

Commentary

**Politics, Culture, and the Public Sphere**

Geoff Eley

When I rashly agreed to contribute a commentary to this collection, I knew that I would learn far more than I could ever hope to add. But the limitations of my European expertise and modest comparative abilities leave me all the more reticent now that I am actually faced with the scholarly brilliance and quiet authority of these essays. So in pulling a few thoughts together, I would like to reflect briefly on some of the forms taken by the contemporary reception of Jürgen Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, which provides the main referent for this collection's shared if only partially explicated problematic.<sup>1</sup> In so doing, I hope to suggest ways in which the existing discussion might be further developed.

For some three decades after its original German edition in 1962, Habermas's book had virtually no impact on historians in any language or national field. Indeed, the international resonance of its author's other works among social scientists proceeded largely independently of the standing of this earlier book. In the English-speaking world his reception was defined

far more by his renewed of critical theory in *Knowledge and Human Interests* and *Theory and Practice* (published in English in 1971 and 1973); by his polemic against the West German student movement, *Toward a Rational Society* (translated in 1970); by his analysis of the state under late capitalism, *Legitimation Crisis* (translated in 1975); and finally by his mature general theory broached in *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (1979) and culminating in the two-volume *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984). These works moved from the original German into English with growing rapidity.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter, translations appeared virtually simultaneously, from his disputes with French poststructuralism, an important collection of interviews, and the many volumes of the philosophical-political writings to the major theoretical treatise *Between Facts and Norms* and beyond.<sup>3</sup> Even among the rising generation of historians in West Germany itself, who were self-consciously fashioning a new “historical social science” partly under Habermas’s influence, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* also mattered far less than the various works of critical epistemology, which during the 1970s were invoked with talismanic regularity.<sup>4</sup>

For many years, access to *Strukturwandel* through the English language was gained mainly via the translation of a short encyclopedia article on “The Public Sphere” in an early issue of *New German Critique*, a journal which also pioneered the earliest discussions of Habermas’s idea.<sup>5</sup> In the book-length English commentaries on Habermas’s work that began appearing at the end of the 1970s, for example, *Strukturwandel* remained notable by its absence. Surprisingly, it was no more visible during the 1980s in the flourishing discussions of “civil society,” a concept that in many ways stood in for the idea of the public sphere.<sup>6</sup> A French translation of the book was published in 1978 as *L'espace public: Archéologie de la publicité comme dimension constitutive de la société bourgeoise*, a title that managed to imply both a Foucauldian inflection to the book’s intellectual history and a more directly class-based social history than it actually possessed.<sup>7</sup> Otherwise, a younger West German historian, Günther Lottes, published an avowedly Habermasian and highly original account of English Jacobinism and its relationship to the “preprocedural” turbulence of the eighteenth-century plebeian public.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the appearance in 1972 of Oskar Negt and

Alexander Kluge's New Left theoretical tract, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, also established a critical West German counterpoint to Habermas's idea.<sup>9</sup>

In my own early work on political change in Germany between the 1890s and the First World War, I began using the concept of the public sphere at the start of the 1970s. It proved invaluable for thinking about the changing circumstances of political mobilization during the nineteenth century and for placing the rise of German liberalism and its subsequent crises in a broader meta-analytical frame. This was true of a number of Habermas's specific themes, especially the circulation of news and the growth of the press, the rise of a reading public, the organized sociability associated with urban living, the distinctive institutional infrastructure of social communication accompanying the development of capitalist markets, and the spread of voluntary associations, all of which helped connect the mid-nineteenth-century coalescence of liberal parties to an emergent social history of the German bourgeoisie. At a time when there were few supports in German historiography for doing this, Habermas's book encouraged me to think conceptually about the changing dynamics of state/society relations and the shifting space for political action in the new constitutional polities of the later nineteenth century. Even more, it gave me a handle for understanding what happened to politics next, when the dominant liberal approaches to the organizing of public life started to break down.

