

Call for Papers

Panel

Contested Municipal Authority in the Contested Constitutional Order

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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In the multilevel order of the United States, cities not only have long played an elemental role in government and public administration, including with regard to implementation of State and even federal policies. They also have far more day-to-day interactions with residents than the other levels of government. Municipalities and local governments themselves have also become part of the growing polarization in the United States – on account of own policies pursued, e.g. when in contravention of upper-level laws, or due to preemption measures by State governments, or when the federal-level government pursues preemption of either or both levels. Such is the case usually, and seemingly increasingly, when different parties are in the majority at different levels of government, or when the policy area in question is an area of controversy. Thus the ‘divided government’ long familiar as a challenge to governing among branches of government at one level with countervailing majorities has expanded into the vertical dimension of the complex constitutional order. Adding to this complexity, and the potentials for contestation, is not just the ambivalence, but rather sheer silence in the US Constitution on the authority of municipalities and the local level of government to this day.

Against this backdrop, this panel invites contributions that take on a variety of issues and perspectives related to the contestation around municipal authority in the US multilevel system. In addition to different (sub)disciplinary approaches, papers are welcome that deal with relevant policy fields such as education, public health or immigration; or a more issue-oriented focus such as on firearms (non-)regulation, abortion, or pandemic-related issues, among others. Moreover, while the panel focuses on the US case, papers may also take a comparative perspective with municipalities/local-level government in other countries and the potential areas of conflict over authority between local government and their role within their respective structures of government.

Paper proposals of max. 500 words should be submitted to the panel chairs by February 12, 2022.