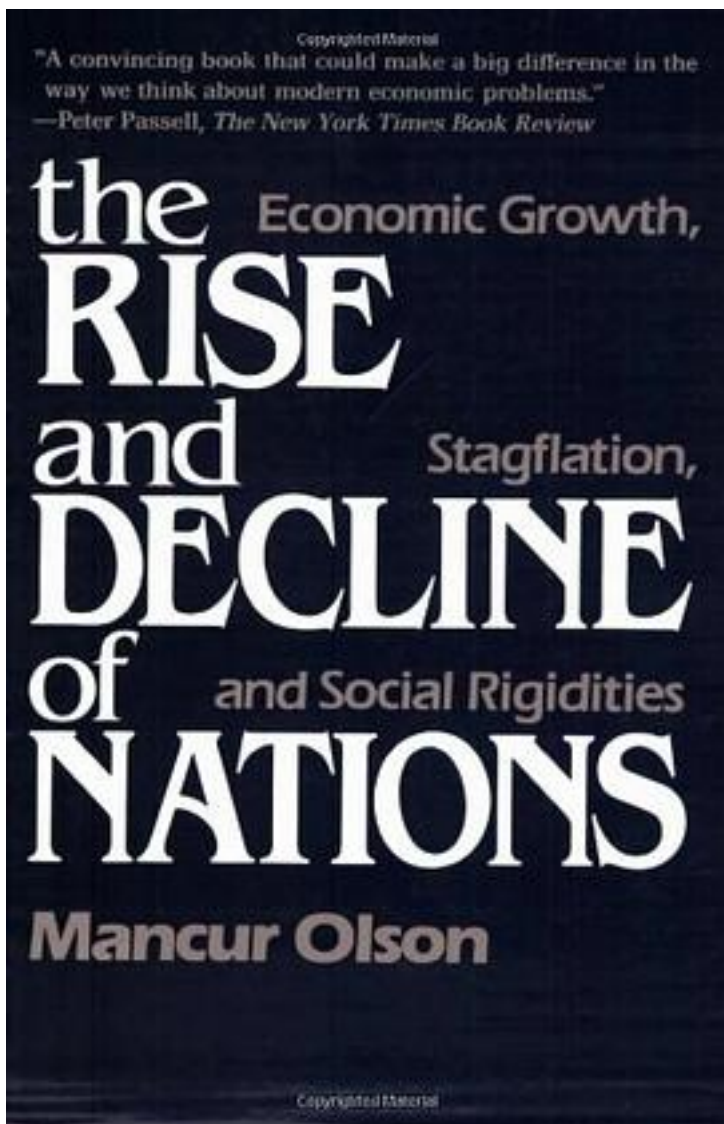


The Rise and Decline of Nations



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著者:Mancur Olson

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The years since World War II have seen rapid shifts in the relative positions of different countries and regions. Leading political economist Mancur Olson offers a new and compelling theory to explain these shifts in fortune and then tests his theory against evidence from many periods of history and many parts of the world.

“[T]his elegant, readable book. . . sets out to explain why economies succumb to the ‘British disease,’ the kind of stagnation and demoralization that is now sweeping Europe and North America. . . . A convincing book that could make a big difference in the way we think about modern economic problems.” —Peter Passell, *The New York Times Book Review*

“Schumpeter and Keynes would have hailed the insights Olson gives into the sicknesses of the modern mixed economy.” —Paul A. Samuelson, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

“One of the really important books in social science of the past half-century.” —Scott Gordon, *The Canadian Journal of Economics*

“The thesis of this brilliant book is that the longer a society enjoys political stability, the more likely it is to develop powerful special-interest lobbies that in turn make it less efficient economically.” —Charles Peters, *The Washington Monthly*

“Remarkable. The fundamental ideas are simple, yet they provide insight into a wide array of social and historical issues. . . . The *Rise and Decline of Nations* promises to be a subject of productive interdisciplinary argument for years to come.” —Robert O. Keohane, *Journal of Economic Literature*

