

Habermas's Account of Rationality: Accept, Reject, or Revise and Resubmit?

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ABSTRACT: This is a constructive critique of Habermas's account of rationality, which is central to his political theory and has sparked theoretical and empirical research across politics and beyond. Habermas and many critical theorists give a distorted view of means-ends rationality – the ability to pick good means to ends. In particular, they should not claim that means-ends rationality must be egocentric. This weakens Habermas's attempt to distinguish means-ends rationality from his hugely influential idea of communicative rationality – the rationality of genuine discussion, roughly. I suggest that sincerity and autonomy, not egocentrism, are key distinguishing features of communicative rationality. But on this view, communicative rationality becomes a subset of means-ends rationality; sincerity and autonomy are side-constraints on the choice of acceptable communicative means. This paper thus challenges decades of what critical theorists have written on means-ends and communicative rationality.

1. Introduction

Frankfurt School critical theorists have often criticized means-ends rationality – the ability to choose good means to ends. My first claim is that these criticisms miss the mark: they involve particular kinds of means-ends rationality, and say little about means-ends rationality broadly understood.

Early Frankfurt School theorists, like Adorno and Horkheimer, could sidestep this response: even if there are other types of means-ends rationality, the one they attack is

prominent and needs challenging. The situation is more serious for Jürgen Habermas. His predecessors' overly negative approach led him to offer a broader typology of rationality. My second claim is that Habermas's account of rationality is seriously inadequate. The pre-1990 typology has significant gaps, some of which Habermas fills after 1990, some of which he does not.

This is a major problem for Habermas because it undermines one of his most important contributions, communicative rationality – the rationality of genuine discussion, roughly. Habermas characterizes communicative rationality in contrast to means-ends rationality; so if he is caricaturing means-ends rationality, communicative rationality is called into question. Most importantly, he often says that means-ends rationality is egocentric while communicative rationality is not; but he does not define 'egocentric,' and I show that none of four reasonable definitions of the term fits his position. My third claim is thus that Habermas does not successfully distinguish means-ends and communicative rationality.

My fourth claim, building on Habermas's late 1980s work, is that sincerity and autonomy are the distinctions he needs: the ends of genuine understanding and autonomous agreement act as side-constraints on means which can be used in communicative rationality, ruling out misinformation and threats, for example. But this is no different to means-ends rationality, where ends also act as side-constraints on appropriate means. If someone wants to get to work without breaking the law, the latter end rules out options like stealing a car.

My fifth claim – by far the most controversial – is thus that communicative rationality is a subset of means-ends rationality. This claim may cause structural damage to eyebrows. But the conclusion follows if the two ideas of rationality are understood along the lines suggested here. The result, I suggest, is a clearer and more workable idea of communicative rationality than Habermas has offered.

Why does this paper matter? One reason is to defend means-ends rationality. We must not confuse the general idea, which should be part of any theory of rationality, with objectionable conceptions or applications of it. A second reason is to challenge four decades of theorising about the fundamental differences between means-ends and communicative rationality. A third reason is to show deficiencies in Habermas's ideas on rationality. Too often, commentators use Habermas's typology without recognizing its gaps and flaws.

A fourth reason, related to the third, is to highlight inadequate understandings of Habermas. We can 'understand' an author in two ways. We can understand an author's intended meanings – what she meant by a word or phrase, say. To understand Plato's *Republic*, for example, we should try to uncover what Plato meant when he wrote it (Skinner 2002, 107). But we understand Plato's *Republic* better if we also see its logical errors, and we understand Berlin's 'Two Concepts of Liberty' better if we see its conceptual ambiguities and inconsistencies. So, the first kind of understanding requires recovering an author's intended meanings, the second requires grasping the logical and conceptual implications of what she writes (Blau 2009).

Clearly, we all have inadequate understanding, in both respects: we cannot in practice know exactly what someone thought, or see the infinite number of logical and conceptual implications of what she wrote. But I will suggest, without having the space to justify this adequately, that many writers significantly misunderstand Habermas.

