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Franz Brentano Lectures on Practical Philosophy with Philip Pettit (Princeton University/ANU Canberra)

"Group Agency in the Field: The Case of the State"

October 17-19, 2022

Erika-Weinzierl-Saal, University of Vienna, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Vienna

Organized by: ERC Project: "The Normative and Moral Foundations of Group Agency", Grant No. 740922, PI: Prof. Dr. Herlinde Pauer-Studer.
In co-operation with Dean Prof. Dr. Hans Bernhard Schmid and Prof. Dr. Paulina Sliwa. Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna.

Day 1		Monday October 17, 2022	
16:00 (s.t.) – 16:15		Opening/Welcome	
16:15 – 17:15		Philip Pettit (Princeton University/ANU Canberra) <i>"Emergent Agency"</i>	
17:15 – 18:00		General Discussion	
Day 2		Tuesday October 18, 2022	
16:15 – 17:15		Philip Pettit (Princeton University/ANU Canberra) <i>"Modular Agency"</i>	
17:15 – 18:00		General Discussion	
Day 3		Wednesday October 19, 2022	
16:15 – 17:15		Philip Pettit (Princeton University, ANU Canberra) <i>"Turbulent Agency"</i>	
17:15 – 18:00		General Discussion	

This event is funded by the ERC project "The Normative and Moral Foundations of Group Agency" (no. 740922).

For participation, please send an e-mail to florian.kolowrat@univie.ac.at

Registration ends on October 10, 2022.

For further information, please contact herlinde.pauer-studer@univie.ac.at and florian.kolowrat@univie.ac.at



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Abstracts

Philip Pettit (Princeton University/ANU Canberra)

"Group Agency in the Field: The Case of the State"

1. Emergent Agency

Standard views suggest that individuals must come together intentionally to constitute a group agent. But, plausibly, the state is a group agent and yet it is not formed intentionally in any sort of social contract. Can the state constitute a group agent, yet come into existence behind people's backs? And if it does emerge in that way, can it achieve a fully incorporated status without the intentional intervention of members?

2. Modular Agency

On a familiar image, a group agent forms insofar as members rally compliantly behind the voice of its leader or leaders. While this image is maintained in absolutist views of the state like those of Bodin, Hobbes and Rousseau, it belies the fact that most states have many mutually checking centers of authority and power. How can the state act as a single group agent, yet be composed in this way out of conflicting modules?

3. Turbulent Agency

The membership of a group agent, modular or otherwise, are normally represented as individuals collaborating in the constitution of that body. But the membership or citizenry of a state are often tasked with the job of keeping the state in line and holding it to account. Does this make sense? Can the citizenry constitute the state on the one side, yet be a body charged with holding it responsible on the other?