' alienation from nature' (Lekan 2004: 263).

92 As Macnaghten and Urry state, 'Wiener argues that what he terms the southern metaphor had become dominant in England by around 1900. Such a metaphor went together the devaluation of both the locales of, and the qualities that had the industrial revolution. Such places and such characteristics became "provincial"' (Macnaghten and Urry 1981: 42). Macnaghten and Urry further note that 'This distinction between the southern and northern metaphors partially overlaps that between town and country' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 169), creating the 'two major dichotomies at the heart of English culture: town and country, and the [south] and the north' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 169).

93 Macnaghten and Urry also observe that '[r]ural planners have regularly employed the notion of "quiet recreation" to exclude many kinds of activity that are deemed not to fit in with historically transmitted conceptions of what are appropriate sounds' (Macnaghten and Urry 1998: 127–128) and thereby also activities.

94 Similarly, in their criticism of author Richard Florida, among others, Hidle et al. have observed that '[t]his picture of the rural is often contrasted to urban areas and cities where complexity is a common affair. Florida explains, for example, that complexity, inclusion, tolerance, and openness are preconditions for regional development and economic growth, and finds these conditions are more significant and present in urban areas than in typically rural areas. In turn, this is an argument for greater support and attention to urban areas in regional development policy. In other words, politics for regional development and restructuration also implement politics in terms of complexity, according to Florida' (Hidle et al. 2006: 194).

95 In a case study, Scott has noted the quandaries this led to for local planners, quoting a planner as follows: 'Planning policy was initially if you're not a farmer then you wouldn't get planning permission for rural housing. So if rural people weren't farmers, does that mean they would have to move … ? But they have as much right to live in the countryside. Economics means that there aren't many farmers left, so does that mean nobody will be living in the countryside?' (Interview, quoted in Scott 2008: 21).

96 The term 'alternative' is taken from Cruickshank (2009), who notes that the Norwegian conception of rurality can be considered an alternative to the more predominant Anglo conception.

97 Cruickshank goes so far as to note that these types of conceptions lie at the core of the Norwegian identity, where 'Næss' deep ecology is in reality an extended version of these values from the Norwegian nation building' (Cruickshank 2009: 103).

98 Ellingsen and Hidle, citing Enzensberger, elaborate: 'Happiness is not an abstract concept in Norway. Happiness is made of wood, grass, stone and salt water, and can be accurately localised. Norwegian happiness is located on the banks of the fjord, at least three hours' drive from the closest city. Its temple is a summer cabin, as old as possible, with a view of the archipelago off the coast' (Enzensberger 1984: 55, quoted in Ellingsen and Hidle 2013: 260)

99 Similarly, Puhakka et al. (2009) show this in a Finnish case in which one main discourse in relation to environmental protection was the requirement of maintaining local use: 'Most interviewees representing this discourse live close by … and fish, hunt and pick berries or mushrooms in the park; consequently, they defend

their right to use nature' – as an interviewee in their study states – 'cheaper …
than tourists' and for the purposes of reindeer husbandry, fishing and hunting
(Puhakka et al. 2009: 538).

100 Institutionalised as early as the thirteenth century, hunting has been relatively
widespread in Sweden, unlike in other parts of Europe where it was the purview
of the elite: all of Sweden's landowners gained hunting rights in 1789 and all
tenants soon thereafter, and the still powerful Swedish Hunting Association was
established in 1830. Until the 1900s, the moose hunt was a pivotal community
event (some would say it continues to be till today) and is presently viewed
within the framework of 'wildlife care' contributing to sustainable wildlife popu-
lations (Swe. *viltvård*, von Essen et al. 2015). In this context, as in many areas of
Europe, the reintroduction of wolves is discussed and conflicted, among not only
hunters but also the rural population at large (von Essen 2017).

101 Here, Cruickshank comments on the policy shift as follows: '[S]ometime during
the 1970s a change occurred in the policies for rural areas. I will suggest that
what happened was that a new sedimented structure was established, where
the antagonism between economic growth and decentralization was dissolved'
(Cruickshank 2009: 104). Cruickshank also notes that some of the modernist
thinking that he regards the Norwegian Labour party, as having forwarded never
really took root: 'It is widely recognized that an important reason for the eco-
nomic growth and the increased welfare in our country, also before we became
a petroleum nation, was the implementation of the welfare state and a mixed
economy following the Second World War. However, this modernist discourse
of the Labour Party did not fully succeed in disengaging human production from
nature and their neglect of the rural-urban dichotomy was ultimately denied'
(Cruickshank 2009: 104).

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