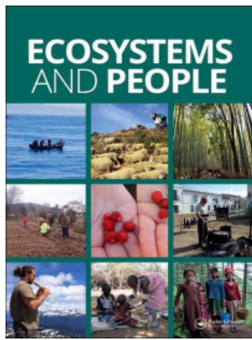

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ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/tbsm22

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To cite this article: Anna Deplazes-Zemp, Annina H. Michel, Timo Oliveri, Rebecca Schneiter, Lucia Thaler & Norman Backhaus (2024) Natural processes and natureculture – A relational understanding of nature amongst local stakeholders in Swiss parks, Ecosystems and People, 20:1, 2421306, DOI: 10.1080/26395916.2024.2421306

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/26395916.2024.2421306

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Published online: 12 Nov 2024.

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ECOSYSTEMS AND PEOPLE
2024, VOL. 20, NO. 1, 2421306
https://doi.org/10.1080/26395916.2024.2421306

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RESEARCH: RELATIONAL TURN IN SUSTAINABILITY

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Natural processes and natureculture – A relational understanding of nature amongst local stakeholders in Swiss parks

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ABSTRACT
Various scholars have criticized that formal Western thinking was dichotomous and substantialist, leading to an alienation from nature and to its exploitation in industrialized societies. Critics argue that a relational turn towards a more holistic, process-based and relational approach to address the world would be an important step to overcome these problems. Such a relational turn involves a shift towards more flexible and inclusive concepts. We analyse 'nature' concepts of local stakeholders in Swiss nature parks to examine whether they contain any relational elements. Indeed, we found that all stakeholders interviewed see themselves as part of nature. Many reported how they experience nature in active processes and see nature as a collaborator and partner. Moreover, they do not strictly separate between natural and cultural elements in their environment. We conclude that a relational turn in environmental policy in Western countries could build on these relational elements in nature concepts of the local population.

KEY POLICY HIGHLIGHTS
- Our interview data of local actors in a Western society show that they endorse relational rather than dualistic or dichotomous worldviews when it comes to the relationship between humans and nature.
- The interviewees see themselves as a part of nature, with human roles in nature.
- They understand nature not primarily as an inventory of objects, but as an active force that shapes the environment together with human planning and design.
- They value and protect natural and cultural elements in the landscape together.
- We propose that such roots of relational thinking in Western worldviews could be a starting point for a broader relational turn in environmental policy, science, economy and other areas of formal Western thinking.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 10 October 2023
Accepted 28 September 2024

EDITED BY
Seb O'Connor

KEYWORDS
Active nature; 'nature' concepts; natureculture; relational turn; relational values; go-along interviews

1. Introduction

According to Simon West and co-authors (West et al. 2020), central elements of a genuine relational turn in sustainability for radical social-ecological transformations include a holistic process-based worldview, a rejection of dichotomous concepts, the integration of 'embodied experiences' in our understanding of the world as well as a normative focus on the ethics of care.

In this paper, we identify elements of relational thinking in the worldviews of local actors in a Western society, and we propose that such elements, combined with relational philosophical theories, could serve as 'seeds' for a relational turn in formal Western thinking. We begin by introducing the aim of a relational turn in Western worldviews and the particular role that contrasting concepts such as nature and culture play in this turn. In the following section we provide some philosophical background on the concept of 'nature' and introduce the philosophy of the perspectival account of 'nature' on which we will build to identify relational elements in our interview data. We then summarise the main insights of other empirical studies on people's understanding of 'nature' before we present our own data from go-along interviews in Swiss nature parks. In these data we identify relational elements by analysing the nature concepts and the connection between nature and culture expressed in these interviews. We continue by discussing how these results indicate that the worldview of this Western society is not dualistic and we close by proposing potential political implications of our results.

2. Conceptual background

2.1. Process-based, non-binary concepts as central features of a relational worldview

We use the term 'Western' here to refer to cultures of European descent. Despite their significant differences

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and idiosyncrasies, these cultures share certain paradigms, norms and beliefs based on their common sources in the ideals of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and consequently include a strong influence by and reference to the sciences. In the literature, Western worldviews are often criticised for their mechanistic and dichotomous thinking, in which humans are completely separated from nature (e.g. Demeritt 2002; Vogel 2015; Zent 2015). Simon West and coauthors observed that in much of contemporary sustainability research this dichotomous view gave way to 'systems thinking'. They explain that while systems thinking highlights the interactions between social and ecological systems, it holds on to a strict dichotomy of two separate systems, the social and the ecological. Therefore, West and coauthors argue that this worldview is still dualistic although no longer dichotomous in the modernist sense (West et al. 2020). A genuine relational turn in the Western worldview moves beyond the dualistic discussion of interactions between separate systems and involves a shift from the classical dichotomous and substantialist paradigms towards accounts that are more holistic, relational, dynamic and process-based (Kaaronen 2018; Garcia et al. 2020; West et al. 2020, 2021). In relational worldviews the entities to which we are exposed in daily life are experienced as a kind of 'events' in the flow of processes and relationships. 'Entities' in this view must not be understood as static sharply defined objects, but as, for instance, individual items but also species or landscapes. They are flexible and in blurred distinction from each other. According to relational theorists, we understand entities based on our concepts of the world. A relational turn thus depends on a shift from static and closed to flexible and open concepts. A concept like 'tree', in this view, is not simply a mental representation of a static entity in the world. Instead, in a relational worldview concepts are understood as tools to navigate in the world (West et al. 2020) and to make sense of it (Hertz et al. 2020). Take the concept 'tree', for some people it may include only tall, single-stemmed plants, for others it may include large bushes. The perception of a particular park landscape and the sense that one makes of it can be influenced by how one conceptualises a tree. Furthermore, the conceptual change in a radical relational turn also involves a shift from substance-based to process-based concepts or a shift in focus from nouns to verbs (Rescher 1996, p. 29). In this sense, our concept of 'tree' includes not only particular things, but also processes such as growth, functions in the ecosystem and interactions with other entities, including with ourselves. Concepts can thus be used to make sense of the world or navigate the world when they shape our experiences, perceptions, interpretations and evaluations.

Pairs of concepts are dichotomous or binary, if they are interpretated as a complete separation and mutual exclusion of two aspects of the world. However, the use of two concepts that refer to a contrast is not dichotomous *per se*, it depends on how the relationship between the contrasts is interpreted. According to a relational worldview, conceptual boundaries are not to be understood as either/or categories but rather as both/and not only (West et al. 2021). A contrast can be understood as non-binary or non-dichotomous if it involves a large overlap or grey area between two extremes of a gradient. For instance, a non-binary understanding of the contrast between blue and green allows for colours that are bluish-green or greenish-blue and it includes the possibility that the same colour might be perceived as green in combination with, say, orange, and as blue in combination with yellow.

