

SALZBURG WORKSHOP IN LEGAL AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

THE POPULIST CRISIS OF PLURALIST DEMOCRACY

CALL FOR PAPERS • 1ST JUNE 2017 • KEYNOTE: JAN-WERNER MÜLLER (PRINCETON)

After the election of Donald Trump, the Brexit decision, Islamist terrorism and the recent European refugee crisis, many citizens of the Western world lost confidence in the powers of liberal and pluralist democracy. As democratic political mechanisms seem to prove incapable of a solution of current problems, authoritarianism appears more and more desirable to many, which, in turn, leads to deep divisions within Western societies.

As external factors, Islamism and Putin's "authoritarian democracy" in Russia are increasingly perceived as threatening. As an internal factor, the European refugee crisis has divided contemporary European societies on the central question of how to deal with Islam: While the "intellectual elite" advocates for freedom of religion, others warn of the danger of islamization. While some speak of irrational fears - often provoked by deliberate disinformation ("fake news") - others see us facing the loss of, say, European or Christian identity. While some see right-wing radicalism as making its way towards the center of the political spectrum, others speak about partisan media. Moreover, many populist parties in the West, who claim to exclusively represent and speak for the "real" people, maintain close relations to Putin's "authoritarian democracy" in Russia - which links internal and external aspects of the problem.

These issues call for academic inquiry, particularly from the point of view of legal and social philosophy. Possible questions include:

- How can we comprehend and evaluate these political and legal challenges with the traditional concepts of legal and social philosophy?
- What are the social and legal structures underlying the current crisis?
- What are the political and legal prerequisites for pluralistic democracies?
- What are the democratic methods for solving the current crisis?
- Can democracy question its own legal and institutional conditions? How far can democracy take its own limitation into consideration?
- Can the legal state ("Rechtsstaat") oppose populist-democratic attempts to dismantle democratic institutions?

Young researchers (pre- and postdoc) are cordially invited to submit abstracts addressing the workshop theme. Travel and accommodation expenses will be reimbursed (up to € 400).

Please send extended abstracts of no more than 1000 words together with a short CV to kristin.albrecht@sbg.ac.at. Deadline for submission is on March 1st 2017. Applicants will be informed within one week.