

The People



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This groundbreaking study sets out to clarify one of the most influential but least studied of all political concepts. Despite continual talk of popular sovereignty, the idea of the people has been neglected by political theorists who have been deterred by its vagueness. Margaret Canovan argues that it deserves serious analysis, and that its many ambiguities point to unresolved political issues.

The book begins by charting the conflicting meanings of the people, especially in Anglo-American usage, and traces the concept's development from the ancient *populus Romanus* to the present day.

The book's main purpose is, however, to analyse the political issues signalled by the people's ambiguities. In the remaining chapters, Margaret Canovan considers their theoretical and practical aspects:

Where are the people's boundaries? Is people equivalent to nation, and how is it related to humanity - people in general?

Populists aim to 'give power back to the people'; how is populism related to

democracy?

How can the sovereign people be an immortal collective body, but at the same time be us as individuals? Can we ever see that sovereign people in action?

Political myths surround the figure of the people and help to explain its influence; should the people itself be regarded as fictional?

This original and accessible study sheds a fresh light on debates about popular sovereignty, and will be an important resource for students and scholars of political theory.

作者介绍:

Margaret Canovan is Emeritus Professor of Political Thought at the University of Keele.

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评论

今天川崎ゼミ最后一次发表，这本书也看完了。在什么都冠以“人民”头衔的中华“人民”共和国，这本理论性的书很值得一读。

梳理人民概念复杂性。外部边界：民族性vs普适性；内部边界：平民vs.精英；实践：常规政治vs.非常时期；实践性vs神话性。人民作为主权者的意志实际上只能在非常情况下表达出来，但其矛盾使得不同政治目的都可以对其加以利用。文献全面、讨论细致、语言古雅、论述罗嗦、结论乏力。可能会是未来国内政治理论的一个热点？

人民研究的扛鼎之作，迄今为止将人民概念剖析的最为清晰。

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