

ISSUES OF LEGITIMIZING POLITICAL POWER IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: MAX WEBER AND KARL JASPERS

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Abstract

The issue of legitimizing political power has specific dimensions determined by the historical context. In the period following the First World War, democratic regimes dramatically collapsed due to ample protest movements against the political establishment from different countries, but also as a result of a serious political legitimation crisis, thus making way for the rise of totalitarian regimes of Fascism and Nazism. That time debates on the problem of legitimization political power are symptomatic. Due to the general perception regarding corruption in politics and to the political incapacity to deal with social problems, we can witness a decrease of trust in contemporary democratic regimes.

In order to exemplify, in a brief expositive manner, my paper will present the topic of political legitimation approached by Max Weber and Karl Jaspers, in a selection of relevant texts issued by both authors during 1919-1931. The aim of this paper is to highlight the actuality, the validity of Weber's and Jasper's statements and also their capacity to give pertinent responses to questions such as: What role do the common values play in the legitimating of power in a democratic society? Are there any kinds of limits regarding the electoral legitimation? How can we make the difference between a legitimate appeal and an illegitimate one, between civism and terrorism?

Keywords: politics, political power, legitimation, Max Weber, Karl Jaspers

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