

POLAR STARS



Contrary to the cliché that our age is post-ideological, this book contends that political ideologies are part of the logic itself of modernity and continue to permeate 'hypermodern' politics. Using a multitude of primary sources (texts) and data, the author identifies the 'polar stars' – guiding principles such as order, freedom and equality – around which ideological fields have developed, mainly in Europe, in recent centuries. In place of the too reductive concepts of 'left' and 'right', this book uses a different strategy to analyse the orientations of contemporary political movements, parties, policies and voters: it reconstructs the main ideological 'matrices' of modern politics in their historical origins and subsequent phases of radicalisation and hybridisation, which still continue, both among these political matrices and with 'metapolitical' ideologies like populism. In doing so, the book also propounds a broader theory that helps to interpret recent ideological trends as reflecting a distinctive 'double movement' of modernity: the continuous tension between liberalising pressures for greater individual rights and, vice versa, 'centripetal' countermovements along either the matrix of order or that of socioeconomic equality.

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