For example, in the first sense of misunderstanding, the political theorist Richard Rorty seems to treat communicative rationality simply as a form of rationality involving communication (1991, 189). So does Mark Pennington, leading to the un-Habermasian claim that markets are communicatively rational (2003, 734-8). In public policy, Clinton Andrews's (2007) account of instrumental, strategic and communicative rationality bears little relation to Habermas's. In international politics, Thomas Risse conflates communicative rationality and

discourse, and sometimes discusses the ideal speech situation in precisely the concrete way which Habermas wants to avoid (Risse 2000, 32; 2004, 294-6, 303, 308). I too used to conflate communicative rationality and discourse (Blau 2007). Such misunderstandings have not prevented some instructive normative and empirical analysis. Pennington, for example, questions deliberative democracy's ability to communicate knowledge (2003, 728-34), while Risse casts new light on the rationality of Soviet/NATO negotiations (2000, 23-8). Nonetheless, I would say that much scholarship which portrays itself as following Habermas is more Habermasish than Habermasian.

More troublingly, many people present Habermas's account of rationality without noting its flaws. This is not a major problem in itself, although it shows critical theorists being insufficiently critical. But we all do this kind of thing, and being challenged on such grounds is standard in scholarly debate. What matters more is if Habermas's unnoticed difficulties undermine these critical theorists' conclusions. For example, many critical theorists use Habermas to attack bureaucratic decision-making and defend participatory/deliberative methods. This line of attack is found in political theory (e.g. Dryzek 1990, 3-6, 9-21, 50-76, 113-6), in planning studies (e.g. Forester 1993, 24-30, 49-50, 68-72, 78-9), and in management studies (e.g. Alvesson and Deetz 2000, 90-3). These arguments are important, and are a breath of democratically fresh air in a stale, elitist literature. But Habermas's means-ends/communicative distinction is not exhaustive, so even if we overlook his caricature of means-ends rationality's defects, the answer is not necessarily communicative rationality. In short, a deeper understanding of Habermas affects the ensuing normative arguments: if these writers had seen the flaws in Habermas's account, their normative conclusions would need to have been altered or, more likely, justified in a different way (Blau 2011, 52-3).

So, this paper challenges both Habermas and the critical theorists who use his ideas for empirical and normative analysis. Habermas's account of rationality has more pitfalls than previously thought, and his paradigm-shifting idea of communicative rationality turns out to be part of the very thing that he and other Frankfurt School theorists have been trying to distance themselves from. Meanwhile, many critical theorists misrepresent Habermas nearly as much as they misrepresent means-ends rationality, many overlook major problems in his account, and some of their conclusions are thus called into question.

A brief note on terms. Habermas and his translators use different terms at different times, and some terms are unorthodox and confusing. To limit confusion, this paper talks of the ability to choose good means to ends as 'means-ends rationality.' 'Instrumental rationality,' the more usual term, is here restricted to Habermas's own, narrower idea: means-ends rationality in non-social situations. (In other publications I talk of instrumental rationality in its broader sense.)

The article proceeds as follows. After briefly explaining what means-ends rationality is and why it needs defending (section 2), the article summarises Habermas's pre-1990 account of rationality (section 3), which has five curious gaps, only some of which are filled after 1990 (section 4). I then challenge Habermas's claim that means-ends rationality is egocentric, by offering four plausible definitions of egocentrism, none of which can distinguish means-ends and communicative rationality (section 5). Sincerity and autonomy, rather, are shown to be key features of communicative rationality (section 6). This suggests that communicative rationality is actually a subset of means-ends rationality (section 7).

2. What is means-ends rationality and why defend it?

Means-ends rationality is the ability to choose good means to ends. Consider a journey from London to Paris. Someone who wants to save time should choose a quicker trip over a longer one, someone who wants to save money should choose a cheaper trip over a costlier one, and someone who wants to save the environment should choose a less polluting trip over a more polluting one. Means-ends rationality is a matter of degree: an individual exhibits means-ends rationality to the extent that she can choose good means to ends. But for ease of argument, this article depicts means-ends rationality as all-or-nothing.

Everyone needs means-ends rationality. Someone who wants to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening and be a critic after dinner needs means-ends rationality to decide what to hunt, where to fish, how to rear cattle and what to criticize. You cannot reach these ends if you try to fish for cows or hunt in theatres. You cannot lead a fruitful life without means-ends rationality, unless you are staggeringly lucky. Means-ends rationality is one of the most basic forms of rationality, but while it is found in every complete theory of rationality (Nozick 1993, 133, 176), our ends ultimately matter more than our means (Rescher 1988, vii, 1-2, 6-8). I must thus emphasize that I am not defending means-ends rationality as the dominant form of political rationality.

