



# **Fabricating the People: Politics and Administration in the Biopolitical State (Public Admin: Criticism and Creativity)**

*Professor Thomas J. Catlaw*

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Since the 1960s, hostility and mistrust toward the U.S. government has risen precipitously. At the same time, the field of public administration has wrestled with its own crisis of legitimacy. What is at the root of current antigovernment sentiment? Conventionally, two explanations for this problem persist. Some see it primarily in moral terms, a deficit of Constitutional or democratic values in government. Others emphasize government's performance failures and managerial inefficiency.

Thomas J. Catlaw departs from both explanations in this groundbreaking study and demonstrates that the current crisis of government originates in the uncritical manner in which we have accepted the idea of "the People." He contends that this unifying, foundational concept—and the notion of political representation it entails—have failed. While illuminating some of our most pressing social and political problems, Catlaw shows how the idea of the People, far from serving to unify, relies in fact on a distinctive logic of exclusion. True political power is the power to determine what constitutes the normal, natural life of the electorate. Today, the exclusionary practices that once made up or fabricated the People are increasingly contested. In turn, government and political power now appear more invasive, less legitimate, and our shared reality appears more fragmented and disconnected.

In order to address this crisis and reinvigorate democracy, Catlaw argues, we must accept as bankrupt the premise of the People and the idea of representation itself. *Fabricating the People* boldly proposes post-representational governance that reframes the practice of modern democracy and reinvents the role of public administration.

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