2.2. Overcoming the nature/culture dichotomy

The juxtaposition between nature and people with their cultures and artefacts, has a long tradition in Western worldviews (Pattberg 2007). It is reflected in environmental policy (Uggla 2010) and has been reported to be embedded in Western societies (Bogert et al. 2022; Kim et al. 2023). Even before the explicit request for a relational turn, various scholars have argued that the instrumental and anthropocentric worldview associated with such a strict nature/culture divide and the ignorance for people's part in nature, have been responsible for the exploitative and dominating attitude and behaviour towards nature in the 20th century (e.g. Naess 1998; Warren 1990; Plumwood 1991; Callicott and Nelson 1998; Routley and Routley 1979). Postmodern theorists such as Steven Vogel seem to see part of the problem of Western thinking in the concept of 'nature' itself (Vogel 2015), raising the question of whether this concept is inherently dualistic and anthropocentric. Based on the relational understanding of concepts as 'tools to navigate the world', it is certainly true – as postmodern authors criticize – that the concept of 'nature' is part of our culture and thus a social construct. Moreover, various authors have pointed to the complexity and ambivalence of the concept of 'nature' (e.g. Soper 1995) indicating that it is unlikely to have sharp boundaries. However, rather than rejecting the concept altogether, many philosophers have developed suggestions as to how the concept of 'nature' could be understood in a consistent, holistic, flexible and process-based way within a Western worldview (for a diverse set of suggestions see e.g. Soper 1995; Stephens 2000; Moriarty 2007; Kaebnick 2013; Dussault 2016; Debaise 2017).

In this paper we use a theoretical model called 'the perspectival account of the concept of 'nature'"(Deplazes-Zemp 2022), as a suggestion of how the two relational elements of a) non-dualism and 2) process-foundation of the concept of 'nature' can be *theoretically* integrated into a Western worldview. We will subsequently analyse whether such elements can also be identified in a non-academic, everyday understanding of nature.

The perspectival account of 'nature' is relational in at least two respects. First, it highlights that 'nature' is a *perspectival* concept, which means that the term 'nature' is used to express a *relationship* with the item or process described as natural. According to this account, when we say that something is natural, we are suggesting that its production has not been planned by humans. The reason for distinguishing natural from human-designed products is *not* that they belong to two separate categories of 'reality', but that people stand in a different relation to natural processes and entities than to artificial ones.[1] This difference is morally relevant if it is assumed that we have certain rights over and responsibility for the actions we control and products we design. In such an account we are thus not talking about the world from a detached outsider perspective but as parts and participants in it. We use the term 'nature' for processes and events to the extent that we do not design and control them (active nature) and for those aspects of and items in the world in and around us that we have not designed and planned (passive nature). 'nature' stands for this active '*Other*' with which we interact and collaborate. However, this is not to say that these processes are strictly separate from humans. Many natural processes operate through (unintended, unplanned) human activity, just as humans themselves are products of active nature and thus are elements of passive nature. According to this account of 'nature', the contrasting concepts 'nature' and 'culture', or 'natural' and 'artificial', do not reflect a dichotomy because they overlap and humans can be seen as part of nature or contrasts to nature, depending on the context.

The second relational element in the perspectival account of 'nature' concerns its focus on *active* nature as natural processes. The account emphasizes that we not only perceive 'nature' as a passive environment and landscape, into which we are born, but also as active forces and processes, to which we are exposed, which we study and use, and with which we collaborate.[2] Active nature and passive nature are understood as two aspects of the same nature which we perceive and comprehend differently. As living beings, we are natural products and directly part of passive nature, as intentional agents that interact with natural processes and attempt to control them, we often perceive ourselves as *an Other*[3] to active nature with which we collaborate. Most items in the environment have been generated in the interactions of active nature with human agency, which implies that actual production processes in the biophysical world and its results are a combination of culture and nature. Therefore, in a relational manner the either/or of nature and culture turns into both/and not only categories. We use the terms 'natural' or 'cultural' to emphasise differently experienced aspects which still cannot be separated from each other.

It may be interesting to note some parallels of this account with Donna Haraway's concept of naturecul-ture. She introduces this concept in the context of companion species as the result of 'the implosion of nature and culture in the relentlessly historically specific, joint lives of dogs and people, who are bonded in significant otherness' (Haraway 2003, p. 16). The common ground with the perspectival account concerns not only the 'implosion of nature and culture', but also the 'bonding in significant otherness' of the two elements in the relationship.

2.3. Nuanced concepts of 'nature' in Western societies

We have seen that there are philosophical accounts that overcome anthropocentric, dualistic and substantialist tendencies in Western thinking, but what about the worldviews of the people who make up the 'public' of Western societies? A considerable number of empirical studies show that the understanding of nature in Western societies is more diverse and differentiated than the categorization of this worldview as generally dualistic and anthropocentric suggests. The authors of these studies identified different understandings of 'nature', which they sorted into categories along different typologies (Mausner 1996; Gobster 2001; van den Born et al. 2001; Keulartz et al. 2004; Bauer et al. 2009; Buijs 2009; Haukeland et al. 2010; van Zeijts et al. 2017; Hatty et al. 2022). Arjien E. Buijs, for instance, conducted qualitative studies with lay people in the Netherlands to derive five 'ideal types of images of nature', which he understands as mental frameworks that combine people's values, beliefs and value orientations. These images range from nature as *Wilderness*, over the image *Autonomy* to an *Inclusive* image integrating humans into nature and the *Aesthetic* image to the *Functional* image of nature, which emphasises its instrumental value (Buijs 2009). Such studies show that even within one nation there are different notions of 'nature', but people are often not aware of this ambivalence (Dahmus and Nelson 2014). Dolly Joergensen reveals that supporters as well as opponents of a project aiming at the removal of dam structures in northwestern Canada, claim that they want to enhance naturalness. Those who want to remove the

dam think of re-*naturalizing* the ecosystem to an original state, whereas those who argue against dam removal, speak of the protection of the *natural* ecosystem – including the associated lakes – that has developed since the dams were built 100 years ago (Jorgensen 2017).

Various empirical studies highlighted that often people do not strictly separate between nature and culture and use overlapping categories (Mausner 1996; Hull et al. 2001; Daugstad et al. 2014; Farjon et al. 2016; van Zeijts et al. 2017; Egberts 2019). For instance, Claudia Mausner (1996) identified five subcategories of 'natural' environments mentioned in interviews: 1) *totally natural* environments without any evidence for human presence, 2) *civilized natural* environments, with trails or other structures that facilitate human visits in 'nature', 3) *quasi natural* environments, in which people 'compose' natural elements to enhance aesthetic qualities, 4) *semi-natural* environments, in which natural and non-natural elements coexist, but where humans control which natural elements remain, and 5) *nonnatural* environments such as urban settings. Mausner highlights that nature can be experienced, at least minimally, in all the natural (without the fifth nonnatural) environments. Likewise, Hull et al. (2001) speak of 'cultured naturalness' that is appreciated by locals, for instance in forests, where highly valued cultural symbols are contained, and which promote local identities.