In looking back through my first book, *Reshaping the German Right* (1980), I am struck by how little explicit trace of Habermas it reveals, although one of my main theses—concerning popular mobilization, the dissolution of an older pattern of politics during the 1890s, and a general broadening of the political nation—was heavily indebted to his argument about the public sphere.<sup>10</sup> In the companion study I published with David Blackbourn in 1984, *The Peculiarities of German History*, which explored the relationship between political forms and the cultural manifestations of a self-confident bourgeois society, that indebtedness was far more visible.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, in parallel work I was doing in the late 1970s and early 1980s on the social history of European nationalism and the growth of political culture, the public sphere was certainly one of the organizing ideas.<sup>12</sup> I was always aware that Habermas's idea could not deliver the theoretical goods alone, it is fair to say, but needed to be combined with other approaches to the cultural complexities

of political change. For me these centered around the concept of civil society, theories of ideology, and the ideas of Antonio Gramsci, whose reception in Britain was then at its intensive height, converging in important ways with the influence of Raymond Williams.<sup>13</sup> In 1981, I published a long essay on social history and political culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain bringing all of this together. Among other things, this considered Edward Thompson's writings within an explicitly Habermasian framework, which I further reformulated in Gramscian terms.<sup>14</sup>

I describe this earlier moment not for the purposes of self-promotion but to illustrate the kind of thinking Habermas's book enabled. During that period, to my recollection, virtually no historians were writing in consciously Habermasian ways. The literary scholar Peter Hohendahl, who introduced Habermas's book into the English-speaking world through the pages of *New German Critique*, was a vital exception, publishing in 1982 a key study of the shaping of a German national literary tradition.<sup>15</sup> But otherwise even the advocates of Habermas's centrality to critical theory showed little interest in his historical arguments about the growth and transformation of the public sphere as such. Remarkably enough, John Keane's *Public Life and Late Capitalism* (1984), avowedly inspired by a reading of Habermas, makes no extended reference to the historical substance of *Strukturwandel* itself. Similarly, Keane's two volumes on the discourse of civil society in the 1980s, which strategically captured the political momentum of that extremely important European discussion, made no connection to notions of the public sphere.<sup>16</sup>

In the 1990s this suddenly changed. A first sign was Joan Landes's stimulating book on women and the public sphere in the French Revolution, which by adding feminist critiques of political theory to Habermas's historicized framework excited widespread interest and debate. Around the same time, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall published *Family Fortunes*, problematizing the public-versus-private distinction in a gendered analysis of the making of the English middle class.<sup>17</sup> But the real impetus came from the belated translation of *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* itself in 1989, powerfully reinforced by the published proceedings of an accompanying conference.<sup>18</sup> Since then, in fact, Habermasian discussions have broken out all over the map.

The most elaborate concentrations of work can be found in territories originally mapped by Habermas's book: eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British history; the background to the French Revolution; formations of bourgeois civility and associational culture in Germany. Specific topics easily follow: the steady accretions of an urban way of life in both provincial and metropolitan settings; civic arenas of action and display in the form of meeting houses, concert halls, theaters, opera houses, lecture halls, and museums; the spread of pedagogy, science, and philanthropy; the flourishing of print culture via the press, publishing, and other literary media; the rise of a reading public through salons and reading societies, subscription publishing and lending libraries; new spaces of sociability in coffeehouses, taverns, and clubs; and the general universe of voluntary association. All these areas of social and cultural history have been booming since the 1980s.<sup>19</sup> Not all historians working in them are directly inspired by Habermas's ideas, but the reception of *Strukturwandel's* translation has shaped the environment where they now have to think. Moreover, beyond these immediate domains, ideas of the public sphere permeate discussion in a wide variety of transnational and cross-disciplinary fields, linking literary scholars, historians and theorists of art and architecture, film specialists, sociologists, anthropologists, political theorists, and anyone placing themselves in the disorderly and undisciplined field of cultural studies.

In the process, the concept has migrated a long way from its original usage. Aside from its general currency among historians and across the humanities and social sciences as a term of theory, "public sphere" has become adaptable for widely varying purposes. After the early "proletarian public sphere" proposed by Negt and Kluge, we now have the black public sphere, the feminist public sphere, professional public spheres, the "phantom public sphere," the global public sphere, the "indigenous public sphere," the intimate public sphere, the electronic public sphere, and so forth.<sup>20</sup> The burgeoning new journals in cultural studies have aired these discussions, mobilizing work across the disciplines from literature to anthropology, philosophy to musicology, history to communications: they include *Critical Inquiry* (founded in 1974), *Media, Culture, and Society* (1978), *Social Text* (1982), *Representations* (1983), *Cultural Critique* (1985), *Cultural Studies* (1987), *New Formations* (1987), *Public Culture* (1988), *International Journal of Cultural Studies*

