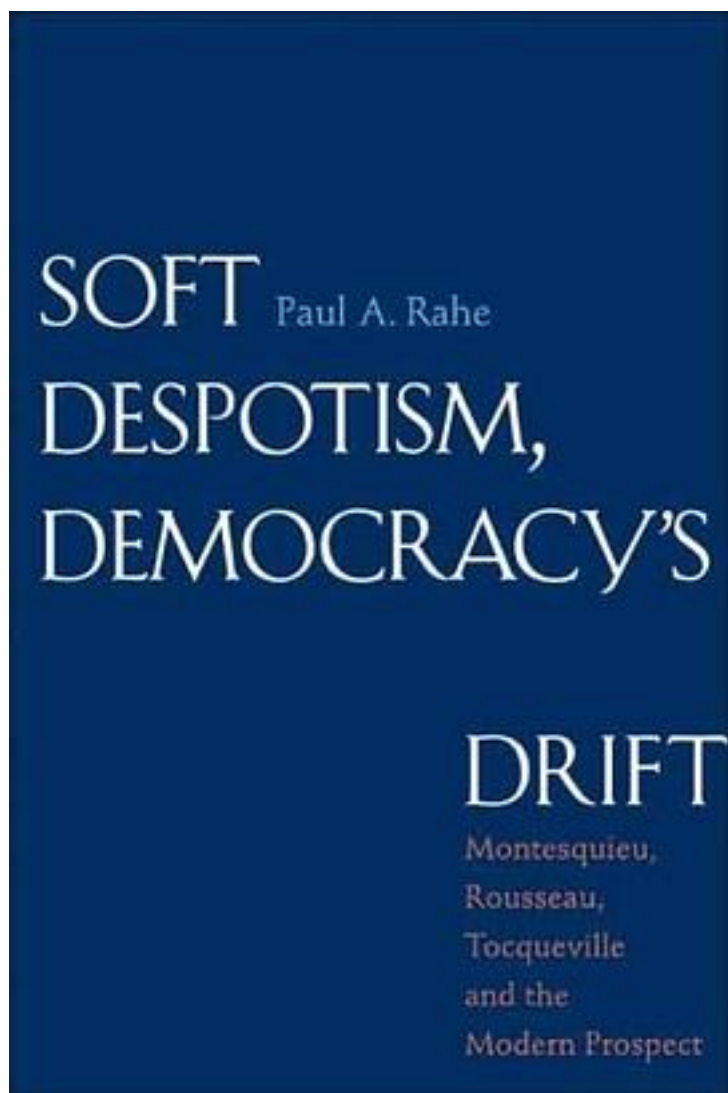


# Soft Despotism, Democracy's Drift



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## Review

"Acute analysts of emergent commercial republicanism found much to praise, even while foreseeing (and showing how one might avert) its slide into mindless self-absorption. With this expert, engrossing account, Paul Rahe joins that honorable company who resist the further degradation of democratic souls."-Ralph Lerner, The University of Chicago (Ralph Lerner)

"This is an exemplary deployment of great past thinkers in an intensely provocative, deliberately controversial meditation on the profound strengths and weaknesses or dangers in our political culture."-Thomas L. Pangle, author of Montesquieu's Philosophy of Liberalism: A Commentary on the Spirit of the Laws (Thomas L. Pange)

## Product Description

In 1989, the Cold War abruptly ended and it seemed as if the world was at last safe for democracy. But a spirit of uneasiness, discontent, and world-weariness soon arose and has persisted in Europe, in America, and elsewhere for two decades. To discern the meaning of this malaise we must investigate the nature of liberal democracy, says the author of this provocative book, and he undertakes to do so through a detailed investigation of the thinking of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Tocqueville.

Paul A. Rahe argues that these political thinkers anticipated the modern liberal republic's propensity to drift in the direction of “soft despotism” —a condition that arises within a democracy when paternalistic state power expands and gradually undermines the spirit of self-government. Such an eventuality, feared by Tocqueville in the nineteenth century, has now become a reality throughout the European Union, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. So Rahe asserts, and he explains what must be done to reverse this unfortunate trend.

作者介绍:

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