“I urgently recommend it to all economists and to a great many non-economists.” —Gordon Tullock, *Public Choice*

“Olson’s theory is illuminating and there is no doubt that *The Rise and Decline of Nations* will exert much influence on ideas and politics for many decades to come.” —Pierre Lemieux, *Reason*

Co-winner of the 1983 American Political Science Association’s Gladys M. Kammerer Award for the best book on U.S. national policy

作者介绍:

Mancur Lloyd Olson, Jr. (pronounced /mæsr/; January 22, 1932–February 19, 1998) was a leading American economist and social scientist who, at the time of his death, worked at the University of Maryland, College Park. Among other areas, he made contributions to institutional economics on the role of private property, taxation, public goods, collective action and contract rights in economic development. Olson focused on the logical basis of interest group membership and participation. The reigning political theories of his day granted groups an almost primordial status. Some appealed to a natural human instinct for herding, others ascribed the formation of groups that are rooted in kinship to the process of modernization. Olson offered a radically different account of the logical basis of organized collective action.

In his first book, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*,

he theorized that “only a separate and ‘selective’ incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a latent group to act in a group-oriented way” ; that is, only a benefit reserved strictly for group members will motivate one to join and contribute to the group. This means that individuals will act collectively to provide private goods, but not to provide public goods.

In 1982, he expanded the scope of his earlier work in an attempt to explain The Rise and Decline of Nations. The idea is that small distributional coalitions tend to form over time in countries. Groups like cotton-farmers, steel-producers, and labor unions will have the incentives to form lobby groups and influence policies in their favor. These policies will tend to be protectionist and anti-technology, and will therefore hurt economic growth; but since the benefits of these policies are selective incentives concentrated amongst the few coalitions members, while the costs are diffused throughout the whole population, the "Logic" dictates that there will be little public resistance to them. Hence as time goes on, and these distributional coalitions accumulate in greater and greater numbers, the nation burdened by them will fall into economic decline. Olson's idea is cited as an influence behind the Calmfors-Driffill hypothesis of collective bargaining.

In his final book, Power and Prosperity, Olson distinguished between the economic effects of different types of government, in particular, tyranny, anarchy and democracy. Olson argued that a "roving bandit" (under anarchy) has an incentive only to steal and destroy, whilst a "stationary bandit" (a tyrant) has an incentive to encourage a degree of economic success, since he will expect to be in power long enough to take a share of it. The stationary bandit thereby takes on the primordial function of government - protection of his citizens and property against roving bandits. Olson saw in the move from roving bandits to stationary bandits the seeds of civilization, paving the way for democracy, which improves incentives for good government by more closely aligning it with the wishes of the population

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评论

奥氏自己运用集体行动理论分析政治经济问题的著作。自信完美解释英国从增长走向停滞、美国南北经济发展速度差异、战后西方各主要资本主义经济体的经济增长和停滞，对其他地区情况则由于资料不足而着墨不多。民主政治、固定疆界和繁复法律有时候是福祸相依；战争和动乱若能消灭分利集团根基，事后在稳定政权下反能创造高速增长，似符合中国。后人多称颂其分利集团从事集体行动以游说保护特殊利益之精美论述，但奥氏野心其实更大：他试图以此论为基础介入当代宏观经济学中凯恩斯与货币主义/理性预期均衡理论的大辩论，力陈分利集团集体行动其实是导致凯恩斯未解释的工资/价格粘性的来源，甚至由于分利集团在政府不行政干预的情况下仍然存在，亦足以使货币主义者构建理论时的经济出清、无政府干预、自动均衡等假设无效。最后期盼相当激烈：消灭利益集团！

一本很好的利益集团研究著作，以及学术通俗读物。Olson对distributional coalition以及encompassing organization的区分，集体行动的逻辑，是有其微观基础的。框架很干净很经济学。——集体行动的逻辑是，基于理性人假设，同质性高的、能够获得更多资源的群体更容易组织起来要求利益，而数量庞大、利益诉求高度分化的工人、消费者、弱势群体从来就是很难组织起来的。从来没有国家能够形成“全对称”的利益群体，永远是少数分利者占据上风，更不用说争夺社会资源所带来的消耗。启发是，即使中国容许了结社自由和利益集团，真能够像一些人所想象的，保护弱者权益吗？

阚凯力教授推荐的

chapter 3, implications. once continued stability and accumulate more distributional coalitions, adverse influence on the eco growth.