Some of these studies implicitly hint at the notion of active nature, such as Buijs (2009) nature image *Autonomy* or van van Zeijts et al. (2017) exploration of four perspectives on nature for 2050, including one that defines and values nature by its processes. In the context of residential yards, Dahmus and Nelson (2014) distinguish four ideas of nature and include the category 'nature as an ecological actor', referring to nature as an actor that provides water or nutrients or absorbs rainwater. However, none of these studies explicitly explored indications for or relational understanding of nature, and none discussed the role of active nature in a collaboration between natural processes and human procedures.

3. Methods

The data that we are presenting in this paper have been collected as part of an interview study with the aim to get a better understanding of how local stakeholders value landscapes in Swiss regional nature parks. Study sites and interview participants were selected as described below. We followed an exploratory study design to unravel local residents' relationships to and in what they call 'nature' using go-along interviews, a mobile interview technique. Mobile methodologies are increasingly used to investigate place-based meanings, everyday life practices, and people's encounters with landscapes (Hein et al. 2008; Kühl 2016; Macpherson 2016). In contrast to sedentary interviews, go-along interviews take place on-site and may be implemented as 'walk-along' on foot, or as 'ride-along' by bike or car, which allows to experience in-situ engagement and explore people's encounters with 'nature' in their everyday landscapes (see Carpiano 2009; Bergeron et al. 2014; Moran et al. 2020). Often, interviewees take the role of a 'tour guide', which aligns with the participatory underpinnings of go-alongs (see Bergeron et al. 2014). This may empower participants and break with usual power relations between interviewer and interviewee, since interviewees 'introduce researchers to settings and ways of engaging with nature that are known and familiar to them but likely to be unfamiliar and unknown to researchers' (Duedahl and Blichfeldt 2020).

3.1. Study sites

The interviews used in this study were conducted in three Swiss regional nature parks: Jurapark Aargau, Nature Park Beverin, and Nature Park Pfyn-Finges. The three parks are located in rural areas, some closer to peri-urban areas, and were selected based on their variation regarding different landscape types (e.g. mountainous vs. hilly peri-urban midlands). Regional nature parks align with the IUCN protected area categories V and VI (Dudley 2008), and follow sustainable economic development and landscape protection goals, integrating cultural heritage into conservation goals (Swiss Parks Network n.d.). Regional nature parks usually consist of several municipalities and are populated areas. They are established bottom-up, which means that the local population decides on the establishment of a park – or it's continuation after 10 years – in a popular vote. The label itself does not automatically add any protected areas to the park boundaries. Each park authority establishes a 10-year charter as a planning instrument, which must include a participatory process for local stakeholders, and implements the charter through budgeting based on the funds from federal, cantonal, and municipal administrations (FOEN 2014).

3.2. Data collection and analysis

For this article we used 31 interviews conducted in 2021 and 2022 (Table 1). The interviewees were selected based on a three-tier sampling procedure. First, we approached stakeholders based on a criterion sampling (see Patton 1990), selecting a focus region in each park and targeting people living in these areas. Second, we aimed for a variation regarding age, vocational background,

Table 1. Interviewed stakeholders with their main areas of occupation, the places they showed us, and the main activity they follow in this place.

Interview	Area of occupation	Place visited	Main activity
Int-1	Tourism	Scenic overlook with bench	Walking, sitting, observing
Int-2	Education	Walking path	Walking
Int-3	Industry/commerce	Walking path, scenic overlook	Walking, sitting
Int-4	Tourism, education	Reservoir dam, mountain top	Walking, sitting, swimming, playing
Int-5	Health, tourism	Building	Observing
Int-6	Agriculture	Walking path	Walking, farming
Int-7	Forestry, public administration	Bee hive	Farming
Int-8	Agriculture	Cattle pasture	Farming
Int-9	Agriculture, forestry	Forest, scenic overlook	Walking, playing, sitting
Int-10	Health/Care (retired), tourism	River	Walking, sitting
Int-11	Health	Forest	Interacting with people
Int-12	Commerce/Industry, health	Pond	Observing
Int-13	Agriculture, industry, hunting	Forest path	Horseback riding
Int-14	Agriculture	Farmlands	Farming
Int-15	Agriculture	Vegetable garden, walking path	Gardening, exercising
Int-16	Agriculture	Walking path, scenic overlook	Walking, farming
Int-17	Commerce/Industry (retired), nature conservation	Bat colony, buildings	Conservation project, observing
Int-18	Agriculture	Meadow	Observing, walking, sitting
Int-19	Commerce/industry, agriculture	Vineyards, building	Walking, reading, sunbathing
Int-20	Agriculture	Trees	Farming
Int-21	Forestry (retired)	Forest, walking path	Forestry, interacting with people
Int-22	Commerce/Industry (retired), nature conservation	Water well	Conservation project, observing
Int-23	Unemployed	River, bench	Walking, sitting
Int-24	Student, commerce/industry	Scenic overlook above vineyards, bench	Walking, sitting
Int-25	Commerce/Industry	Scenic overlook with bench	Walking, sitting
Int-26	Health (retired), agriculture	Gorge, walking path, own farmlands	Walking, sitting, farming
Int-27	Nature conservation	Walking path, scenic overlook	Walking
Int-28	Education (retired)	Chapel, scenic overlook	Walking
Int-29	Tourism, commerce/industry	Walking path, waterfall	Cycling, interacting with people
Int-30	Agriculture	Walking path, river	Walking, farming
Int-31	Education, agriculture	Walking path, river	Walking, exercising

and gender. And thirdly, we resorted to opportunistic snowball sampling using existing contacts to recruit further interview partners. This sampling strategy resulted in 18 female and 13 male respondents, with an age range from 23 to 83 years.

The go-along interviews were conducted by a team of four researchers, all using the same semi-structured interview guideline covering following topics: Specific place meanings, practices and activities, perceptions and emotions, changes over time, and human-nature relationships. However, the interviews were kept exploratory to allow the interviewees to direct the conversation. As a prompt, the interviewees were asked to show us a meaningful place in nature for their everyday lives. We did not give them any further instruction on what we mean by a 'place in nature' or by 'meaningful'. We asked the respondents what made the place meaningful and in what respect they perceived and experienced 'nature' there. Being outdoors allowed the respondents to discuss the abstract concept of 'nature' in a more embodied manner, but also facilitated the articulation of thoughts and feelings due to being immersed in the specific landscape elements they described.

Most interviews were go-alongs by foot, some were a mixture of moving by car and by foot and generally lasted between one and three hours. As is customary in Switzerland, we used the self-assessment tool of our university (https://www.research.uzh.ch/en/procedures/research-on-humans.html) to review our study. According to this tool the study was classified as a low risk, which does not require approval by an ethics committee in Switzerland. All research participants gave oral consent to the use of their interviews in our study and for the anonymous publication of the interview results.

The conversations were recorded and later transcribed as verbatim as possible, directly translating Swiss German dialect into written German and translated into English for the publication. Interview data was coded using MaxQDA software based on an abductive content analysis (Flick et al. 2008) including inductive and deductive coding steps. This allowed us to synergize an inductively generated understanding of our empirical cases with a theory-driven exploration aiming to push theory boundaries (Mayring 2014; Reichertz 2014).

