

Cluster of Excellence "Contestations of the Liberal Script" (SCRIPTS)

"Political Polarization, Regional Governance and Challenges for the Liberal Script in Latin America."

The Cluster of Excellence "Contestations of the Liberal Script" (SCRIPTS) seeks to explore and understand causes, types and consequences of contestations of what we call "The liberal way of organizing societies" from different disciplinary perspectives, focusing on the local, regional and global level.

From the recent presidential election in Chile going back to the collapse of Venezuela, Latin America has been the stage of polarized and volatile politics, of the constant redesign of regional governance institutions, and of countless challenges to democracy. Some of the attacks on democracy took the form of traditional institutional ruptures while others mined selective institutions associated with the rule of law. Populist leaders were the main architects of the latter. The long Latin American tradition of strong regional governance institutions was replaced by an à la carte approach, wherein states join and defect from these regional arrangements as they see fit. As a result, these governance institutions are losing strength and legitimacy -- their mandate as providers of public goods increasingly under attack. In the absence of regional public goods providers in the realm of macroeconomic coordination, human rights protection, environmental policies, the protection of democracy, Latin America has dived into worrisome thresholds of economic instability, social inequality, environmental degradation and human rights violation. Looming large is the ubiquitous fear that democracy will not withstand these many challenges -- an impression backed by a not-so-distant experience of authoritarianism.

Together with its international academic partners, El Colegio de México and the University of São Paulo, SCRIPTS will host two regional conferences on the crisis of the liberal script with the aim of analyzing the variations of the script, its challenges and contestations in the Latin American context and the implications beyond. The first conference will take place in Mexico City, at Colegio de México in early 2023. A follow up conference will gather selected

presenters from the Mexico conference in São Paulo, at the University of São Paulo in late 2023.

We particularly invite panel and paper proposals on the following topics:

- Contemporary as well as historical understandings of “liberalism” and the “liberal script” in Latin America and their contestations
- Latin American varieties of populism and their challenges to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law
- Origins and causes of contemporary crises of democracy in Latin America
- Regional governance institutions in Latin America and their contestations
- Latin America and the world: troubled relationships with the U.S., China, and others.

We expect to be able to cover reasonable travel and accommodation costs of presenters.

Please submit your **panel proposals** and **paper proposals** to Dr. Isabel Winnwa (irc@scripts-berlin.eu) until April 15, 2022. Also feel free to e-mail any questions you might have to this address.

You will find further information about the Cluster and its research agenda on our website:
www.scripts-berlin.eu

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