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The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader

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The notion of 'the public sphere' has become increasingly central to theories and studies of democracy, media, and culture over the last few decades. It has also gained political importance in the context of the European Union's efforts to strengthen democracy, integration, and identity. The Idea of the Public Sphere offers a wide-ranging, accessible, and easy-to-use introduction to one of the most influential ideas in modern social and political thought, tracing its development from the origins of modern democracy in the Eighteenth Century to present day debates. This book brings key texts by the leading contributors in the field together in a single volume. It explores current topics such as the role of religion in public affairs, the implications of the internet for organizing public deliberation, and the transnationalisation of public issues.



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Editorial Review

Review

The idea of the public sphere has been a vital part of democratic theory throughout the modern era. This helpful reader provides the intellectual and historical background to enable those thinking about these issues today to connect the most important contemporary contributions to their intellectual history. (Craig Calhoun, president, Social Science Research Council; professor of sociology and history, New York University)

Though much has been written about the public sphere, this ambitious and generous collection of key texts is truly in a class by itself. While tracing the intellectual history of the concept from the Enlightenment, the volume also probes its links to other key notions such as democracy, culture, media, and multiculturalism, placing it in the context of contemporary debates. Framed by edifying and accessible introductions – to the whole volume, to the seven sections, and to each one of the texts – this book will prove to be an immensely useful resource. It destined to become a classic volume on this topic. (Peter Dahlgren, Lund University)

This is a timely and long-needed introduction to the roots of public sphere thinking, which could help to better understand some burning contemporary controversies in the field. (Slavko Splichal, University of Ljubljana)

About the Author

Jostein Gripsrud is professor of Media Studies at the University of Bergen in Norway. **Hallvard Moe** is associate professor of Information Science and Media Studies at the University of Bergen in Norway. **Anders Molander** is associate professor and research coordinator at the Center for the Study of Professions at Oslo University College in Norway. **Graham Murdock** is reader in the sociology of Culture at Loughborough University.

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