The management and the socio-economic or environmental impact of the parks were not a focus of this study. However, since park managements are active in different outreach activities, and, moreover, at least a large part of the local population supported the park at the ballots, we can assume that we have a slight bias in our sample leaning towards people supporting sustainable development.

4. Results

In this paper, we present relational elements in the understandings of 'nature' that emerged from the interviews. We present our results along two main

themes: First, what do people mean by the concept of 'nature'? Second, the relation between culture and nature.

4.1. *What is nature?*

4.1.1. *People as part of nature*

The concept of 'nature', is ubiquitous in everyday language and deeply rooted in Swiss worldviews. But as is often the case with everyday terms, it is usually used without a precise definition, therefore, the interviewees often hesitated or took some time for reflection before answering our general questions on nature. At one point in the interview, we usually got to the question of whether humans are part of nature. There was not one interviewee who answered this question with a 'no'; for all of them it was evident that people are in one way or another a part of nature.[4] Five respondents highlighted that people are a temporary and insignificant part of a great whole.

A farmer phrased this idea in a quantitative way:

Q1: '[. . .] if the world has been in existence for 24 hours, the human being has been in it for 2 seconds. The greedy thing, that never gets enough, and then it even behaves badly!'(Int-20)

A retired forester expressed it more poetically:

Q2: '[. . .] you know, you're just [. . .] you're part of something flowing for a moment. [. . .] You actually just come and go again. And everything goes on' (Int-7)

Human-critical statements as in quote Q1 were made by many interviewees, for them, being part of nature comes with certain normative requirements which many people seem to ignore. Eleven interviewees pointed out that people lack awareness for their integration into nature, that they do not act according to their role and that they disturb the equilibrium and interplay within nature. The forester quoted above (Q2) said later that it was easier to 'do nothing' and protect nature by leaving it alone rather than to use it sustainably in the sense of an equilibrium, as he thought one should.

At least four respondents directly highlighted that people, as a part of nature, also have functions in nature, as they, for instance, enable biodiverse habitats by preventing forest encroachment (Int-2, Int-5, Int-8, Int-16). Three interviewees said that our cognitive abilities give us a special position in nature, but according to one person these capacities also make humans a disruptive factor in nature (Int-24).

Besides these fact-based explanations for humans' part and role in nature, several stakeholders described an emotional belonging to nature, feeling a strong connection with nature (Int-6, Int-8, Int-10, Int-27).[5] One of them pointed out that this connection was strongest in the valley that they call home, in other regions, this person feels more like a guest than a real part of nature. Consequently, it is not whether an area is cultural or natural but whether it is more or less familiar, that makes them feel included or excluded.

Q3: '[. . .] in an unknown region it's like you are on last name terms, and here you are on first name terms, because you really already know each other so well [. . .]. You know exactly [. . .] behind the little bush, the little path goes off to the left and in an unknown place you have to be much more alert. The familiarity makes the difference [. . .]'. (Int-8)

4.1.2. *Wild nature as the Other*

Even though they understand themselves and other people as part of nature, many (12) respondents also discussed nature as a contrast, as *the Other* to the characteristically human products and processes. The term 'wild' has often been used in this context for places that were at least to some degree left to nature. Most of the time this attribute was used with a positive connotation.[6] Wild nature was described as being beautiful (Int-1, Int-2, Int-27), magical (Int-9, Int-12) or as sites that resonate with a particular power (Int-10, Int-22).

Q4: 'in a beautifully designed park, [. . .]there you can also find … the green and so on. But wild nature, untouched nature is of course even a bit more beautiful'. (Int-1)

The interviewees often opposed 'wild' or 'untouched' nature to some type of human impact. We identified three types of such human counterpoints. Three stakeholders (Int-1, Int-20, Int-26) contrasted the natural and wild to the '*over-tended*', '*over-controlled*', where people decide what 'nature' should look like. For two stakeholders (Int-9, Int-21) the contrast to wild forests was '*managed*' and '*used*'. As a third contrast, stakeholders mentioned the '*touristic*' (Int-9, Int-10), where there are so many people that it is not possible to 'feel' nature anymore. It is thus the untended, unused and unpeopled that is appreciated as wild nature; and in these forms it can face us even in human-influenced places or landscapes.

Infrequently, wild nature was connotated negatively as a forest that is economically uninteresting

(Int-9) or as a neglected garden (Int-15) or exuberant plants (Int-28):

Q5: '[…]these are all overgrown vines that climb up here, this used to be different back then [when I was a child]. They [the wine growers] simply didn't take care of them [the vines] any more. Now they just grow rampant.' (Int-28)

4.1.3. Nature as 'active nature'

The description and appreciation of nature as wild indicates that nature is perceived as something that operates and develops independently of human control. These flexible, process-based and active aspects of nature play an essential role in interviewees' 'nature' concepts and have been expressed in different ways. Some stakeholders speak of nature as an agent who, for instance, withdraws (Int-10):

Q6: 'nature just withdraws … until humans stop doing anything, and then nature comes back again, doesn't it?' (Int-10)

Other stakeholders speak of nature as an agent that returns (Int-2), reacts (Int-14) and does things or works by itself (Int-7, Int-19, Int-23, Int-26). The power of nature has often been described with respect to particular experiences that left the stakeholders with a lasting impression, as expressed in the following quote:

Q7: 'One day I was in a vineyard in X, and then, a hailstorm passed, I couldn't drive home, the children were still small, and we were sitting in the car and couldn't drive home. The car was covered with leaves, and everything was shredded … really shortly before you could harvest. In such a situation you are devastated, and you appreciate when you have something to harvest again in the following year. And that's just nature (shrugging). It's unpredictable. You can't do anything about it, and I say now, in a way that's actually the beauty in it, when you as human being can't interfere and just see what power nature has. […] So, you'll endure fears, but… they make you realise that you cannot manage (control) everything because nature does'. *(*Int-14)

Inorganic nature in the form of weather phenomena, water, fire, avalanches, or landslides particularly leaves such impressions (Int-3, Int-7, Int-9, Int-14, Int-29). But the activity of nature is also connected to biological nature. Several stakeholders describe how nature awakes in spring and how plants develop and grow (Int-2, Int-6, Int-8, Int-9, Int-13, Int-20, Int-22):

Q8: 'In spring I find it extremely beautiful to go out here and … to feel how nature returns […]. When plants start to grow again … birds and everything come back to life. The soil starts to smell again, I find that extremely beautiful'. *(*Int-2)

Climatic, geological and biological processes together are responsible for the constant change in nature, on the one hand as seasonal changes, on the other hand also in terms of linear fugacity (Int-2, Int-7, Int-9, Int-13, Int-19, Int-21, Int-25, Int-29) (see also Q2 above). Several stakeholders describe nature as an active collaborator, for example when explaining the permaculture farming approach, where minimal human interventions still let nature work by itself (Int-26). Others describe the interaction with nature as a give-and-take.

