

Call for Papers

**Panel**

**Why the Founders' Nightmare Came True:**

**Analyzing the Constitutional Crisis of the United States**

As Part of the Section:

*Rigging the System – Righting the System: Dimensions of a constitutional, political and societal crisis in the United States*

ECPR General Conference, University of Innsbruck, Austria, 22-26 August 2022

*Panel Chair:*

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For more than 200 years the U.S. Constitution has been marvelled and revered for its ingeniously engineered system of checks and balances coupled with a system of representation in order to neutralize the upcoming of powerful factions in a federal state with a large territory - and its symbolic force as an integrative device for “we the people”. However, in the last decades and especially under the pressure of hyper-partisanship, the functional deterioration of House and Senate as well as the “unmaking of the presidency” (Hennessey/Wittes) by Donald Trump, the constitution has suffered serious blows and was shaken in its very foundations. A veritable constitutional crisis has been slowly creeping and gained momentum up to the deplorable “big lie” and “stop-the-steal” agitation by a ruthless president and his cronies – finally culminating in the constitutional and democratic trauma of 6th January 2021 where a peaceful transition was in great danger and a coup seemed to be ready at hand. More, the “bitterly fractured unity” (Collinson) which has been the subtext of “We the People” from the beginning of the United States developed into a scenario where great parts of the people no longer feel united under the constitution, but claim their own vision and version of the “real constitution” instead.

This panel addresses the main reasons for the founders' nightmare coming true and aims to take a closer look at malfunctions of the U.S Constitution, flaws of constitutional and institutional design, functional pre-conditions and possible cures. It welcomes contributions/papers from all (sub)disciplines and especially from Law & Politics, Law & Society, American Political Development, Political and Constitutional Theory and History and (Comparative) Political Science. Especially early career researchers are encouraged to submit their proposals (max. 500 words) by February 12, 2022.