

PPAD COLLOQUIUM

September 17th, 2025

2:00 to 3:00pm

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The Crisis of Design in American Government

The American political system confronts two distinct crises. The first is the crisis of the moment, stemming from President Trump's controversial actions since January 2025. The second is the deeper crisis of design, relating to flaws in the system's architecture that predate Trump and will persist beyond his presidency. In the long run, the crisis of design is more consequential. Over-centralization within the system has contributed to four pathologies: overload, gridlock, societal polarization, and programmatic inefficiency and sclerosis. A better-designed system would be one in which authority was devolved and central institutions reconfigured. Systemic reform will be hard to accomplish because of constitutional constraints and a culture of anti-governmentalism. Still, structural changes are essential. History demonstrate that large and complex political systems are fragile. They are particularly prone to collapse under turbulent conditions like those facing the American system in coming decades.

[Zoom link](#)

<https://aucegypt.zoom.us/j/95295897188>



PPAD Meeting room# 2158
El Jameel Building, 2nd floor