

# **Ex Pluribus Unum: Articulating Res Publica in a Complex Society**

## **An International Symposium**

**University of Navarra,  
Pamplona, Spain –  
ICS Lecture Hall**

**October 20th 2023**

**Organized by The RESPUBLICA  
Project: Building Res Publica in a  
Culturally and Morally Complex  
Society: A Normative Inquiry  
Informed by History, Law, and  
Social Science**

**Financed by Fundación Ciudadanía y  
Valores y Proeduca Summa S.L.**

**Hosted by Institute for Culture and  
Society, University of Navarra**

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**PLEASE NOTE:** This symposium is co-hosted by the III International Congress on City and Philosophy: **New Citizenships for a Collapsing Globalization**, also held on the University of Navarra's campus (18-20 October 2023). Symposium participants are warmly invited to attend both conferences.

Modern debates about governance, citizenship, and political authority reveal two broad tendencies: On the one hand, there is a tendency toward *monocentrism*, that is, the belief in the ordering, protective, and liberating power of centralised institutions, most notably the State, and the view that social and cultural fragmentation and diversification pose a grave threat to order and liberty. On the other hand, there is a tendency toward *polycentrism*, that is, the belief in the ordering, protective, and liberating power of non-State institutions and associations, and the view that cultural and governmental centralisation and standardisation constitute the primary threat to order and liberty.

There seems to be some truth to both of these views: it is hard to conceive of a functional society without some degree of centralised coordination and governance; but it also seems undeniable that local actors are often more efficient at solving local problems, and that local units of governance can be more sensitive to local needs. This symposium aims to investigate how to strike the right balance between monocentric and polycentric visions of social and political order. We aim to explore the perennial problem of achieving *unum ex pluribus* – one thing out of many – in the ordering of social and political life. Specifically, the symposium poses the question, “How can we articulate an attractive and coherent ideal of civil order – a conception of the “public thing,” *res publica*, if you will - that combines the coordinating power of centralised governments with the legitimate prerogatives, functions, and freedoms of non-State civil society and economic associations?”

# Conference programme

All sessions will be held in the ICS Lecture Hall on the campus of the University of Navarra, Pamplona.

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20TH

8:30	Registration
9:00	Introductory Remarks David Thunder
9:15-10:30	<b>KEYNOTE</b> <b>Polycentric Status Contests</b> Vlad Tarko
10:30-11:00	Coffee break
11:00-13:15	<b>SESSION 1. CONCEPTUALISING A PLURALIST REPUBLIC</b>  <b>From the Public Sphere to Fragmented Publics? On the Plural Gaze of Citizens</b> Paolo Monti  <b>Why Human Flourishing Requires a Robust Form of Governmental Pluralism</b> David Thunder  <b>Making Sense of Global and Local Common Goods</b> Mark Hoipkemier
13:15-15:15	Lunch
15:15-17:30	<b>SESSION 2. POLYCENTRIC INSTITUTIONS</b>  <b>Antifragile Democracy: Disagreement, Pluralism and Stability</b> Pablo Paniagua  <b>The Constitution of Liberties: Polycentrism in the Westminster Constitutional Tradition</b> Elliot Bulmer  <b>Do Polycentric Social Structures Promote the Development of Moral Judgment? A MacIntyrean Framework for Institutional Evaluation</b> Matías Petersen
17:30-18:00	Coffee
18:00-19:00	<b>SESSION 3. GOVERNING THE POLYCENTRIC REPUBLIC – A VIEW FROM THE FIELD</b>  <b>Decentralization in Buenos Aires: Real Participation or Political Manipulation?</b> Esteban Rocha  <b>Claims and Contestations of Participatory Governance in a Neo-Liberal City: The Case of Ahmedabad, India</b> Shelly Kulshrestha
19:00	Conference Ends

# Speakers

## Dr Vlad Tarko

is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Political Economy and Moral Science at University of Arizona. His work is primarily in the areas of polycentric governance, varieties of capitalism, and history of political economy. His writings include *Elinor Ostrom: An Intellectual Biography* (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017), *Understanding Capitalism: An Introduction to Political Economy* (Polity Press / Wiley, under contract), *Capitalist Alternatives: Models, Taxonomies, Scenarios* (Routledge, 2015) (co-authored with Paul Dragos Aligica), *Public Governance and the Classical Liberal Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 2019) (co-authored with Paul Dragos Aligica and Peter Boettke), and *Elinor Ostrom and the Bloomington School: Building a New Approach to Policy and the Social Sciences* (Agenda Publishing / Columbia University Press, 2021) (co-edited with Jayme Lemke). His forthcoming book is *Understanding Capitalism: An Introduction to Political Economy* (Polity Press).

## Dr David Thunder

is a Researcher and lecturer in political philosophy at the University of Navarra's Institute for Culture and Society. His principal research interest is the social and institutional conditions under which people can pursue flourishing lives individually and in community. David's academic writings include *Citizenship and the Pursuit of the Worthy Life* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), *The Ethics of Citizenship in the 21st Century* (edited volume, Springer, 2017), and numerous articles in international peer-reviewed journals. His current book project, *The Polycentric Republic: A Theory of Civil Order for Free and Diverse Societies*, advocates replacing the principle of State sovereignty adapted from monarchical absolutism with a more pluralistic and decentralized conception of civil order, sensitive to the governmental role of non-State organisations in many different spheres of life.

