



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Ex Pluribus Unum: Articulating Res Publica in a Diverse Social Landscape



Place

University of Navarra,
Pamplona, Spain



Date

October 20th
2023



Organized by:

RESPUBLICA: Building Res
Publica in a Culturally and Morally
Complex Society

CALL FOR PAPERS

Deadline: June 1st 2023

Please submit:

1. A title and abstract of 300-600 words.
2. A short bio of up to 150 words, indicating your current position, research interests, and any publications of special note that you wish to mention.

Abstracts and bios should be submitted as a Word document or pdf to the symposium coordinator, Dr David Thunder (dthunder@unav.es).

Successful applicants will be notified no later than June 15th 2023.

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International Symposium

Ex Pluribus Unum: Articulating Res Publica in a Diverse Social Landscape

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 mono-centric 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?”

Submissions will be considered from disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including political theory, law, history, political science, philosophy, political economy, sociology, architecture and urban design. Papers may cover any of the following topics, or other related topics connected to the problem of configuring a res publica in a diverse society:

1. Insights from history about the successful management of social, cultural, and religious diversity
2. The implications of the fact and value of social, religious, and cultural pluralism for the structure of political institutions
3. The role of civil society and economic institutions as sources of law and order alongside or in competition with the State
4. The strategies used by economic and civil associations for solving collective action problems, independently from or in conjunction with state and/or municipal actors
5. Implications of social, religious and cultural pluralism for ideals of citizenship and conceptions of res publica and the public sphere
6. Potential advantages as well as limitations of federalism as a theory and ideal of governance across diverse social groups, whether territorial or non-territorial
7. The sovereign state and its competitors as potential vehicles of freedom and social order in a diverse social landscape
8. Cities and towns as sites of governance and political identity, and their evolving relation with States
9. The role of architectural and urban design as a “glue” of shared citizenship and political belonging
10. The potential and limits of free markets as vehicles of order and prosperity
11. Implications of religious, cultural, and social pluralism for theories of constitutionalism and law

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