

## MA thesis IAKH 2018

### **Fascism, right-wing radicalism and extremism. Threats to the liberal democratic system in Europe before and after 1945.**

Associate professor Elisabetta Cassina Wolff, tlf. 22 85 82 51, e-post: e.c.wolff@iakh.uio.no

In what way did fascism in Western Europe survive after the military defeat in 1945? Did it survive as ideology within isolated right-wing radical and antidemocratic groups outside the political system? Or were neo-fascist parties created with the goal of operating within the Liberal Democratic political system? If so, how did the democratic institutions and their representatives react? An interesting question concerns the integration and assimilation of outsiders. Does the meeting with democracy and its openness favour an internal reform process and a revision of, for example, racist and antidemocratic views, or does it only lead to a superficial transformation? Do radical views move to right-wing extreme and non-parliamentary groups? Does the degree of ideological radicalization increase together with the feeling of exclusion and marginalization? Is the latter a reason why anti-democratic and radical positions *in theory* become violent actions *in practice*?

The students are invited to analyse the abovementioned main topic from different perspectives:

- ✓ Theory and method: analysis of the concepts of fascism, right-wing radicalism, right-wing extremism and right-wing populism;
- ✓ changes in the nature of fascism after 1945: from anti-Semitism and corporatism to immigrant hostility;
- ✓ political practice: anti-establishment parties and non-parliamentary groups
- ✓ attack on the Liberal Democratic system: terrorism during the 1970s and violence as a means of fighting
- ✓ the debate among the intellectuals: 'The new right' in France and Italy
- ✓ reaction from democratic institutions: political decisions that have prevented, reduced or fought right-wing extremism
- ✓ interaction with democratic institutions: different forms of political dialogue and political cooperation (voting in connection with legislation and resolutions in national assemblies, and coalitions) between system-critical parties sitting in parliaments and established conservative and / or right-oriented parties

MA theses on these topics should be rooted in empirical studies that take into account a specific national context in a clearly defined period from the 1920s to the end of the last century. The students should therefore master the language of the country in question to study. Knowledge of historical fascism in Europe between the wars is a prerequisite for an analysis of neo-fascism and right-wing radicalism / right-wing extremism after 1945. However, the focus will be on post-war times.

Primary sources can be of different kinds: journals and newspapers online or in national libraries, political programs and political manifests in the parties' archives, political debates in

the press, public documents such as parliamentary referrals, laws and resolutions in national assemblies (much available online now), interviews with relevant actors, etc.

Within the framework of the main theme, the students may discuss other proposals for MA thesis with the supervisor.

MA theses on fascism, right-wing radicalism and right-wing extremism will have themes close to in-depth assignments under ‘Totalitarian Ideas and Movements’

Supervisor:

**Wolff, Elisabetta Cassina**

(Associate professor, 30% affiliation to Center for Research on Extremism)

European modern and contemporary history:

- Fascism as both national and overnational phenomenon (‘general fascism’)
- Right-wing radical and extreme movements, parties and ideas in Europe from the 1920s until today
- European history of political ideas
- Italian history and politics