Critical theorists rightly attack precisely this dominance: in modern society, they say, the exercise of rationality is too often reduced to choices of means to pre-given ends (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972, 36-42). But the main problem here is the pursuit of undesirable ends, or the dominance of certain ways of picking means; neither of these should be confused with means-ends rationality itself.

A related and equally misplaced complaint is that means-ends rationality is linked to such things as self-interest (Horkheimer 2004, 3), treating other people merely as a means (Alker 1990, 174), conservatism (Dryzek 2006, 113), patriarchy (Alvesson and Deetz 2000,

92), domination of nature (Horkheimer 2004, 64), neo-liberal economics (Healey 2006, 50, 53), bureaucracy (Dryzek 1990, 4-5), and neglect of participatory methods (Forester 1993, 28). These arguments are valuable but as criticisms of means-ends rationality they do not work: there is no reason why means-ends rationality must be associated with any of the above. For example, Forester states that means-ends rationality involves ‘treating participation as a source of obstruction’ (1993, 28). But this assertion fails by definition: when participation is a good means to ends, treating it as a source of obstruction violates means-ends rationality. Rather than attacking means-ends rationality, an argument which cannot work, critical theorists should challenge people who claim to uphold means-ends rationality but who actually support things which are bad means to their ends (Blau 2011, 41-4).

Critical theorists should thus be clearer about whether the problem is means-ends rationality in general or simply the particular way in which it is applied. Targeting the former may undermine their more important substantive concerns. Habermas himself does not reject means-ends rationality (Heath 2001, 13) but his account is partly to blame for the excessive criticisms of some followers.

Much more could be said about means-ends rationality, for example how to deal with means which help short-term ends but undercut long-term ends (Elster 2007, 114-22), or means which are constitutive of ends (Harsanyi 1986, 85-6). But these things are beyond the scope of this article. It is now time to turn to Habermas.¹

¹ Abbreviations of Habermas’s work used in this paper, with original German and translated English dates in brackets: **AR**: “A Reply,” in *Communicative Action*, ed. Honneth and Joas (1986/1991). **ASI**: *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews* (1978-84/1986). **BFN**: *Between Facts and Norms* (1992/1996). **CES**: *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (1976/1979). **JA**:

3. Habermas's pre-1990 account of rationality

Habermas's work is important partly because it offers positive answers to the overly negative critiques of his Frankfurt School predecessors, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Habermas sees Horkheimer and Adorno's account of instrumental rationality as a key reason why their work 'oversimplif[ies] its image of modernity so astoundingly' (PDM 112-3). This is strong language from Habermas; but it is hard to deny that Horkheimer, for example, exaggerates woefully in talking about the 'complete transformation of the world into a world of means rather than of ends' (2004, 69). In my view, Adorno and Horkheimer should not have criticized means-ends rationality itself, merely the dominance of particular ends and the way in which for many people rationality is reduced to selecting means not ends. That shift of emphasis is consistent with their broader social and political critique.

But a similar shift of emphasis is far trickier for Habermas, because his criticisms of means-ends rationality are needed to support other parts of his theory. Most at threat is his

Justification and Application (1990-1, 1993). **KHI:** *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968/87). **LC:** *Legitimation Crisis* (1973/1976). **MCCA:** *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (1983/1990). **OPC:** *On the Pragmatics of Communication* (various/1998). **PDM:** *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1985/1987). **PMT:** *Postmetaphysical Thinking* (1988/1992). **RC:** "A reply to my critics," in *Habermas: Critical Debates*, ed. Thompson and Held (1982). **RD:** "Remarks on the discussion," *Theory, Culture & Society* (1990). **ST:** *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962/1989). **TCA:** *The Theory of Communicative Action* vols. 1 and 2 (1981/1984, 1987). **TIO:** *The Inclusion of The Other* (1996/1998). **TJ:** *Truth and Justification* (1996-2000/2003). **TP:** *Theory and Practice* (1963-8/1974). **TRS:** *Toward a Rational Society* (1968/1971).

idea of communicative rationality, the most significant advance on earlier Frankfurt School theorizing. Habermas repeatedly contrasts communicative rationality and means-ends rationality; so if we need to rethink means-ends rationality, we may also need to rethink communicative rationality. First, though, we must cover Habermas’s account of rationality – and uncover its flaws.