(1998), and *European Journal of Cultural Studies* (1998). Moreover, even the most casual visit to the Internet reveals an extraordinary wealth of activity around the term, ranging across national and linguistic borders, inside the academy and out, across all manner of disciplines and fields, from poetry to psychoanalysis, law to markets, television to cybernetics.<sup>21</sup>

In contemporary discourse, “public sphere” now signifies the general questing for democratic agency in an era of declining electoral participation, compromised sovereignties, and frustrated or disappointed citizenship. The term is called upon wherever people come together for collective exchange and expression of opinion, aiming both for coherent enunciation and the transmission of messages onward to parallel or superordinate bodies, whether these are a state, some other institutional locus of authority, or simply a dominant culture. Such publics might be local and extremely modest, as in the public sphere of a particular institution like a company or university, or in the actions of citizens in a special part of their lives such as parents involved with school boards. Or they may be spatially quite indefinite, as in the novel publics of the cyberspace, transnational diasporas, and globalization.

Where does this profusion leave us? Most obviously, the term has become decisively disengaged from its author’s original purpose. Arguments can certainly still be made for the public sphere’s embeddedness in the consequences of those large-scale societal transformations between the late Middle Ages and the eighteenth century, where Habermas began his account. In *Strukturwandel*, he linked an emergent political logic of transition to a complex of long-run changes in that way, from trade-driven processes of capital accumulation and the reconfiguring of state/society relations to the dissolving of the household economy and the coalescence of the bourgeoisie into a new and dynamic social force. But the term’s value has long emancipated itself from this more specific beginning. Habermas himself now deploys the concept in relation to citizenship and “democratic legitimation” more generally, using it to express the “equal opportunity to take part in an encompassing process of focused political communication” and the need to fashion a resilient “communicational infrastructure” toward that end.<sup>22</sup> It now functions as a mobile theoretical term analogous to *state* or *society*, and as such lends itself perfectly appropriately to contexts other than the Western European ones

Habermas originally discussed, such as the Japanese ones addressed in these essays.<sup>23</sup>

Second, at a time of extreme uncertainty among social historians, when the so-called linguistic turn and the new cultural history were placing them uncomfortably on the defensive during the 1990s, *Strukturwandel* offered an account of democracy's cultural prerequisites that remained grounded in highly materialist ways. It begins with a particular model of the formation of commercial society for understanding the transition from feudalism to capitalism, embracing all the institutional innovations presupposed in the organization of markets, of communications, of the creation of newspapers, and so on, linking the circulation of ideas to a new infrastructural environment of social organization and exchange. For its time this account was impressively based on the social-historical scholarship then available.<sup>24</sup> It always implied a social history rather than just an argument about ideas. Its beauty was to have theorized the emergence of modern politics in a way that was precisely grounded in materialist social history and a broader conception of public action. In that sense, a recent claim that its appeal in the 1990s was "the result of the slow decline of unreconstructed social history and the linguistic and cultural turns in the discipline" is very wide of the mark: on the contrary, it allowed key social bearings and lines of social explanation to be preserved while so many voices were casting them out.<sup>25</sup>

Third, there is perhaps more ambiguity to the concept of *Öffentlichkeit* than much of the English-language discussion allows. An unwieldy aggregation of terms like *publicness*, *publicity*, *public culture*, and *public opinion* translates the term perhaps more accurately than the customary *public sphere*, which manages a rather clumsy and unsatisfactory approximation of the complex German meaning. It connotes something more like "the quality or the condition of being public," making space for a set of ethical and philosophical desiderata in addition to the more distinctly institutional arena of political articulation foregrounded by many of the English discussions. If we consider the implications of publicness within this rather different horizon, the changing coordinates of political life become more intelligible than if we confine ourselves to the more familiar institutional approach. The period since the 1960s in particular simply is not graspable using only a framework of constitutional liberalism, parliamentary politics,

and reasoned public debate, any more than the turbulence of the 1960s was assimilable by the already consolidated political culture of the postwar time. Instead, violence, direct-action militancy, street demonstrations, the politics of memory, visual culture, the mass circulation of images, and the commercialized and mass-mediated domain of popular culture all require a different kind of analytic from the one offered by Habermas's classic account. These aspects of 1968 exploded the terms of established political discourse. Theoretically speaking, they also expose some crucial difficulties at the center of Habermas's concept of the public sphere.