## Dr Mark Hoipkemier

is Assistant professor of politics, philosophy and economics at the University of Navarra. (Ph.D., Notre Dame - 2017). His research is primarily concerned to clarify the concept of common goods and apply it to contemporary challenges. He recently finished a book manuscript, entitled *Beyond Price: The Market, the Corporation, and the Common Good*, which applies Aristotelian pluralism to our two dominant economic institutions. Though we normally think of markets and firms only as vehicles of private interest, in fact they involve us all also in morally-formative shared projects oriented to common ends, which we ignore only at the price of injustice. Mark's next big project, of which this essay is a part, is to give a fuller account of the Aristotelian pluralism as a theory of the common good. This research will draw on Aristotle and his modern readers, including Charles Taylor, Yves Simon, and Alasdair MacIntyre.

## Dr W. Elliot Bulmer

is a Senior Programme Officer (Constitution Building) at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, where he has had practical engagement in constitutional change processes around the world, including Sudan, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Ukraine, Georgia, Egypt, Sri Lanka and Tuvalu. He was previously a Lecturer in Politics at the University of Dundee and an officer in the Royal Navy. He specialises in the comparative study of constitutions and the politics of constitutional change, with a focus on Westminster Model and Commonwealth democracies. His books include *Constituting Scotland: The Scottish National Movement and the Westminster Model* (Edinburgh University Press, 2016) and *Westminster and the World: Commonwealth and Comparative Insights for Constitutional Reform* (Bristol University Press, 2020).

## Dr Paolo Monti

is assistant Professor of Moral Philosophy at the "Riccardo Massa" Department of Humanities for Education of Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca and Adjunct Professor of Ethics at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. His research focuses on the ethics of citizenship in technological societies, the role of cultural and religious pluralism in the public sphere and the moral responsibilities of educators and social workers. He has been Associate Researcher at Université du Luxembourg and Visiting Researcher at the University of Notre Dame (USA) and at the National Institutes of Health (USA). In 2018 he published the book *Contemporary Political Philosophy and Religion: Between Public Reason and Pluralism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018 – with C. Ungureanu).

## Mr Esteban Rocha

is currently a PhD student in Real Estate and Planning at Henley Business School, University of Reading, and a research assistant working on a research project on organisational behaviour. He pursued an undergraduate degree in Liberal Arts at Thomas Aquinas College, USA, and a Master's degree in philosophy at the University of Navarra. Esteban's research focuses on civil society participation in local governments, and he is currently working on a case study that evaluates key participatory institutions within Buenos Aires city. His research interests are institutional theory, field theory (Niel Fligstein) and governance theory.

## Ms Shelly Kulshrestha

has over 20 years of experience in research, consultancy and teaching in multi-dimensional areas related to participatory governance and urban management. She is a managing trustee of The Urban Lab Foundation, which is incorporated as an NGO, with a mission to work towards making cities safe and livable. She has an interest to work towards strengthening of municipal services for the urban poor through participatory processes. She is a visiting professor at the Faculty of Management, CEPT University, Ahmedabad, where she facilitates skill and knowledge development for students to get trained as urban management professionals. She has designed and facilitated online courses on disaster risk management for the World Bank Institute (WBI). She has published paper on Commuter's Exposure to PM2.5. She has done post-graduation in planning and is currently pursuing PhD from CEPT University in the area of participatory governance.

## Dr Matías Petersen

has a PhD in Political Economy from King's College London and is currently the director of the Centro Signos at the Universidad de los Andes (Chile). His work combines elements of economic theory and political philosophy. He has published on rational choice theory, institutional design, and on the thought of F.A. Hayek, James Buchanan, and Elinor Ostrom. His forthcoming book, under contract with Routledge, is entitled *Political Economy, Institutions, and Virtue: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*.

## Dr Pablo Paniagua

is an economist and Research Fellow at King's College, London. He is also Professor and the Academic Director of the Master's Program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) at Universidad del Desarrollo, Chile. He received his M.Sc. in Economics and Finance from Milan Polytechnic and his Ph.D. in Political Economy from the University of London. His research focuses on governance, PPE, and institutional analysis. He has authored over 25 papers, essays, and books dealing with various aspects of political economy, philosophy, and the governance of social dilemmas. His work has appeared in journals such as *Cambridge Journal of Economics, Public Choice, and Economy and Society*.

## This conference is organised by

### **RESPUBLICA PROJECT: Building Res Publica in a Culturally and Morally Complex Society: A Normative Inquiry Informed by History, Law, and Social Science**

**RESPUBLICA** is an international research project financed by **FUNCIVA (Fundación de Ciudadanía y Valores)**, led by **David Thunder**, based at the University of Navarra's Institute for Culture & Society. This project investigates the problem of building a shared civil order under conditions of social, cultural, and institutional complexity. We explore the hypothesis that a polycentric, federated civil order granting substantial governmental prerogatives to local territorial associations as well as non-territorial associations, and not investing total sovereign power in any specific institution, could manage problems of coordination and contestation in a complex society in ways that are more consonant with freedom and public order than a sovereign State, as it has been construed by modern philosophers like **Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant**.



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