From about 1965 to 1990, Habermas mainly discusses three types of rationality: instrumental, strategic and communicative. Habermas also calls instrumental rationality ‘cognitive-instrumental’ rationality, and sometimes talks of instrumental and strategic rationality together as ‘purposive’ and ‘subject-centered’ rationality. But as mentioned above I talk of ‘means-ends rationality’ here.

Since 1990, Habermas also discusses practical reason, which has three forms: pragmatic, ethical and moral. These radical changes have been overlooked by many commentators (e.g. Weber 2005), but Habermas continues to use the pre-1990 account (TJ 13-14; OPC 310, 313-5, 325-6). And since it remains far better known than the post-1990 ideas, I focus mainly on the former.

The three basic types of rationality are characterized according to four criteria:

(A) Aim of action	Success	<i>or</i>	Understanding/Agreement
(B) Nature of action	Non-social	<i>or</i>	Social
(C) Ends	Fixed	<i>or</i>	Changeable
(D) Motivation	Egocentric	<i>or</i>	Non-egocentric

Criterion A produces two main types of rationality: means-ends rationality, aimed at success, and communicative rationality, aimed at understanding and agreement. Criterion B then gives two subsets of means-ends rationality: strategic rationality, which is social, and

instrumental rationality, which is non-social; communicative rationality is always social. Criteria C and D overlap with A and B: means-ends rationality, whether strategic or instrumental, involves fixed ends and egocentrism, while communicative rationality is non-egocentric. (The place of ends in communicative rationality is less certain – indeed, criterion C is less prominent in Habermas’s writings, and I do not place too much weight on it. But it is worth addressing because Habermas sometimes discusses it and because some applied critical theorists emphasize it, as discussed below.)

Habermas’s approach should ring alarm bells. Four pairs of choices could give between two and sixteen types of rationality, depending on how the choices are combined. With only three types of rationality, has Habermas left options out? Yes, as his post-1990 changes show. But he is not explicit about this, and still sometimes uses the pre-1990 account, which remains hugely influential. I will thus scrutinize the pre-1990 typology, starting with criteria A and B.

In the mid-to-late 1960s, Habermas’s account of rationality is based on ‘the fundamental distinction between work and interaction’ (TRS 91; emphasis removed). Habermas is quite vague about this problematic distinction (Giddens 1982, 155-6), but the key point here is this. Work, which involves means-ends rationality, is or could in principle be monological, i.e. done by an isolated person. But interaction, which involves communicative actions, must be dialogical, involving open-minded discussion (TP 151, 159; KHI 137, 186). So, choosing means to ends may or may not be social.

From the 1970s, Habermas talks about the non-social, non-dialogical form of means-ends rationality as ‘instrumental rationality,’ and the social and often dialogical form of means-ends rationality as ‘strategic rationality’ (see especially CES 40-1, 209; TCA1 285). (He used ‘instrumental’ and ‘strategic’ differently in his earlier work – TRS 91-2.) Instrumental and strategic rationality are ‘teleological’: they govern actions aimed at achieving success, by

finding good means to ends. Communicative rationality governs actions aimed at achieving understanding and agreement (TCA1 10-12, 86-8, 285-6; RC 263-4). Habermas does not of course deny that achieving understanding and agreement is a kind of success, but still wants to keep means-ends and communicative rationality separate (TCA1 101; RD 131; AR 239-42, 291; OPC 217-20). I question this separation in section 7.

Habermas's instrumental/strategic/communicative typology has three great strengths. First, it moves beyond almost all previous theories of rationality by giving criteria for what makes a *discussion* rational. This is a profound achievement. After one has read Habermas, it feels odd to read the essentially monological account of rationality in writers like Rawls (1999, 361-72).

Second, and related, Habermas distinguishes between genuine and strategic discussion. In the former, participants seek mutual understanding and agreement, and use communicative rationality. In the latter, at least one participant simply tries to win, perhaps by manipulation or threats, and uses strategic rationality: she aims at her own success, not at genuine understanding and agreement. Habermas's distinction is problematic, as we will see, but it has led to fascinating and normatively important empirical research on genuine versus strategic communication, for example in international negotiations (Risse 2000, 25-33) and in local planning (Sager 1994, 102-6, 200-19).