Whenever we are dealing with questions of conflict, disputation, and pluralization in that way, we necessarily complicate the framework proposed by *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, with its classic grand narrative of bourgeois emancipation between the Enlightenment and the later nineteenth century, followed by its twentieth-century degeneration and decline. The historical picture of the rational political agency of a bourgeois citizenry as Habermas described it, however flawed by exclusions and however idealized and vulnerable to empirical critique, certainly retains its normative appeal for democratic theory, postulating as it does a protected space of procedural deliberation and reasoned political exchange intermediating between state and civil society. But to grasp the problems of democratic articulation in the second half of the twentieth century, it is also necessary to engage Habermas's argument about the public sphere's decline and fall, the "structural transformation" of the book's title. Thus, from the last third of the nineteenth century, Habermas argues,

the growing contradictions of a capitalist society—the passage of competitive capitalism into monopoly or organized capitalism, the regulations of social conflicts by the state, and the fragmentation of the rational public into an arena of competing interests—serve to erode the independence of public opinion and undermine the legitimacy of its institutions. In the cultural sphere proper, from the arts to the press and the mass entertainment industry, the processes of commercialization and rationalization have increasingly targeted the individual consumer while eliminating the mediating contexts of reception and rational discussion, particularly in the new age of the electronic media. In this way the classic basis of the public

sphere—a clear distinction between public good and private interest, the principled demarcation of state and society, and the constitutive role of a participant citizenry, defining public policy and its parameters through reasoned exchange, free of domination—disappears. The relations between state and society are reordered, to the advantage of the former and the detriment of a free political life.<sup>26</sup>

Here, there is an irony to Habermas's critique of the Federal Republic's degraded public sphere as he saw it from a standpoint in the early 1960s, which has some relevance for cognate discussions of post-1945 Japan. For in reality, this 1962 lament for the supposedly vanished public sphere of classical liberal modernity was actually part of a sustained contemporary plea to create that ideal in West Germany in the first place. *Strukturwandel* drew its impetus from a gathering political discussion of the early 1960s among the so-called 1945ers—journalists, writers, social commentators, TV pundits, academics, and other public intellectuals born roughly between 1921 and 1933, who as teenagers or young adults had experienced 1945 as their decisive life-defining event, and who now were pressing for greater measures of operative liberal democracy in the Federal Republic. By the end of the 1950s, suffering the political culture of Konrad Adenauer's authoritarian "CDU [Christian Democratic Union]-state" increasingly as a kind of democracy-constricting claustrophobia, this postwar cohort strove for a new climate of polite pluralism, national civility, and reasoned public exchange, in a fundamental "politicizing of the public sphere."<sup>27</sup>

This commitment to securing the conditions of public reasoning was very much the ideal animating Habermas's 1962 book. But what figured there as a nostalgia for something that had once existed but was now degraded and lost was actually the novel desideratum of a maturing contemporary generational critique, which sought to establish and consolidate a liberal public sphere for the first time. In other words, so far from standing alone as the generative theoretical text of a new and original tradition of analysis, which is how *Strukturwandel* easily appears today, Habermas's book was actually one element in an extremely dense and much broader existing debate about the desirable meanings of publicness—*Öffentlichkeit*—for West German democracy. That debate, which Habermas joined with his 1962

book, was all about the importance of overcoming antidemocratic political traditions.

Once we have clarified this context of the earlier 1960s, which was one of perceived and demonstrable progress toward a fragile but functioning pluralism, it is also much easier to appreciate the radicalism of the rupture entailed by 1968—because the radicalism of the 1968ers' critique was aimed precisely against the hollowness of the new culture of public civility the 1945ers were so assiduously trying to produce. For example, during 1967–68 the outrage of the West German student movement was fuelled not only by the excesses of Franz-Jozef Strauß, the CDU, and the far Right, but also by the equally crude authoritarianism of the West Berlin Social Democratic Party. Thus both of Willy Brandt's successors as mayor of that city, Heinrich Albertz and Klaus Schütz, responded to students with an intransigence that was especially inflammatory, feeding the hysteria against the Socialist German Students, endorsing police illegalities, and generally demonizing the exercise of the classic civil freedoms.