Q9: 'For me this means that… nature… is habitat that can be cultivated and used, but in such a way that this habitat is preserved…, because … a landscape, a nature … it's a give and take … and yes … we cannot just take because otherwise … the landscape turns one-sided or just… breaks down… I say I work with nature… with all the advantages and disadvantages.*'* (Int-16)

This quote also shows that collaboration with nature implies accepting the limits it sets and dealing with the challenges it poses. In this give-and-take mentality the interaction with nature implies adaptation as well as management and control (Chapman and Deplazes-Zemp 2024).

4.2. Nature and culture

The content of the interviews was shaped by the places the interviewees chose to show us (Figure 1). The places ranged from spectacular viewpoints to everyday walking routes to cattle pastures or vineyards (Table 1). In line with the studies summarised in the introduction, the stakeholders discussed natural and cultural elements together. This section explores the connection between nature and culture as well as their blending into natureculture (Haraway 2003) in the narratives and the values of the stakeholders interviewed.

4.2.1. Nature as cultural inspiration

The interviews demonstrate how local culture is shaped by nature. Various interviewees mentioned that nature serves as an inspiration for a vast variety of cultural products or activities. One stakeholder told us that she

Figure 1. Photos taken during the go along interviews. Photos represent natureculture in Swiss landscapes, a) agricultural road in the cultural landscape in the Swiss midlands (Jurapark Aargau, int-18), b) rocky wine-growing area in the southern Swiss Alps (nature park pfyn-finges, int-29), c and d) viewpoints with a bench selected as 'meaningful places in nature' in the Swiss Alps (c: nature park Beverin, int-1) (d: nature park pfyn-finges, int-25). Photo credits: a: Rebecca Schneiter, b: Annina Michel, c & d: Timo Oliveri.

brings her drawing pad to her favourite spot (Int-23) and a young musician often brings her guitar (Int-19). A retired teacher told the story of how she had been asked to write a song text for her choir, so she went to her favourite spot and wrote a text describing the beautiful view of her village and the vineyards and their hardworking inhabitants (Int-28). Two respondents reported that they collected nicely shaped stones or pieces of wood to put in their gardens or house or use for crafting (Int-4, Int-31). Another one told us proudly that the valley has been appreciated by a famous poet (Int-29). Others referred to public events inspired by the landscape, such as an international art event in the valley (Int-4), or a classical open-air concert with a singer and a lute player (Int-15).

Two interviewees mentioned that architecture should be inspired by the natural landscape into which it is integrated. They highlighted that the aesthetics of the building should take up elements from the landscape, one of them further suggested that local materials should be used to integrate a building with the environment (Int-5). According to one respondent, a building that is inspired by the natural environment is less disturbing in the landscape:

Q10: 'This huge winery, I personally perceive it as less disturbing, because with certain structures they tried to take over certain elements of nature … certain patterns from nature. It still fits in … even though it's a rather squared block (laughs) … it somehow fits in better …' (Int-24).

Finally, several interviewees mentioned that the location of a church or graveyard had been inspired by nature. Such religious monuments were built in a prominent place (Int-7) or a place that naturally radiated a special spiritual presence [*Kraftort*] (Int-5, Int-18, Int-28). One respondent explained that this special natural spiritual power of the place was perceived through time and led to the same place being perceived as a sacred place in different religions.

Q11: 'The church is a place of spiritual power [Kraftort]. One just knows this, because … the Celts already had graves here … under the church' (Int-18)

4.2.2. Blending of nature with culture

The previous two examples indicate that for many stakeholders, nature as well as culture determine Swiss landscapes (Figure 1). Indeed, because of alpine farming, even mountainous regions in Switzerland are cultural landscapes. The interviewees are very much aware of this tight connection, but this does

not prevent them from admiring and appreciating nature in these landscapes. Three interviewees listed natural and cultural elements in one breath, when they described what they value in the prospect from their selected spots (Int-1, Int-3, Int-25).

Q12: 'You come here and look at everything from above, and you see how it goes and comes. You can just be here and really see something of life in front of you, how it happens in different forms. Just with nature, with the sun moving, you see planes flying and you see the forest, there also is a train.' (Int-25)

Some mention explicitly that they appreciate the combination of nature with infrastructure for practical and aesthetic reasons (Int-4, Int-26, Int-29). They appreciate forests (Int-20, Int-21), vineyards (Int-25), traditional irrigation channels (Int-26, Int-27) and domesticated animals as entities that represent nature as well as culture. One person selected a water reservoir as a destination for the go along interview. Although the dam was impossible to miss, the interviewee perceived it as a natural place with a sandy shore and driftwood that was washed up by the river. Another interviewee brought us to a pond, where they had observed a lynx one day. The respondent didn't know whether the origin of this pond was natural or artificial, a question that seemed irrelevant to the person, it had already been there when they moved into the area and thus was perceived as natural (Int-12).

4.2.3. Collaboration between natural processes and human actions

The representation of the nature-culture connection discussed in the previous section focuses on natural *entities* such as landscape elements, species, organisms, sounds and thus on what has been called passive nature in the introduction. However, in light of the relational turn, we are particularly interested in active nature as natural *processes*. This aspect of nature has also been a recurring topic in our interviews, often discussed as a collaboration between natural processes and human action. For instance, one stakeholder showed us a beehive in the mountains (Int-7). The respondent described observing the bee swarms as observing nature, each time it is different, the respondent never knows exactly what to expect. Bee keeping has tradition in this family, the ancestors selected the location of the beehive for its natural features such as protection from the wind, the right amount of sun exposure, the nearby river that can provide water and an ecosystem that provides pollen. These conditions are 'optimized' by the family by planting shrubs that flower at different times of the year and ensuring that water is collected in a biotope. The main motivation for beekeeping is not the honey itself, but the activity and collaboration with nature and the connection to the family tradition and the valley.

As a different form of appreciating active nature, a farmer sometimes intentionally lets a bramble bush grow or deliberately refrains from mowing a spot in the meadow to observe what lives there (Int-20). Another farmer explained to us that it is the collaboration with nature that makes people feel connected with their valley.

Q13: 'You know ... it's not only living and being, it's also working, they work with the landscape with nature, with the animals, [it is that work], that makes people feel so connected ... with their valley . . . I think.' (Int-8)

A winegrower describes the collaboration of people and nature with respect to the product. According to this person, the wine is always a product of the region, shaped by the landscape and the soil (Int-14, Int-16). For a teacher the region's worth lies in a 'beautiful interplay between people and nature' (Int-2), adding that humans did leave traces in nature, but the same was true for any living being (similarly also Int-29). In line with the beekeeper and the farmers mentioned above, other stakeholders also highlighted that nature must be nurtured (Int-14, Int-19, Int-21). This is particularly true in times of climate change, where people must change planting strategies in forests to ensure their persistence (Int-13, Int-22). Whereas nature can serve as cultural inspiration, cultural practices can also take place in collaboration with nature, for instance, when planting a garden or when it comes to the aesthetic importance of pruning fruit trees (Int-22).