本书尝试论证一点：随着西方社会进入和平稳定发展的阶段，拥有共同利益倾向的个体、团体会逐渐聚集，并形成社会影响力。这些广泛分布的特殊利益集体（例如工会）会降低社会的生产效率，而目前西方的两党制政治体制不足以解决这些社会利益团体所带来的问题。事实上，作者仅说对了一半。详见书评。

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书评

最近翻译一些东西，与此同时也在看一些翻译过来的东西。看出现在和上世纪翻译方法的一些差别。看的书是同一本The rise and decline of nations，两个译本，商务吕应中等译92年版的《国家兴衰探源》和上海人民最近新出的李增刚译本《国家的兴衰》。不用看内容，看书名就可以...

奥尔森在三本重要著作The Logic of Collective Action, The Rise and Decline of Nations和Power and Prosperity的开头，或多或少地都强调自己提出的理论未必能解释纷繁复杂的各种历史和案例，读者需小心鉴别，乃至明确说自己并非试图提出单自变量/单向度理论。然而一开始详细论...

为什么触动利益比触及灵魂还难？——读奥尔森《国家兴衰探源》有感
2013年3月17日，十二届全国人大一次会议闭幕后，李克强总理答记者问上，说出了这样的话“改革进入了深水区，也可以说是攻坚期，的确是因为它要触动原有的利益格局。现在触动利益往往比触及灵魂还难。”——

在所有的经济政策选择以外，本书从另一角度，解答了国家兴衰历史的个中缘由，也为现在的中国问题，提供了另外一种深刻的思路。中国问题是农民问题，更是分利集团的问题。
本书论述的观点，基于上述前提假设，如果凯恩斯倡导的重商主义理论以扩大内需，推动消费来治理滞涨为否...

本文链接：<http://www.aisixiang.com/data/38365.html>
文章来源：《北方法学》2009年第2期
摘要：国家起源理论中的契约理论只是对某种国家形态及功能的事后正当化论说，无法成为一种对国家起源的解释性理论。在奥尔森的理论中，国家是由固定下来的匪帮转化来的，专制国家权力的...

This book is more than an exegesis of economic concerns in the 1980s. It deals with a philosophical question of the nature of Western economies: when the market is perfectly free where everyone in the economy acts in accordance with his or her best interest...

奥尔森反对古典自由放任主义，认为自由放任并不能带来（纯粹的）竞争市场，即使完全取消政府，也会形成集团性垄断。那么，问题一是，达到一种纯粹竞争的市场，会是最优化的一种经济结构，能够带来最好的经济发展效率吗？这个问题我现在尚不能回答，但是看上去，一方面，假如就...

这本书读起来太痛苦了。一小部分原因是书中涉及到了一些经济学的知识，作为一个门外汉，读起来还是有些吃力的。但最主要还是因为翻译的质量太差了。整本书完完全全就是直译——英文的句式是怎么样，他就怎么翻译；单个英文单词是什么意思，他就怎么翻译——让人完全没有读...

[美] 曼瑟·奥尔森，上海世纪出版集团，2007.
前有《集体行动的逻辑》，后有《权力与繁荣》，可以看作是承上启下的一本书，也可作为是《集体行动的逻辑》的姊妹篇。不过，本书对衰落讨论地较多，故而也为《权力与繁荣》一书留下了空间。研究的核心问题：为什么有的国家兴盛...

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