

LVII Annual Philosophical Meetings / Reuniones Filosóficas

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## The Social Ontology of Sovereignty:

Timeless and Timely Perspectives



Universidad  
de Navarra

March 14-16, 2024  
Pamplona, Spain

The University of Navarra invites paper proposals for the 57th annual Philosophical Meetings / Reuniones Filosóficas, to be held March 14-16, 2024 on the theme of the social ontology of sovereignty. Historically, the conflict between the state and rival forms of social order has prompted much of the best theorizing on the nature of social reality. The 17<sup>th</sup>-century alone saw Hobbes's juridical absolutism, grounded on an ontology of covenants and personification, pitted against Filmer's divine right theory grounded in a state-family analogy and Bellarmine's dual theory of popular sovereignty in the state and divine sovereignty in the Church. Conflicts of governance, both before and since, have spurred similarly vital social-ontological debates among jurists, theologians, and philosophers. The Westphalian state remains very much with us, and the ongoing resurgence of social ontology will do well to turn full attention to the fertile and consequential puzzles that sovereignty continues to raise. What can cool-headed contemporary social ontology and heated real-world debates about the state learn from each other?

### Invited Keynote Speakers:

HANS-BERNHARD SCHMID

*University of Vienna*

THOMAS PINK

*King's College London*

JENNY PELLETIER

*University of Gothenburg / KU Leuven*

### Submission Guidelines

- Submit proposals by December 15, 2023, to [sovereignty2024UNAV@gmail.com](mailto:sovereignty2024UNAV@gmail.com)
- Abstracts should be 400-600 words long
- Presentations should be around 20 minutes long and may be given in English or Spanish (or another language such as French/German, if there is a critical mass of presenters)

### Questions?

Contact the organizing team at [sovereignty2024UNAV@gmail.com](mailto:sovereignty2024UNAV@gmail.com)

Mark Hoipkemier, Michaël Bauwens (Antwerp), David Thunder (Strasbourg), Sergio Clavero

More information will be available on our [website](#) soon

**We invite historical as well as systematic papers around such questions as:  
(non-exhaustive)**

- Which concepts and approaches from social ontology can help to describe and analyse contemporary and historical conceptions of sovereignty?
- What views of their own nature and functioning are implied by communities that claim to be sovereign, or those that contest such claims?
- How does the reciprocity implied by collective intentionality relate to the primordial position of sovereignty – i.e. how can a person be really sovereign if her sovereignty depends on its recognition by the subjects of that sovereignty?
- Is a putatively sovereign community built on the same lines as other social orders, or is it (in its self-understanding or in actuality) radically different?
- If sovereignty is established by a speech act, by whom is that speech act spoken? Does that distinction map onto the distinction between constituted power and constituent power?
- How do the implied views of social reality in constitutional or canon law comport with rival social ontologies, or with the facts?
- Is state sovereignty incompatible with the independent standing of subordinate communal/corporate bodies, as Hobbes thought?
- What views on social reality have been operative in the historical trajectory of the sovereign state, and what practical or argumentative influence have such views exerted?
- Can multiple sovereign communities co-exist or overlap, as some thinkers claim?
- If sovereignty is a “secularized theological concept,” as Carl Schmitt avers, what (political) theology does it imply and what are the implications for theorizing social reality?
- Is the theological distinction between divine ordained power and divine absolute power relevant for the understanding of creaturely sovereignty?
- What social ontology of “the people,” if any, is implied by the claim of popular sovereignty?
- Can claims to sovereign power ultimately attach to persons, or communities of persons, or both, or neither?
- How does a claimant to sovereignty relate to that social order over which it is claimed?