Genuine collaboration between people and nature implies that people also accept limits set by nature and adapt to or are guided by nature. This aspect has been mentioned by many stakeholders, for instance, when the beekeeper explained how natural factors decide where to build the beehive. Several farmers explained how they adapted the selection of plants and expectations of gains to the climate and soil of the region without aiming for 'artificial' maximization or the desire to move to a more fertile area (Int-3, Int-14, Int-15, Int-20).[7] For example, one female mountain farmer explained that particularly women would love to have some flowers in their gardens, but that this is just not possible at this altitude (Int-3). The interaction with nature is also evident in dealing with natural hazards (Int-7, Int-23). The beekeeper mentioned that the beehive had been destroyed by an avalanche before and explained that this could happen any time again, adding that this threat raises the

awareness of the real balance of power between people and nature (see also Q7).

Q14: 'it just shows wonderfully the balance of powers and it also shows how afterwards … actually … when people say the world is coming to an end, I say the world is not coming to an end, maybe humanity is coming to an end, but the world is certainly not coming to an end'. (Int-7)

4.2.4. Joint protection of nature and culture

The integration of nature with culture in the thinking of local stakeholders is also evident when they talk about what they consider worth protecting. Cultural and natural heritage cannot be separated when they talk about the beauty and meaning of the landscape. A respondent, who is engaged in the traditional craft of making shingles, regrets that many new barns have corrugated iron roofs instead of traditional wooden shingles, or that barns that are no longer used in agriculture are falling apart. For this person, these traditional barns are an element of the natural landscape just as the mountains, the river, and wild and domesticated alpine animals (Int-3).

Others also mentioned traditional crafts and practices that contribute to the nature-based lifestyle and landscape. These practices are associated with a particular appreciation of and collaboration with nature that cannot be reduced to the aim of generating benefits. One respondent practises charcoal burning (Int-21), others highlight the importance of traditional dry stone walls (Int-28), or old ways of gardening that originate from former self-sufficiency (Int-30). These practices are more sustainable and locally-anchored and, additionally, provide habitats for certain species. This is also true for cultural monuments such as churches. One interviewee showed us a church tower that houses a large bat colony and explained that living conditions in the tower were perfect for these bats. The respondent had informed the authorities so that this would be considered in case of renovation, to make sure that the protection of cultural heritage does not happen at cost of natural heritage (Int-17).

Q15: 'Thank God we have a colony here. […] we offer them the best possibilities, so that they can maintain themselves, perhaps develop further … […]. Because I can't influence the food supply etc. […] Here [they are] protected. That is registered. In case of reconstructions, this will be taken into account'.

5. Discussion

When Western worldviews are being criticised for their substantialism or dualism, one of the favourite examples to illustrate these problems is the conceptual pair of 'nature' and 'culture'. Our study demonstrates that it is precisely the contested concept of 'nature' that can be used to illustrate that the generalised critique of this dualism in Western worldviews is inadequate beyond a formal context.[8] Our analysis connects to rich literature on the complexity and ambiguity of nature concepts in Western societies. We add a discussion of three relational topics in the way people in Swiss nature parks think and talk about nature: First, the suspicion of dualism whenever two contrasting concepts are being used; second, the importance of process and change in the interviewees' concepts of 'nature'; and third, the inseparability of the concepts of 'nature' and 'culture'. We discuss these findings against the background of the perspectival account of 'nature' to suggest how such a relational conception of nature can be integrated into a coherent but neither substantialist nor dualistic theoretical model of 'nature' which subsequently could be incorporated also into *formal* Western thinking as represented in science, technology, governmental strategies, and law.

5.1. Contrasting concepts without dichotomy and dualism

The local stakeholders that we interviewed have all used the term 'nature' (Q4, Q6, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q12, Q13) and often implicitly or explicitly contrasted it with 'culture', 'human', or 'artificial'. Sometimes nature was even viewed as '*the Other*' (4.1.2.). Nevertheless, we claim that the worldview of these people was relational rather than dichotomous or dualistic. West et al. (2020) describe a dualistic understanding of human-nature connectedness as "Humans are connected to nature in various ways but cognitive abilities **separate** them to some extent" (309, emphasis added); and they distinguish this from a relational worldview which they describe as: 'non-essentialist: Humans are nature and vice versa, through concept of embodied experience in holistic situations' (309).

Does the idea of 'embodied experience in holistic situations' mean that we cannot use a term for 'nature' or that we cannot distinguish between those aspects of an event that we or our fellow humans have planned and those that cannot be planned because they are natural? We deny this and suggest that we need a concept of nature, particularly of its active component, to make sense of the world and to express our role in and collaboration with nature. We

experience active nature as the processes and forces, in which we as humans participate, but which we have not designed and planned. Nature in this sense approaches us from the outside, we are born and integrated into it (Q1, Q2), we adapt to it, and use it (Q9), we protect ourselves from it (Q7) and it inspires us (Q8, Q10, Q11). This is what we mean when we say that nature confronts and fascinates us as the *Other*,[9] which is emphasised, for instance, when people talk about wild nature in contrast to the over-tended, managed or touristic environment (Q4, Q6, Q7) or also in contrast to a well-tended, tidy garden (Q5).

Otherness in this context is not associated with inferiority or subordination, which is an element of dualism criticized, for instance, by ecofeminist authors (Warren 1990). On the contrary, otherness in these interviews triggers respect, acknowledgment and fascination (Q4, Q7, Q8) similar to what Donna Haraway discussed as respecting the *Other* in natureculture. According to the perspectival account of nature, this *Other* is not independent of us because we are intimately connected to it. It is even part of us as human nature, but even in that form we experience and recognise it as processes that are not under the control of our will. In the interviews, active nature came up in the context of admiration for natural diversity, beauty and sophistication, reverence for dreaded natural hazards and pests, and as a constructive force to be used in agriculture, forestry, and leisure – an *Other* with which we enter relationships of control, collaboration or adaptation (Q9, Q13) (Chapman and Deplazes-Zemp 2024).

Observing this external force and its impact on the world in and around us is not the same as ontologically separating it from our own intentional and planned influences. Our interview partners not only collaborate with natural forces in a dualistic sense, but also see themselves as natural products and active elements in natural processes. The fact that it is impossible to define in one sentence, what exactly ‘nature’ means to the local actors in these parks suggests that ‘nature’ is a flexible concept that may include the same entity in one context but exclude it in another. So, it is not possible to separate between natural and artificial or between nature and culture by ‘applying the knife’ as suggested in a dualistic worldview (Raymond et al. 2021; West et al. 2021).

The above definition of dualism might raise another question: Does not the reference to human intentionality and design as criteria of artificiality imply human exceptionalism? The perspectival account of ‘nature’ introduced before (Deplazes-Zemp 2022), shows that reference to human intentionality is not necessarily dualistic. In Western ethics, the distinction between people’s intentional actions and their unintentional involvement is important to make sense of our impact on the world. Therefore – and not because we think human artefacts and natural objects belong to different ontological categories of an objective reality – intentionality is an important criterion in Western thinking.