For the point I am making here, the most painful aspect of that polarization was that these Social Democratic defenders of order represented precisely the political groupings that the liberal advocates of the public sphere necessarily relied upon for advancing their hopes. But once politics was taken out of doors, with all the resulting noise, theatricality, unpredictability, shocking experimentation, physical transgressions, stylistic excess, and rampant disrespectfulness, the resulting dynamism inevitably broke through the frameworks of decorum and civility the 1945ers wanted to protect. For while the procedures of formal (parliamentary) democracy in the Habermasian sense needed certainly to be upheld, they needed equally to be complemented by participatory energies and responsiveness to the grass roots. And the completely unbending refusal of liberal and Social Democratic proceduralists to acknowledge this case seemed to the New Leftists to expose the self-serving and narrow assumptions of the given system. For the New Left the democratic potential of public sphere proceduralism was always already circumscribed by the given rules of the polity. To establish genuinely democratic publicness, therefore, radical extensions were needed. In Dany Cohn-Bendit's words: "A society that claimed to be democratic was

made to confront its authoritarian structures, the authoritarian personality was challenged, society's smooth running profoundly shaken."<sup>28</sup>

These questions, and the related West German conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s, have obvious resonance for the Japanese histories presented in these excellent papers. In their complex ways Nakai Masakazu, Maruyama Masao, and Etō Jun all struggled with issues analogous to those confronted by respective cohorts of West German intellectuals who experienced the Third Reich: how could democratic politic culture be reconstituted in societies severed from the normal resources of continuity and tradition, in which the national past per se had lost its authorizing legitimacy and even seemed to have been entirely disqualified? If these individual thinkers inevitably diverged in many specific ways from Habermas and other West German counterparts, then the structural syndromes of these two "postwars" remain nonetheless comparable, and the specific differences can be as illuminating in that respect as the similarities. Likewise, Wesley Sasaki-Uemura's arguments about "localization" and pluralization of the public sphere provide excellent points of convergence with the West German protest movements of the same period, whose comparative possibilities cycle back through the *Bürgerinitiativen* (Citizens' Initiatives), the new social movements, and eventually the Greens from the late 1960s to early 1980s. The fields of tension between these new direct-action militancies and Habermas's incorrigible defense of communicative and proceduralist reasoning possess clear affinities to the contemporary conflicts in Japan.

The classical framework of proceduralist *Öffentlichkeit* is particularly ill-fitted for the new types of publicness that erupted in the 1960s and 1970s, a disjunction dramatically and poignantly illustrated by the conflicts Habermas directly solicited with the West German New Left.<sup>29</sup> This applies most blatantly to the countercultural radicalisms of 1968, and here the essays by Noriko Aso, Abé Mark Nornes, and Reiko Tomii provide another fascinating plane of potential comparison, ranging across the official spectacle of the Tokyo Olympiad, the potential counterpublic imagined by the documentarists, and the avant-garde interventionism developing around the remarkable *Model 1,000-Yen Incident*. For example, in the West German context we know something about the Situationist and avant-garde precursors of *Kommune 1* and other countercultural groups, and during the 1960s a

variety of bohemian and hedonistic subcultures in major cities like Munich, Frankfurt, Hamburg, and West Berlin were crystallizing alternative publics of some long-term importance. Across the North Sea in Britain, analogously, it is also clear that the worlds of jazz and rhythm and blues, poetry in pubs, folk music, little magazines, and art schools were just as basic to 1968's prehistories as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the New Left Clubs. For discussions of the public sphere, this area of stylistic dissidence, aesthetic radicalism, and the associated cultural politics remains both seriously neglected and a potential source of extremely fruitful comparison.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, the most important of the counterpublics generated by the new conflicts of the 1960s has been the feminist one, an area the essays in this collection do not address. Feminist critiques have also been the most far-reaching of the responses to Habermas in the decade since the translation of *Strukturwandel* appeared.<sup>31</sup> As both history and idea, these have argued, the public sphere was constructed around a system of gendered meanings, whether in the formal intellectual discourse of politics, citizenship, and rights, in the institutional arenas of publicness and publicity, in the associational universe of civic engagement and sociality, or in the personal sphere of family life. More generally, of course, both in theory and politics, feminists have turned the relationship of the personal and the political completely inside out since the explosions of the late 1960s and early 1970s, making it possible entirely to remake the connections between everydayness and political life, whether in the family or the workplace, in sexuality and personal relations, or in all the situations where pain and pleasure are produced.

