

Call for Papers - Authors' Conference:

Contestations of the Liberal Script in Regional Organizations in the Global South and the Global North

Organizers:

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The Cluster of Excellence "Contestations of the Liberal Script" (SCRIPTS) is based in Berlin, Germany. SCRIPTS seeks to explore causes and consequences of contestations of the liberal script. We look contributions that either shed light on either episodes of contestation of the liberal script in or through a regional organizations (RO) as well as their causes or contributions that examine the consequences that such episodes of contestations for the ROs and their resilience as well as the regional order concerned.

A script is a set of norms and rules that organize the society of individuals and/or states. Thus, a *liberal script* is characterized by liberal norms and values, that balance the principles of individual and collective freedom without negating one of them. Thus, the specific configuration of a liberal script can differ over time and context but speaks to principles of democracy and human rights, rule of law and a (regulated) liberal market economy.

Contestations are social practices that express disapproval of ideas and institutions or their implementation, are publicly justified or recognized by others, and come with some degree of social mobilization. Contestations are crucial for the internalization of liberal principles and norms and their social acceptance.

Regional organizations (ROs) organizations in which at least three member states cooperate and are linked by geography. ROs are often regarded as important and in some instances even ideal outlets for tackling regional challenges. By contributing to regional governance, ROs are thus an important feature of governance beyond the nation-state.

Episodes of *contestations* of the liberal script *in ROs* are instances in which one or several member states publicly call one or several liberal norms and values of their RO into question, for instance by means of public criticism, by stopping their budget contributions, by intentional non-compliance and obstruction, or by exit threats or actual withdrawals. Episodes of contestations of the liberal script *through ROs* include instances in which an RO turns into a collective actor that contests the liberal script of other regional or global IOs. This could be associated with authoritarian ROs (i.e., organizations created by authoritarian states); however, this is not the only option of how liberal script can be contested through ROs.

Contestations of the liberal script do not only take place within states and on the global level, but also on the regional level within the more than 70 different ROs. While we already know a lot about contestation dynamics on the state and the global level, the regional level has not been studied

systematically. Thus, the conference brings together scholars from Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe to investigate either

- a) episodes of contestation of the liberal script in or through a specific RO as well as their causes

or

- b) contributions that examine the consequences that episodes of contestations of the liberal script in or through a specific RO bring about, such as the RO's resilience and implications for regional governance and the regional order

The **aim of the conference** is to produce an **edited volume** on contestations of the liberal script at the regional level, which covers ROs from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe. The edited volume will be submitted to Oxford University Press (OUP).

SCRIPTS will host the necessary **authors conferences**. The first conference will take place in **Berlin, Germany on November 27-28th 2025**. We will cover the conference and accommodation costs as well as transportation costs of one paper giver per chapter. The follow-up-conference will either be in Berlin as well (costs are also covered) or will take place online in spring 2026. We will submit the manuscript of the edited volume to OUP in summer 2026.

How to Apply & Deadline:

To apply for this authors' conference, please submit a 500-word abstract together with the name of all authors, their affiliations, academic positions and contact details (postal address, email address and website) to conference@scripts-berlin.eu no later than May 15th 2025. In the abstract, please explicate which specific episode of liberal script contestation you are investigating and whether your chapter will speak to the causes (see option (a) above) or the consequences (see option (b) above).

We will select the contributions swiftly after the deadline for the submission of abstracts. Late submissions are not accepted. All selected paper-givers are expected to submit a 6,000-word version of the chapter by October 15th 2025 and the full chapter (8,000 words) by January 30th 2026. You will find further information about the Cluster and its research agenda on our website: www.scripts-berlin.eu