

Re-energizing ideology studies: the maturing of a discipline

At the end of 2015 the *Journal of Political Ideologies* will celebrate 20 years of its existence. To mark the coming of age of a field that cuts across established divides, and the success of the *JPI* in contributing to that development, the University of Nottingham's Centre for the Study of Political Ideologies, at the School of Politics and International Relations and the Department of History, supported by the *JPI*'s publisher, Routledge, will host a conference on 27 and 28 November 2015.

Over the past 20 years the scholarly interest in ideologies, and the range and sophistication of analyses devoted to them, have undergone a sea change. Both as a theoretical concept and in the manner of its application to a host of concrete cases, ideology and its study have cast off the fetters of prejudice and misunderstanding that confined them during much of the past two centuries, and their reputation has been largely cleared of its pejorative connotations.

In the field of politics, ideologies have gained respect alongside historical articulations of political thought and alongside the normative advocacy of ethical desiderata for a good society. Investigating and analysing actual political thought-practices have become increasingly common and significant in understanding societies. History, cultural studies, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and law have all generated important insights into the patterns, logic, functions and sources of collectively-held ideas. The research they have conducted demonstrates a shift from macro to micro-analysis, and those disciplines that had not already done so have also extended their purview from examining elite forms of thought to emphasizing the vernacular. The pluralism and diversity of ideological thinking and its inbuilt flexibility even within conventional ideological families have enabled far subtler accounts of the continuous aggregation and disaggregation of its components.

Ideologies have usually been investigated as verbal or written texts, but a growing awareness of their visual expressions has drawn in domains such as the performative arts, photography, architecture and body language. Emotion as well as rhetoric, all-too frequently banished to the sidelines as distorting the ostensible public reason to which political thought should aspire, have come into their own as normal modes of voicing and conveying ideologies. The task of recognizing the ideological dimension of all types of human thought and activity is now indebted to a vital ongoing process of cross-disciplinary co-operation.

In this **call for papers**, the focus is on the changes that ideology studies have experienced over the past twenty years or so, on applying methods of understanding ideologies to the rapidly mutating face of actual ideologies in the contemporary world, and on emerging areas that could command future interest. Proposals for papers are welcome from any branch of knowledge that is engaging in pushing forward boundaries with an impact on research into ideologies and into a deeper comprehension of the phenomenon of ideology.

Abstracts of up to 300 words, including a paper title, name, affiliation and contact details should be submitted to the conference organizer, Professor Michael Freeden, School of Politics and International Relations, University of Nottingham (michael.freeden@nottingham.ac.uk). The deadline for proposals for papers is 7 September 2015.