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Consumer Citizen: The Constitution of Consumer Democracy in Sociological Perspective

Author: JÖRN LAMLA

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This paper approaches the question of whether and how consumers as “consumer citizens” establish consumer democracy. It will do so by drawing on various theoretical building blocks from sociology. The paper will make use of the different dimensions contained in the notion of constitution, starting with the constitution of the social through action, through the politico-legal or institutional conditions constituting the consumer citizen, to the current state of the consumer citizen. Specifically, the consumer citizen will be briefly discussed in five steps: from the angles of general social theory, socialization theory, the theory of modern society, from the view of current social trends, and in the light of considerations from the theory of democracy. The Internet, as a new means of consumer networking, will serve as an empirical research area for exemplifying and specifying the theoretical considerations.

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