Third, Habermas's account of rationality partly underpins another key part of his social theory: the system/lifeworld distinction. For reasons of space I cannot discuss this here. But this too has led to important empirical research, for example on social movements (Schlosberg 1995) and international diplomacy (Lose 2001, 194-8).

So, Habermas's account of rationality is important in itself and has sparked valuable research. Major problems remain, though. I will bypass issues like the scalar or dual-aspect

nature of means-ends and communicative rationality (McCarthy 1978, 27-8; Fraser 1985, 101). I focus first on gaps in the typology, only some of which Habermas tackles after 1990.

4. Five gaps in Habermas's pre-1990 typology of rationality

Habermas's pre-1990 account has five curious gaps. First, it does not cover an *isolated* individual seeking understanding, for example when interpreting the weather or a book. Yet when Habermas describes an individual interpreting a book, he uses the same categories as in communicative rationality: subjective honesty, empirical truth and normative rightness (MCCA 29-31; see also AR 223, 229; PMT 224). If communicative rationality applies in non-communicative interpretation, this drastically undercuts the idea that communicative rationality is essentially social, intersubjective, mutual, dialogical, indeed communicative. And if something similar to but different from communicative rationality applies in non-communicative interpretation, Habermas's typology needs another category. I am not aware that Habermas ever solves this dilemma, although I confess I do not understand the Robinson Crusoe passage (MCCA 100), which may be relevant here.

Second, there is no place in Habermas's typology for a group of people trying to find means to shared ends. Habermas partly fills this gap after 1990 (JA 10-11, 16; BFN 160-1, 164, 180, 186). But this omission too is overlooked in the many discussions of Habermas's pre-1990 typology. This matters: there simply is no reason why means-ends rationality should be non-social.

Third, and more normatively important, before 1990 Habermas has no place for choosing ends in non-social situations. If rationality in non-social situations is only about choosing means, then no one can choose ends in non-social situations. That too is clearly wrong. We do not need to pretend that we *always* choose ends by ourselves, which is the impression Rawls often gives (1999, 361-72), to accept that we sometimes do this. Habermas

later corrects this. For example, after 1990 he places Kant's moral philosophy in a new category: individual moral reason (JA 8, 51-2). Bizarrely, before 1990 he had tried to shoehorn it into strategic rationality (TP 151). Although Habermas discusses Weber's account of non-communicative choices of ends (TCA1 168-85), this has no formal place in the pre-1990 typology – an odd and important gap. (A similar point, about phenomenological and pragmatist choosing of ends, is made by Joas 1991, 100-3.) Habermas was not primarily concerned with normative arguments at that stage of his career (Ferrara 1996, 121) and I agree with Joas (1991, 101) that whatever Habermas might imply, his pre-1990 account is not an exhaustive typology of rationality/action but a selective view aimed at his social theory. It is thus a shame that so many critical theorists simply recite Habermas's typology without probing its omissions.

There is a fourth gap: means-ends rationality without completely fixed ends. Habermas implies that means-ends rationality involves fixed ends (TRS 92; see also TCA1 285; MCCA 49). Some critical theorists attack means-ends rationality for the same reason (e.g. Forester 1993, 69-72). In fact, some ends may not be fixed in means-ends rationality – and Habermas sometimes accepts this. For Weber, he writes, purposive rationality includes 'not only an instrumental rationality of means, but a rationality of choice in setting ends selected in accord with values' (TCA1 170, emphasis removed; also TCA1 172, 285), a point Habermas makes more often after 1990 (BFN 159-61, 180, 186-8; JA 2-3, 10-11, 63).

Call this 'the two faces of means-ends rationality.' Consider an environmentalist trying to get from London to Paris. If there is no green way of making the trip, she might cancel it. Her values lead her to change her immediate ends. This important idea is usually overlooked, and Habermas himself often elides the two faces (TCA2 303, 332-3; AR 258; OPC 219; TIO 26-7). It does not help that Habermas or his translators talk of the two faces, respectively, as 'instrumental rationality' and 'rational choice' (TRS 91; TCA1, 170, 172;

though compare CES 117). Given the social science meaning of ‘rational choice,’ this term is now unhelpful.

A related reason why means-ends rationality can help us choose ends is that we can ask whether proposed ends are themselves good means to other ends (Simon 1983, 7-8, 11). In the above example, the environmentalist has two ends: reaching Paris and protecting the environment. