Abstract

In spite of its frequent uses at the present time, the concept of civil society suffers from a substantial obscurity in what it designates, signifies and involves. In order to dissipate this obscurity, it is necessary to elucidate the theory that impregnates the concept in its source and along its evolution. With this purpose in mind, a short history of the theoretical elaboration of the concept of civil society is introduced. A number of theories are reviewed: the naturalism of Aristote and the conventionalism of Hobbes, Locke and Ferguson, as well as the alternative theories of Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Marx and Gramsci.

Keywords

Civil society, naturalism, conventionalism, liberalism.