

Department of Political Philosophy and Globalization Research, Institute of Philosophy CAS invites you to the lecture

Incompatible Sovereigns: Populism, Democracy and the Two Peoples

22 June 2023 from 17:00

Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences

Conference Room no. 124a

Jilská 1, Praha 1

The meeting will be the occasion to discuss Leonardo Fiorespino's book *Radical Democracy and Populism: A Thin Red Line?* (Springer, 2022). The aim of the book is to investigate the problematic relationship between populism and democracy, by comparing the conceptions of 'the people' and popular sovereignty which they presuppose. Whereas democratic theory invariably assumes a people intended as simultaneously plural and united, populism appears to conceive of the people as a moral whole, internally undifferentiated. The book examines the implications of this incompatibility for the relationship between populism and democracy, and calls into question major ways of relating the two concepts: for instance, it argues that populism cannot be made to overlap with "illiberal democracy", a "democratic myth", a crude electoral majoritarianism, nor does it amount to hiding undemocratic policies into democratic justifications. Populism's homogeneity and intrinsic righteousness preclude the task of specifying what it means for a multitude of heterogeneous individuals to share sovereign power. Such specification, on the other hand, is essential to both democratic theory and practice, and the book attempts to reconstruct it systematically. The presentation will end with some remarks on the possible implications of this argument for democratic theory.