The notion of the public sphere has turned out to be a very good way of getting from these contexts of everyday life to an idea of political agency and action. The concept's usefulness for me was always about opening up a space in this way to talk about politics without it being subsumed in the conventional institutional understanding of how politics occurs. Such a narrow understanding has been especially common for many workaday historians, who might be very sophisticated in their handling of empirical work, but recalcitrantly anti-intellectual when it comes to explicating assumptions or making use of theory. There is a well-entrenched tendency in such work to present politics as located in the political process narrowly understood—parties, legislatures, government. That is an abiding problem

of our contemporary assumptions about politics, too, in terms of commonsensical understandings. What I have always liked about “public sphere” as a theory term, as a framework that we can take from Habermas, is that it provides a way of conceptualizing an expanded notion of the political. It forces us to look for politics in other social places.

This is useful not only for producing those histories of earlier periods I have been describing. It is also useful for activating a sense of ordinary and efficacious citizenship today. The “public sphere” in that sense is a space between state and society in which political action occurs with real effectivities, whether in terms of the local effects, in building a sense of political agency, or in behaving ethically in one’s social relations and allowing some notion of collective goods to be posed, and thereby contributing to wider processes of political mobilization. It is one way of making connections between what we think and do in everyday life, including the personal sphere, and the world of politics at a time when such extreme and debilitating skepticism has accumulated about the purpose and potency of such action. When in popular perceptions “politics” degenerates ever more cynically into a synonym for corruption, self-interestedness, and machineries of privilege beyond realistic popular control, the “public sphere” becomes a way of restoring intelligibility to the political process. It offers a possibility of reclaiming politics for a realistic discourse of democracy.

At a time of such depressingly extensive political disbelief—of disaffection and disablement around one’s agency as a citizen—this term “public sphere” becomes an excellent starting point for thinking again about what politics is, about where it takes place, and about how it can function as a space available to ordinary people and not just to official or professional politicians. It allows one to imagine—modestly and realistically—how a sense of citizenship might be re-engaged, whether in the public sphere of particular institutions like a university or a profession; in some local setting like a school board, a workplace, or a community campaign; or in the new political communities of the cyberspace. Such a renewed concept of citizenship may even infiltrate the political process more conventionally understood, in relation to parties and elections, the articulation of “interests,” and the presentation of demands in government. This is clearly linked to notions of civil society as well, as the ground on and from which political actions arise. So if I argue that the public

sphere makes more sense as a structured setting in which contestation and negotiation can occur, this is what I have in mind, whether it is historically in relation to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, to Japan and Western Europe since 1945, to the 1960s, or to now.

### Notes

- 1 See Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Newied: Hermann Luchterhand, 1962), translated by Thomas Burger as *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).
- 2 See the following works by Habermas: *Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon, 1970; originally published in 1968); *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon, 1971; originally published in 1968); *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon, 1973; originally published in 1963); *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1975; originally published in 1974); *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1979); *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, 2 vols. (Boston: Beacon, 1980; originally published in 1984). This is by no means an exhaustive listing of Habermas's works.
- 3 See Peter Dews, ed., *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas* (London: Verso, 1986), and the following works by Habermas: *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987; originally published in 1985); *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989); *The Past As Future*, trans. Max Pensky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); *A Berlin Republic: Writings on Germany*, trans. Steven Rendall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, trans. Ciaran Cronin and Pablo De Greif (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998); *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays*, trans. Max Pensky (Cambridge: Polity, 2001); *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996; originally published in 1992).
- 4 See esp. the various works of Hans-Ulrich Wehler, including *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1969); *Historische Sozialwissenschaft und Geschichtsschreibung: Studien zu Aufgaben und Traditionen deutscher Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1980); and Wehler, ed., *Moderne deutsche Sozialgeschichte* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1968). The flagship journal of this generational grouping is *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, subtitled *Zeitschrift für historische Sozialwissenschaft* [Journal of historical social science], which began publishing in 1975.

