

A "Democratic State of Exception": The corona virus controversy in Germany (February to May 2020)

Initiative: Corona Crisis and Beyond – Perspectives for Science, Scholarship and Society (beendet)

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The project aims at answering the question, in which way the 'state of exception' is rolled out and is overcome in a democratic public debate. A mapping of the corona virus controversy in Germany between February and May 2020 shows the key elements of the 'democratic state of exception': (a) a highly uncertain matter of concern, which science cannot (yet) settle, (b) the articulated urgency to decide crisis-related issues and to integrate manifold expectations, (c) the relevance of time to adequately deal with controversial issues, and (d) the disputed transition towards a new normal situation. Beyond the single case of the corona crisis controversy in Germany, the concept of the 'democratic state of exception' will be useful as a script for handling further crises in a democratic way and may help to overcome the widely debated classic concepts of the 'state of exception' as a sovereign, authoritarian rule in cases of existential concern.

Projektbeteiligte

Dr. Hagen Schölzel

Universität Erfurt
Staatswissenschaftliche Fakultät
Professur für Politische Theorie
Erfurt

Prof. Dr. Andre Brodocz

Universität Erfurt
Staatswissenschaftliche Fakultät
Professur für Politische Theorie
Erfurt