The paradox of technocratic democracy and the democratic deficit of European institutions by Jürgen Habermas

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RESUMO

In the nineties, Habermas redirected his political writings to the post-national constellation (global and European) and the possibilities of a society politically integrated through transnational democracy (or post-national democracy). This thematic reorientation took place on two fronts. The first one is the global transnational democracy, which includes the impacts of the economic globalization on national democracies, as well the proposal for a political Constitution for a pluralistic world society, based on a constitutionalization of international law. The second one is the European transnational democracy, which includes the redefinition of the political profile of European welfare state for an economic liberal profile, as well the paradox of democratic technocracy operated by European institutions and the proposal to overcome the decoupled technocratic policy model. This paper will address only this last topic, describing the reasons of the democratic deficit and the consequent delay of European political Union. Despite numerous reforms, the technocratic policies have not eliminated the discrepancy between centralization and democratization, and mistakenly indicate another direction further reinforcing the problem of European undemocratic institutions. In contrast, Habermas argues that the democratic deficit could only be overcome replacing the technocratic approach by a deeper democratization of European institutions.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Jürgen Habermas; Transnational democracy; Technocratic democracy; European democratic deficit; Public sphere depoliticization

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In this chapter I assess Jürgen Habermas’s book The Crisis of the European Union. I show that Habermas’s suggestions for transition from monetary to political and democratic union are persuasive, as... I show that Habermas’s suggestions for transition from monetary to political and democratic union are persuasive, as are his calls for a unified Europe to have stronger global presence. However, I argue that there is a gulf between the...
contemporary pressing realities and the optimism of Habermas’s cosmopolitan aspirations. Indeed, Habermas acknowledges just how far we are presently removed from this normative vision, and how the institutions of the EU are currently controlled by technocratic elites with their neo-liberal agenda. But Habermas did not stop there. To him, European unification was and still is not an end in itself but constitutes a means to a much larger project. For Habermas, a reformed European Union serves as a kind of scaffolding that is necessary to find legitimate political answers to the complexities of an emerging and ever more complex world society in which problems can no longer be answered by relying on one, worryingly implicated hegemonic superpower alone – that of the US. There is a