- 5 Habermas, "The Public Sphere," *New German Critique* 3 (1974): 49–52. See also Peter U. Hohendahl, "Critical Theory, Public Sphere, and Culture: Jürgen Habermas and His Critics," *New German Critique* 16 (1979): 89–118.
- 6 See Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978); David Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980); Rick Roderick, *Habermas and Foundations of Critical Theory* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Macmillan, 1986); Anthony Giddens, "Jürgen Habermas," in *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*, ed. Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 121–139; John B. Thompson and David Held, eds., *Habermas: Critical Debates* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982). For the civil society debates of the 1980s see John Keane, *Democracy and Civil Society* (London: Verso, 1988), and Keane, ed., *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives* (London: Verso, 1988).
- 7 See Habermas, *L'espace public: Archéologie de la publicité comme dimension constitutive de la société bourgeoise* (Paris: Payot, 1978).
- 8 Günther Lottes, *Politische Aufklärung und plebejisches Publikum: Zur Theorie und Praxis des englischen Radikalismus im späten 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1979).
- 9 Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), belatedly translated by Peter Labanyi, Jamie Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff as *The Public Sphere and Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). See also Miriam Hansen, "Unstable Mixtures, Dilated Spheres: Negt's and Kluge's *The Public Sphere and Experience* Twenty Years Later," *Public Culture* 5 (winter 1993): 179–212.
- 10 Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck*, 2d ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).
- 11 David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).
- 12 Geoff Eley, "Nationalism and Social History," *Social History* 6 (1981): 83–107, and "State Formation, Nationalism, and Political Culture: Some Thoughts on the German Case," in *Culture, Ideology, and Politics: Festschrift for Eric Hobsbawm*, ed. Raphael Samuel and Gareth Stedman Jones (London: Routledge, 1983), 277–301.
- 13 Geoff Eley, "Reading Gramsci in English: Observations on the Reception of Antonio Gramsci in the English-Speaking World, 1957–1982," *European History Quarterly* 14 (1984): 441–477. There are strong affinities between Habermas's argument in *Strukturwandel* and the early works of Raymond Williams published at around the same time. See *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958); *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961); and *Communications* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1962).
- 14 Geoff Eley, "Re-Thinking the Political: Social History and Political Culture in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 16 (1981): 427–457.

- 15 Peter U. Hohendahl, *The Institution of Criticism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982; originally published in 1974); see also Hohendahl, "Critical Theory, Public Sphere, and Culture."
- 16 John Keane, *Public Life and Late Capitalism: Toward a Socialist Theory of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). See also Keane, *Democracy and Civil Society* and *Civil Society and the State*.
- 17 Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).
- 18 See the published proceedings: Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).
- 19 Exhaustive citations would be inappropriate here, but see especially the following: Dena Goodman, "Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime," *History and Theory* 31 (1992): 1–20; Jon Cowans, "Habermas and French History: The Public Sphere and the Problem of Political Legitimacy," *French History* 13 (1999): 134–160; Colin Jones, "The Great Chain of Buying: Medical Advertisement, the Bourgeois Public Sphere, and the Origins of the French Revolution," *American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 13–40; Anthony J. LaVopa, "Conceiving a Public: Ideas and Society in Eighteenth-Century Europe," *Journal of Modern History* 64 (1992): 79–116; Ian McNeely, "The Intelligence Gazette (*Intelligenzblatt*) As a Road Map to Civil Society: Information Networks and Local Dynamism in Germany, 1770s–1840s," in *Paradoxes of Civil Society: New Perspectives on Modern German and British History*, ed. Frank Trentmann (New York: Berghahn, 2000), 135–156; Belinda Davis, "Reconsidering Habermas, Gender, and the Public Sphere: The Case of Wilhelmine Germany," in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany 1870–1930*, ed. Geoff Eley (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 397–426; John Brewer, "This, That, and the Other: Public, Social, and Private in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Shifting the Boundaries*, ed. Dario Castiglione and Leslie Sharpe (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995); Steven Pincus, "'Coffee Politicians Does Create': Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture," *Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995): 807–834; David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999); Margaret C. Jacob, "The Mental Landscape of the Public Sphere: A European Perspective," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (1994): 95–113.
- 20 See the special issue "The Black Public Sphere," *Public Culture* 7 (1994), republished as *The Black Public Sphere*, ed. the Black Public Sphere Collective (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Joan B. Landes, ed., *Feminism, the Public, and the Private* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Bruce Robbins, ed., *The Phantom Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); John Hartley and Alan McKee, *The Indigenous Public Sphere: The Reporting and Reception of Aboriginal Issues in the Australian Media* (Oxford: Oxford University

Press, 2001); Lauren Berlant, ed., *Intimacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Douglas Kellner, "Globalization from Below? Toward a Radical Democratic Technopolitics," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 4 (1999): 101–113; Lincoln Dahlberg, "Cyberspace and the Public Sphere: Exploring the Democratic Potential of the Net," *Convergence* 4 (1998): 70–84, and "Extending the Public Sphere through Cyberspace: The Case of Minnesota E-Democracy," *First Monday* 6 (2001): [firstmonday.org/issues/issue6\\_3/dahlberg/index/html](http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue6_3/dahlberg/index/html). See also the "Public Sphere Project" of the Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility (CPSR) Initiative, launched by the CPSR Symposium on "Shaping the Network Society: The Future of the Public Sphere in Cyberspace," Seattle, 20–23 May 2000. See the Web site at [www.scn.org/sphere](http://www.scn.org/sphere).

