

## (2) People and Political Representation (08.09)

### Common understanding

1. People - are those who constitute the political community (now, before us and after us?)
2. People are the source of political power and sovereignty (popular sovereignty theory)
3. People consent to share power (social contract theory - Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau)

ALSO: Demographic term. In Russian: *narod*: "plurality of those who have been born"

### Debate on the concept

#### Ontological:

- Is People an idea (Plato), a material form (Aristotle) or social continuity in time and space (Heidegger)
- Is people indivisible (whole) or does it consist of different individuals?
  - Does people possess general will? Or is People individuals with the sum of individual wills?
- Does people possess its own agency (*general will*)? Or is it a sum of individual agencies?

#### Epistemological:

- How to theorize about People? Should we take *normative* approach (the people as the source of legitimacy) or *empirical* (people as a factual community of individuals)
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### Contemporary approaches

1. **Perennial (primordial, essentialist)**: people as a perennial (centuries-long) community based on culture and ethnicity (Anthony Smith, Alexander Dugin)

EXAMPLE: Russians, French, Englishmen, Italians appeared in Middle Ages and continue to exist since then.

2. **Modernist**: people as a resource of political legitimacy in Modern capitalist society (Eric Hobsbawm)

EXAMPLE: "the people" is merely a narrative, that hides the reality of class exploitation and capitalist/Modern mass production.

3. **Constructivist**: "the people" is the socially produced knowledge about the political community (Benedict Anderson)
4. **Feminist**: "the people" are those who **perform** power, active, present, performing citizens (revolutionaries, activists). Not the totality of nation's population (J. Butler, Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly 2015)

## **Populism as the representation of People**

Populism: representation of the political as the struggle between “the people” and “the elite”/the ruling class/the political class

the Political class: those who live off and for politics (G. Mosca, M. Weber), also used in broader term (= the political elite) (Laclau, On Populist Reason, 2005)

Populists it is antagonized with “effective”, technocratic politics, politicians, who advocate for measures, reforms, that are not “popular” (E. Laclau)

Left - post-Marxist, Agonal, inclusive politics, based on post-Marxist, New Left and structuralist political theory (

Right - post-Nationalist: “New Right” is more populist: see Trump, M. Le Pen, Beppe Grillo (Italy, Five Stars)

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Non-nations - Gypsies? There are Roma people - that migrate in Europe, Irish *travellers* that migrate across Ireland and several other cases of ethnic groups that are not connected to the territory