

Marble 2021-2022, Fall Semester

The Alt-Right Pipeline

Supervisor: Dr. Jeroen Moes

Email: Jeroen.Moes@Maastrichtuniversity.nl

Faculty: FSE

Department: UCM

Spaces available for this project: 2

Project description

One prominent feature of contemporary politics in western societies is the rise of the radical right. In Europe this includes a long list of political movements, such as the German AfD, the French Rassemblement / Front National, the Dutch PVV and FvD, Fidesz, Finns Party, Vlaams Belang, Golden Dawn, Lega, PiS, and UKIP. The radical / alt right phenomenon is not limited to Europe, however. Jair Bolsonaro, Donald Trump, Shinzo Abe, and Vladimir Putin are all commonly seen as proponents of the same broad ideology. A lot of energy has been expended to label the ideology as well. Labels such as the 'alt right' or 'new nationalism' suggest that these are new movements taking old ideas for another spin. Others have argued that this is simply fascism that has been submerged for decades and has rediscovered its self-confidence.

Regardless of what we choose to call this beast, scholars and other commentators have been struggling to offer a conclusive explanation for this global phenomenon, often seeking answers in the particularities of each society where this occurs. However, it is undeniable that these movements share certain striking characteristics in terms of their politics, agenda-setting, organisation, strategies, and the types of electorates they tend to appeal to.

This MaRBLe project aims to look at this phenomenon from a political sociology perspective, emphasizing the micro level, but certainly also looking at how this interfaces with the meso and macro level. There is no concrete plan for this, or even a narrower focus yet. The first step of this project will be for the student(s) and supervisor to decide on the specific direction. Several ideas are currently being considered: first, it would be very valuable to conduct a participant-observation / ethnographic investigation amongst specific alt-right groups in the vicinity of Maastricht. One such example might be the youth movements for political parties such as the Dutch *Forum voor Democratie* (FvD) or similar. A second example of a direction this project could take would be to dive deeper into the online gathering places of alt-right groups, such as those on some corners of Reddit and certainly 4Chan. For such a project, we could make use of content analysis, digital ethnography, or discourse analysis. Finally, a combination between these two

ideas, where we look explicitly at the interface between online and offline gathering and exchange could be very valuable and interesting.

Prerequisites

No specific prerequisites.

Tasks and expectations

Development of a research puzzle, research design, data gathering, analysis, and writing. All of this in collaboration with the supervisor, and ideally aiming at publishing our results collectively.

Research phases

- 1 – Generating Questions
- 2 - Developing Methodology
- 3 - Gathering Data
- 4 - Analysing Data
- 5 – Presenting Analyses

Assessment

At UCM, you will have to present your research plan in the form of a poster (ungraded), and in a presentation at the end (20% of the final grade). The supervisor (in this case Dr. Jeroen Moes & Dr. Inge Melchior) determines the remaining 80% of the grade based on an assessment that fits the students' responsibilities in the project. Here are the details for the remaining 80%:

We can agree on this at the start of the project. By default, a final paper counting for 80% of your grade, and 20% for a presentation at UCM is assumed.

Context

MaRBL students are expected to genuinely contribute to on-going research or the research agenda of the supervisor or her/his department. Below is a description of the context for this project, and the background of the supervisor:

Dr. Jeroen Moes holds a PhD. from the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, Italy. He has worked as an anthropologist and political sociologist on issues of identity, social class, and inequality across different places in Europe. He also coordinates several other student-centered research projects and takes an anarchist, non-hierarchical approach to his collaborations.



Note that for help with your research you can also [get in touch with the Methods Lab.](#)