

**Call for Papers – Extended Deadline !!!!!!!**

## **DEMOCRACY AND ITS LIMITS**

### **THE UNITED STATES IN PERSPECTIVE**

A Conference, co-hosted by  
The Political Science Section of the German Association for American Studies,  
Atlantische Akademie Rheinland-Pfalz e.V.,  
Freie Universität and Bard College Berlin

Date: November 5-7, 2020

Location: John-F.-Kennedy Institute, Freie Universität Berlin / **or online**

Organizers: Aysuda Kölemen, Christian Lammert & Boris Vormann

Democratic institutions in the United States are often thought of as bulwarks against manifold threats, both from inside and outside of the American polity. Donald Trump's first term in office has been a stress test to these democratic institutions and processes. This conference asks for the causes as well as the consequences of Trump's electoral success. We consider illiberal tendencies as a serious political phenomenon in the United States and see Trump as a symptom of a longer-standing set of dynamics that we can better grasp through a comparative view and against the backdrop of global dynamics.

As a glimpse at different cases from Jair Bolsonaro to Viktor Orbán shows, demagogues, once in office, alter the structures of the state and civil society in ways that are likely to inflict long term damage. Compromises to the separation of powers, public officials' conflicts of interest, the defamation of the media: some of the essential pillars of democracy and core ideals of the Enlightenment are under attack.

As such, this conference examines the effects of Donald Trump on democratic processes and institutions, and reflects on the immediate and potential long-term consequences of his administration for democratic participation in the political system of the United States, and how these processes compare to other democracies in crisis.

Proposed papers can respond to a range of questions including:

- How do the different challenges to liberal democracy compare across contexts? To what extent, if at all, are the United States exceptional? Which vocabulary and concepts can help us fathom such illiberal dynamics in the context of the United States?
- Do constitutional procedures such as the system of checks and balances still provide an obstacle to illiberal tendencies and autocracy?
- How do illiberal actors alter the possibilities for participation in American democracy? What is their impact on responsiveness, participation in the public sphere, the electoral system, political parties, interest groups and (other) social movements, the reconstitution of the demos, and the role of money in US politics?
- How do illiberal actors affect policy across different fields? What is the effect of illiberalism on conceptions of citizenship rights and social policy in particular? What impact do such actors have on (welfare) state institutions?
- How does the perceived failure of liberal policies and institutions in the US impact the global standing of liberal democracy? And what effect do illiberal tendencies in the US have on international relations, institutions, and the global order?

**Please submit your short abstract (250 words maximum) to the organizers  
([politics@jfki.fu-berlin.de](mailto:politics@jfki.fu-berlin.de)) by June 12, 2020.**