- 21 See, for example, the "Psychoanalysis and the Public Sphere" Web site of the journal *Free Associations*, at [www.shf.ac.uk/~psysc/rmy/fa.html](http://www.shf.ac.uk/~psysc/rmy/fa.html); and the conference on "Poetry and the Public Sphere" held at Rutgers University, 24–27 April 1997, at [english.rutgers.edu/pomain.htm](http://english.rutgers.edu/pomain.htm).
- 22 Habermas, "Why Europe Needs a Constitution," *New Left Review*, 2d ser., 11 (September–October 2001): 17.
- 23 For a valuable review of this changing theoretical valency see Margaret R. Somers, "What's Political or Cultural about the Political Culture Concept? Toward an Historical Sociology of Concept Formation" and "Narrating and Naturalizing Civil Society and Citizenship Theory: The Place of Political Culture and the Public Sphere," *Sociological Theory* 13 (July, November 1995): 113–144, 229–274.
- 24 Given the paucity of historical accounts at the time, Habermas's book offered an extraordinarily creative synthesis whose challenge to historians remained long unmet. Instead, West German scholarship was shaped far more by the state-centered perspective of Reinhart Koselleck's magisterial *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution: Allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung, und soziale Bewegung von 1791 bis 1848* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1967). Habermas's *Strukturwandel* was also matched by Koselleck's slightly earlier *Kritik und Krise: Ein Beitrag zur Parthogenese der bürgerlichen Welt* (Freiburg: K. Alber, 1959), which was translated similarly belatedly as *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Parthogenesis of Modern Society* (Oxford: Berg, 1988).
- 25 See Brian Cowan, "What Was Masculine about the Public Sphere? Gender and the Coffeehouse Milieu in Post-Restoration England," *History Workshop Journal* 51 (spring 2001): 127–158 (quote on 129). Despite its cavalier dismissal of the public sphere concept's wider value, this article develops an extremely rich discussion of the coffeehouse milieu, with excellent guidance to the wider literature.
- 26 This is my summary of Habermas's argument in Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century," in Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, 292.
- 27 See esp. A. D. Moses, "The Forty-Fivers: A Generation between Fascism and Democracy," *German Politics and Society* 17 (1999): 94–126, and Christine von Hodenberg's forthcoming

- study of *Liberalisierung der politischen Öffentlichkeit. Massenmedien, Journalismus, und Pressepolitik in Westdeutschland, 1949–1969*. I take the phrase *politicizing of the public sphere* from a paper von Hodenberg presented at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, on 12 April 2001.
- 28 Dany Cohn-Bendit, in Ronald Fraser et al., *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (New York, 1988), 361.
- 29 See Negt, ed., *Die Linke antwortet Jürgen Habermas. Mit Beiträgen von Wolfgang Abendroth et al.* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1969); Habermas, *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform* (Frankfurt am Main: Surhkamp, 1969); Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society*.
- 30 See here the works of Dick Hebdige, *Subculture—The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979) and *Hiding in the Light* (London: Comedia, 1988). See also Peter Wollen, “The Situationist International: On the Passage of a Few People through a Rather Brief Period of Time,” in *Raiding the Icebox: Reflections on Twentieth-Century Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), and “Global Conceptualism and North American Conceptual Art,” in *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s*, ed. Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, and Rachel Weiss (New York: Queen’s Museum of Art, 1999).
- 31 This friendly feminist critique was anticipated in the later 1980s. See esp. Nancy Fraser, “What’s Critical about Critical Theory?” and Iris M. Young, “Impartiality and the Civic Public,” both in *Feminism As Critique: On the Politics of Gender*, ed. Sheyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 31–56, 57–76; Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*; Mary P. Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825–1880* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) and *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997); Landes, *Feminism, the Public, and the Private*.