

## Call for Papers

### *Reconceptualizing Civic Rights and Democracy*

COST Action CA 16211 (RECAST) – First Workshop of Working Group 3: Concepts

**2–3 November 2018**  
University of Coimbra

The Workshop “Reconceptualizing Civic Rights and Democracy” is the first of a series of three workshops to be organized by Working Group 3: Concepts of the COST Action CA 16211 *Reappraising Intellectual Debates on Civic Rights and Democracy in Europe* (RECAST). This will be an exploratory workshop whose substantive goal is to map the key concepts operating at several different levels in the debates on civic rights and democracy, assess their specific, context-bound semantic changes, and eventually contribute to redefine some of them. It will also aim at defining the central theoretical paths that will be explored in the two subsequent workshops of this working group, and thus devising a publication plan of the main results.

The overall goal of RECAST is to “reappraise the contributions of intellectual debates to the challenge of civic rights in European democracies” and in so doing it “seeks to revamp the path connecting intellectual debates, public debates, politics and policy action”. Within this framework, concepts play a key role in bridging the gap between theory and practice and unfolding the complexity of the political, legal, historical and institutional layouts of civic rights and democracy, as well as the relations between them.

While concepts sometimes share a context-transcending claim towards a possible universal validity, one cannot overlook the fact that through their different interpretations, applications and (mis)appropriations, their meaning is related to a wide array of different, and sometimes conflicting context-specific usages. For instance, human rights are universal in their claims but their concrete instantiations depend on the political will of sovereign states. And also in European democracies there is often a tension between the respect for these universal rights, and other priorities that often lead to their neglect – the recent refugee crisis being a case in point. Furthermore, concepts such as “freedom”, “justice” or “equality” are appropriated by different political parties, social movements or NGOs that try to spell out their claims by resorting to them. Others, such as “terrorism” or “populism” are used according to an antagonistic logic that aims at identifying the enemy. As such, concepts are implicitly or explicitly mobilized by political and social agents as well as by scholars.



Within this context, Working Group 3: Concepts sets out to analyze the uses of concepts from political, philosophical, historical, legal and non-scholarly perspectives. For this exploratory workshop, it invites submissions on the definition, use or interpretation of any concept pertaining to civic rights and democracy. The submissions should focus on the European framework, and they might (but not necessarily) include a comparison between the uses of these concepts in different countries. Proposals might explore (but are not limited to) the following topics:

- The history, or histories, of civic rights, their elucidation and application (or lack thereof) in European and neighboring countries, including in the context of recent events, such as the economic crisis, the refugee crisis and the rise of populism.
- The uses of specific concepts in the struggles of social movements (e.g., the use of the vocabulary of “recognition” or “equality” in feminist, LGBTQ, or other social movements, including those of minorities).
- The different appropriations of key concepts related to civic rights and democracy, including positive concepts such as “freedom” and “equality”, antagonistic concepts like “populism”, or concepts whose signification often varies geographically (i.e. the understanding of “socialism” in Eastern vs. Western Europe, or “liberalism” in continental and Anglo-American traditions).

Potential participants should submit their proposals until **31 July 2018** to [gongalomarcelo@gmail.com](mailto:gongalomarcelo@gmail.com) and [hanna-mari.kivisto@jyu.fi](mailto:hanna-mari.kivisto@jyu.fi). These should include contact details along with the title, a 150-300 word abstract and 4-5 keywords.

### **Organizers**

This event is jointly organized by COST Action CA 16211 *Reappraising Intellectual Debates on Civic Rights and Democracy in Europe* (RECAST) and Centro de Estudos Clássicos e Humanísticos (CECH) da Universidade de Coimbra

### **Conveners**

Gonçalo Marcelo (CECH, Univ. of Coimbra / Católica Porto Business School), Working Group 3: Concepts Leader

Hanna-Mari Kivistö (University of Jyväskylä), Working Group 3: Concepts Vice-Leader

