

Call for Papers

Panel

The ‘dishonest media’, a ‘woke military’, and post-2020 ‘election integrity’ laws? Politicization as the undercurrent of the creeping autocratization in the US

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 Chairs

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Even more clearly than on January 6, 2021 itself, the year after the attack on the US Capitol has demonstrated that a new, single division – emanating from former President Trump’s ‘big lie’ of election fraud – has come to structure the political arena in the United States.

Underneath this dichotomy, common organizing principles of liberal representative democracies have begun to sway; traditional separations between branches of government and their respective functions and logics, between facts and fiction, and between issues outside and within the bounds of partisan controversy are increasingly blurred. In recent public discourse as well as scholarly analyses, the most radical and violent actions and actors and those around the former president have so far taken center stage. Yet, in order to grasp this creeping autocratization more fully, it is essential to examine the promotion and justification of a broader foundation in which major trends of deinstitutionalization, anti-liberalism and anti-science are being anchored in the political system, in the media and in society.

This panel zooms in on these developments to study them as processes of politicization and depoliticization that can strategically and significantly (re)define, (re)form, (de)stabilize and (de)legitimize the social, discursive and institutional context in which societal interactions, political conflict and decision-making can legitimately take place. This perspective also allows us to inquire into the particular knowledge(s), information or rationalities that these processes of (de)politicization rely on and that they (in)validate in turn.

Against this backdrop, we invite paper proposals from all intellectual traditions and theoretical, method(ological) and empirical perspectives to address especially, but not exclusively, the

- continuities and changes regarding the relationship between the judiciary and the (legislative) realm of politics, i.e. a potential politicization of the judiciary or judicialization of politics – including ways this relationship has played out in specific policy areas like e.g. education and public health or in the field of civil rights, electoral processes and voting procedures;
- ways in which national actors like the military, the diplomatic service, governmental departments and agencies as well as state and local actors like (elected) county sheriffs, school boards, local boards of election or election workers have been affected

by increasing partisanship in society and government – as well as the ways in which they themselves have resisted or promoted (de)politicization;

- relationships between communication, (dis)information and networking on traditional media and social media platforms and processes of (de)politicization, also with a view to tracing and explaining the growing relevance of fringe ideologies and conspiracy theories in the political and media arenas and regarding the role of the courts to distinguish between different contents and forms of ‘knowledge’.

Please send your paper abstracts of max. 500 words (and any further questions you may have!) to simonj@hsu-hh.de and v.tsagkroni@fsw.leidenuniv.nl before the deadline of February 12, 2022.