5.2. A broad and flexible nature concept

The interviews revealed holistic views on ‘nature’ that included living entities such as plants and animals, as well as stones, mountains, rivers, landscapes, weather phenomena, seasons, sunlight, sounds and smells (4.1.3). In their description of nature, the interviewees switched between *passive* nature – for example in the description of landscapes (Q4, Q12) – to *active* nature – for example regarding gradual seasonal changes, plant growth or nature as sudden storms or landslides (Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q13). With a relational lens, one could observe that the described elements of passive nature show themselves as events that arise from the relationships and processes of active nature.[10]

The concept of ‘nature’ in these interviews is flexible, as nature has been experienced and understood differently depending on the situation. People are aware that what they describe as natural (e.g. a water reservoir or cultivated landscapes 4.2.2.) could also be discussed with respect to its artificial aspects. In that sense, it is not only the entities that constitute nature, but nature is also one aspect of these entities themselves, the natural aspect of bees, cows or meadows. Mausner’s (1996) subcategories of ‘natural’ environments could also be understood as subcategories of passive nature. In the three intermediate categories, which she calls civilized natural, quasi-natural and semi-natural, (passive) nature seems to be somewhat compromised through human control or infrastructure. Nevertheless, Mausner highlights that nature can be experienced in all these categories. This experienced nature does not need to be categorised, it is the same procedural element or active nature in all subcategories. In all these situations, ‘nature’ is experienced as an *Other*, for instance as something that surprises (e.g.: a sudden hailstorm Q7), fascinates (e.g.: witnessing plant growth in spring Q8) and frightens (e.g.: avalanche that destroys beehives 4.1.3.) us and that operates according to different mechanisms than the human mind.

The concepts of nature expressed in the interviews were relational in other ways too. The interviewees’ narratives, for instance, revealed the relational elements of accessing and explaining the world through experiences and of constituting a worldview as an immersed participant and not from the perspective of a detached observer (Q9,

Q13, 4.1.1., 4.2.2., 4.2.3., 4.2.4.). Moreover, the interviews illustrate how the concept of 'nature' is used to make sense of the world and how the explanatory power of the concept lies in its flexibility and adaptability. Different understandings of nature can combine different experiences that are still related by the fact that they are beyond human control and design. For instance, when we compare the meaning of active and beautifully threatening nature in the story of the hailstorm (Q7) with a more substantialist understanding of passive nature as a usable habitat in the beginning of Q9. Even within quote Q9, the speaker shifts to a more active interpretation of nature as the collaborator of the farmer. These different emphases complement each other to a holistic, flexible and relational understanding of 'nature' as described by the perspectival account.

5.3. Inseparability of nature and culture

In accordance with the other studies introduced at the outset, we found that local actors usually do not draw a line between nature and culture in their environment (4.2.). Part of what the participants described as 'nature' is strongly reminiscent of Haraway's natureculture (Haraway 2003), Hull et al'.s 'cultured naturalness' (2001) or Mausner's categories of civilised, quasi, or semi nature (1996). The natureculture described by our interviewees is not merely a network between individual cultural and natural nodes but instead a holistic conglomerate that cannot be separated into cultural and natural components (4.2.2.). Nature and culture are reciprocally constituted as nature is often found in a cultured landscape and as our examples on natural inspiration showed, local culture is strongly shaped by nature (4.2.1., Q10, Q11). In the emotional connection with a place, identities, memories, meanings and aesthetical values in natural and cultural elements cannot be separated (Q12). The concepts 'nature' and 'culture' thus refer to mixed and overlapping realities, which implies that these concepts lose their sharpness and become adaptable and situation dependent.

6. Conclusion and outlook: environmental policy implications

Advocates of a relational turn request a radical shift in Western worldviews towards more relational concepts. Do our results and interpretations suggest that no such turn is necessary because Western worldviews are already fully relational? No, this is definitely not the conclusion we want to draw! We talked to people living in rural areas in central Europe and our conversations took place during a walk in nature. In a different context, other, more modernist aspects of the concepts of 'nature' are likely to have prevailed. As introduced above, other studies showed a diversity of visions and concepts of 'nature' including substantialist, dualistic concepts in Western societies. Moreover, *formal* Western thinking often is less relational than this study's respondents' perceptions. So, our claim is more modest, we argue that our results show that relational thinking is *not contrary to Western worldviews* and that Western cultures contain roots of relational thinking (Figure 2). Revisiting and making visible these relational roots can be a promising starting point for initiating a broader relational turn that extends to formal contexts such as environmental policy, science, or economics. Focusing on pluralistic conceptions of 'nature' that are already present within a society – even if often concealed – appears to be a more straightforward approach than trying to integrate worldviews from other cultures. Western philosophical accounts can strengthen such a turn by demonstrating how non-dualistic worldviews are inherently coherent and compatible with science.

A shift to relational paradigms and relational thinking has been suggested as a powerful leverage point for transformational change towards a more sustainable lifestyle in Western societies (West et al. 2020). The incorporation of relational values into the international environmental policy discourse, for instance, through their inclusion in the IPBES framework (Anderson et al. 2022) is a step into this direction, as this value category emphasises the embeddedness of humans in nature and dissolves the dichotomy of instrumental and intrinsic values (Chan et al. 2016). However, values are only one element of people's understanding of nature, which depend on and overlap with descriptive views of nature (Buijs 2009).

One proposal for a more broadly relational formal approach could be to break up the nature/culture dichotomy with a third category analogous to 'relational value' in the context of environmental values. As was previously described for relational values (Deplazes-Zemp and Chapman 2021) such a third category 'natureculture' with new characteristics could integrate elements of the two existing categories. Building on the insights of this study, this third category would include events where people experience active nature in the interaction and collaboration with it. Natureculture includes places, species, organisms, and practices in which human actions and natural processes intertwine and, thus, is dynamic and in constant development and change.

'Heritage' is an established concept in formal Western thinking, which in covering both cultural and natural entities, displays some similarities with 'natureculture'. Others have highlighted that the separation of cultural and natural heritage cannot be

