

Abstract

Public power in democratic society emanates from the citizens and is, in its turn, responsible to them. The citizens are entitled to observe, scrutinize and influence it. The public consists of private individuals actively engaged in public affairs and coordinating this activity with others. The present essay is concerned with Jürgen Habermas' concepts of the public in his *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, and *Between Facts and Norms*. At first, these works are interpreted and critically evaluated here. Then, the issue of the public is developed with special emphasis on the concept as it is elaborated in *Between Facts and Norms*. This essay tries to characterize the civil public and pursues the question how it is positioned in the larger frame of the civil society. The public is studied from the point of view of its influence in society. Habermas ascribes a substantial role to the public, for, according to his idea of the deliberative democracy, the public takes a part in the democratic processes of lawmaking and that by means of a dialogue with the public power. In this perspective, the public is conceived of as communicative power. This dissertation concentrates on the origins and forming of the communicative power and the ensuing process of its transformation into administrative power. The issue of the transformation of power is conceived of in terms of the participation of citizens.

Keywords

Civil society, the public, deliberative democracy, public participation, Jürgen Habermas, communicative power, communicative action