

*Call for Papers*

## **“Re-inventing Liberal Universalisms”**

Research Workshop

COST Action CA 16211

*Reappraising Intellectual Debates on Civic Rights and Democracy in Europe (RECAST)*

Working Group 2: Languages and Ideologies

University of Greifswald, 26-27 February 2018

Liberalism, even when considered as a manifold and plural political ideology, is still widely regarded as having universal reach in its concepts and arguments. “Universal” here refers to the interweaving of abstract terms assuring continuity throughout fluctuating political agendas. Due to the important role of rationality in liberal anthropology, liberal arguments are also universal and comprehensive in claiming plausibility irrespective of linguistic, cultural or political borders. Still, from a rhetorical perspective, the tension between universal and context-bound claims has remained a constant challenge for liberalism.

How has liberal universalism been undone and re-invented in history? This workshop suggests approaching this question through the nexus between liberal universalism and migration – migration in the double sense of a key experience in the formulation of liberal arguments as well as a movement of ideas and languages. The experiences of different cultural contexts have shaped the ideas of many liberal theorists, intellectuals and politicians. Be it in voluntary travels, in the context of migration, or forced exile, the re-integration of novel experiences into the liberal framework can bring to the fore the reinvention of liberal universalism, but possibly also its problematisation and struggle for alternative variants within the liberal universe. But the tension of context-bound and universal claims also comes to the fore when we examine the migration, translation, or adaption of specific liberal arguments, both in political theory and its ideological uses. Elaborating on the links between intellectual and public debates, this workshop will address the historical and contemporary plurality of liberal languages.

The reinvention of liberal universalism continues to play an important role in contemporary political imagination. The old challenges that conservatism and state-centred nationalisms once posed have now multiplied and diversified, and tensions with multiculturalism or populism, to name but two, are the rule rather than the exception. In a world of competing ideologies and ideological families, what is the normative reach of liberal claims? “Liberal” has even migrated

ideologically as a label to become a pejorative term, which makes for an interesting case study, both from a historical and/or contemporary perspective.

We invite paper proposals from a wide range of disciplines, including political science, history, philosophy, cultural sciences, linguistics, law, or journalism. Among others, we welcome papers dealing with questions such as: How has migration influenced the formulation of both historical and contemporary liberal political theories? When does the encounter of different cultural contexts enhance the recourse to universalising argumentative patterns, and under which circumstances does it pose a challenge? How have liberal languages themselves travelled through cultural contexts, and how have such travels strengthened, challenged, and transformed the universal outlook of liberal arguments? The workshop is open to individual or comparative case studies as well as to papers exploring new methods in historical semantics, corpus linguistics, and ideology studies.

**Keynote speaker:** Prof. Michael Freeden  
(SOAS University of London and University of Oxford)

Please submit proposals to [recastworkshop2018@gmail.com](mailto:recastworkshop2018@gmail.com) by **19 January 2018**. Participants will be notified of acceptance by **22 January**.

### Organisers

Working Group Languages and Ideologies. COST Action CA 16211 RECAST: *Reappraising Intellectual Debates on Civic Rights and Democracy in Europe*  
([https://www.cost.eu/COST\\_Actions/ca/CA16211](https://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/ca/CA16211) & <https://www.uma.es/costactionrecast>)

Concepta: International Research School in Conceptual History and Political Thought

Department of Political Science & Communication Studies, University of Greifswald  
(<https://ipk.uni-greifswald.de/en/institute/fields-of-work/political-science>)

### Convenors

Rosario López, University of Málaga ([rosariols@uma.es](mailto:rosariols@uma.es))

Lenka Strnadová, University of West Bohemia ([lstrnad@kap.zcu.cz](mailto:lstrnad@kap.zcu.cz))

Rieke Trimčev, University of Greifswald ([riek.trimcev@uni-greifswald.de](mailto:riek.trimcev@uni-greifswald.de))