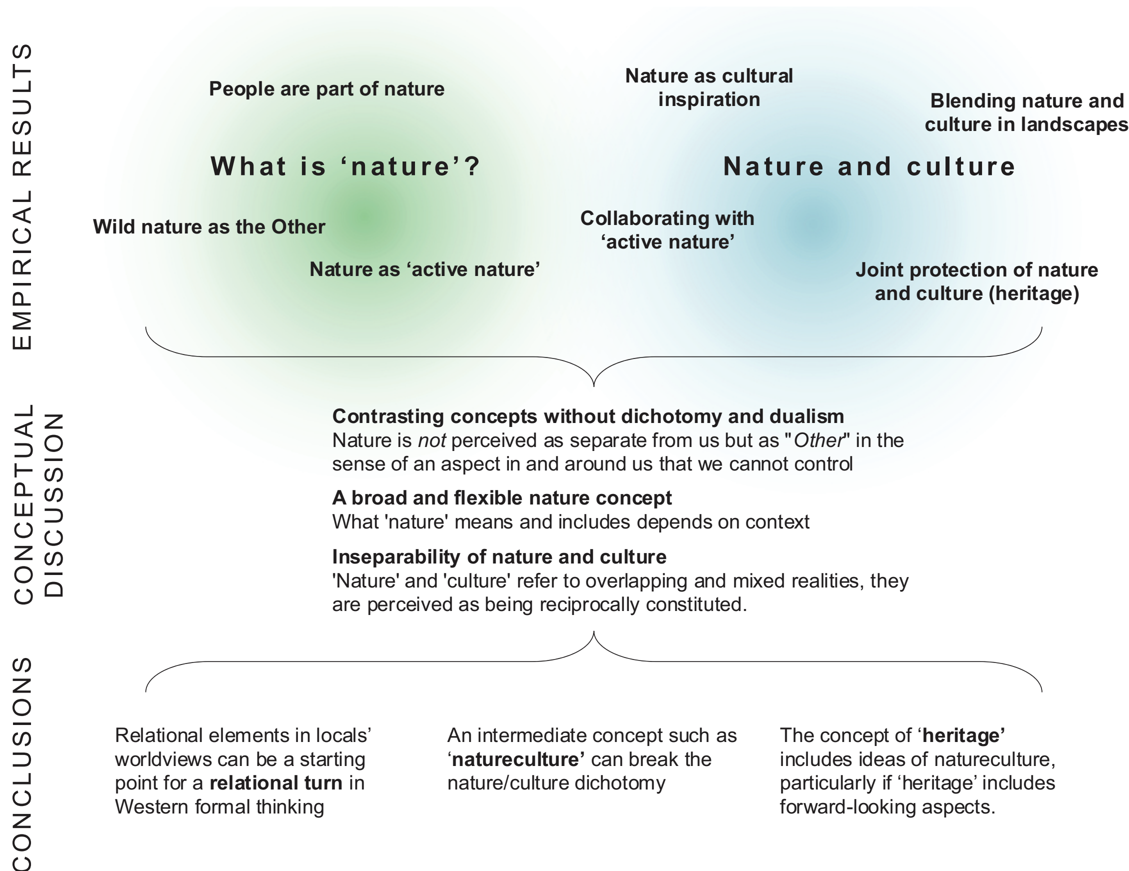

Figure 2. How our interview data suggest that a relational turn in formal Western thinking could build on local stakeholders' worldviews. Schematic representation of the main argument of the paper. Phrases in the figure align with subtitles in the article.

upheld in practice (Bridgewater et al. 2007; Harrison 2015; Azzopardi et al. 2023). This blurring is also confirmed by the fact that e.g. the 'UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage'[11] combines the two types of heritage. Likewise, in Switzerland, the protection of nature is combined with safeguarding cultural heritage in the 'Federal Act on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage'.[12] This law aims 'to carefully manage and protect heritage landscapes and sites of local character, historical sites, and the country's natural and cultural monuments, and to promote their preservation and up-keep; [. . .]' (Art1a). Unfortunately, as indicated by these aims, 'Heritage' is understood as a backwards-looking and static notion of both nature and culture. However, Rodney Harrison (2015) has nicely elaborated that the concept of heritage can also include the future. He refers to heritage as a collaborative process and heritage practices as 'conserving objects, places, and practices "**from** the past, **in** the present, **for** the future"' (Harrison 2015, p. 27, emphases in original). Such a flexible and forward-looking understanding of heritage can also be seen, for instance, in the climate change discourse, which focuses on the legacy that we pass on to future generations, this heritage is shaped by active nature together with our actions in the present. A corresponding relational concept of heritage in conservation would allow for the protection of nature in natureculture, where it would support traditional as well as new local forms of considerate interactions and collaborations with active nature, that leave room for natural developments and allow to experience nature as *the Other*.

The regional parks, in which we conducted the go-along interviews are legally grounded in the previously mentioned Act on Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage. Despite the static backward-looking understanding of 'heritage' in the law, the many small-scale bottom-up conservation initiatives that the interviewees told us about indicate that this type of park does strengthen a relational (i.e. non-dualistic, flexible, procedural) concept of nature that can lead to a sense of connection with and responsibility for nature.

To close, we would like to clarify that we are not suggesting that a relational concept of 'nature' in environmental policy should reduce nature protection to the promotion of natureculture. Instead, we believe that a relational concept of nature involves a flexible and pluralistic approach that focuses on active nature in a variety of more or less cultural contexts. Such a process-based approach may increase awareness that all the singular natural entities that we protect such as species, landscapes, habitats, etc., are part of the same

flexible and changeable whole that we also affect through our consumption and lifestyles.

Notes

1. According to this account 'nature' and 'natural' are not ontological but relational categories, which means that if a beaver were to philosophise about nature, it would refer to human technology as natural, and to those aspects of the world that were impacted through the traits that the beaver would consider typical of its kind (e.g. beaver dams) as non-natural.
2. The idea of active nature has a long tradition in Western philosophy as *natura naturans* (Merchant 2016).
3. According to some authors the reference to *an Other* is problematic because inherently dominating or essentialist. For instance, Haila writes with respect to the discussion of nature as an *Other* 'The relationship to the "other" is asymmetric and implies domination [...]'. (Haila 2000, p. 157). In contrast, we understand the relationship with *an Other* in a non-dualistic sense. Respecting something or someone as *an Other* means refraining from categorising it as better or worse but involves being open and interested in its otherness (e.g. Plumwood 1993; Wienhues 2022; Wienhues and Deplazes-Zemp 2022).
4. This result is somewhat clearer than one would expect based on a quantitative survey in Switzerland published in 2009 (Bauer et al. 2009).
5. This finding links our study to a rich literature on the connectedness to nature as reviewed, for example, in Hatty et al. (2022); Ives et al. (2017); Restall and Conrad (2015).
6. The representative survey published by Bauer et al. (2009) reported more diverse attitudes towards wilderness in the Swiss population.
7. Such an understanding of the human nature relationship was also observed in a recent study of Swiss mountain farmers (Chapman and Deplazes-Zemp 2024).
8. We do not claim that our results can be directly extrapolated to all Western cultures with their differences and idiosyncrasies, but our results clearly show that Western worldviews are not *necessarily* dualistic when it comes to the separation between nature and culture even when they hold on to the two concepts.
9. This has also been nicely elaborated by Uggla and Olausson in their analysis of the representation in tourist information as different types of *Others* (Uggla and Olausson 2013).
10. For such a relational theory of nature see Didier Debaise's 'Nature as Event' (Debaise 2017). Building on Whithead's work, Debaise describes nature as passage in space and time. What we perceive as natural entities are elements in/of this passage, or in other words, events in space and time.
11. Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage (1972) https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/. (accessed 10/06/2024)
12. https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/1966/1637_1694_1679/en. (accessed 10/06/2024)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Dr. Sarah Hartmann for supporting us in conducting go-along interviews and all the interview partners for their time and the fascinating walking routes which they selected. We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the NOMIS foundation as well as from the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) under the project "ValPar.CH: Values of the ecological infrastructure in Swiss parks" of the Action Plan of the Swiss Biodiversity Strategy.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

The work was supported by the NOMIS Stiftung and the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN).

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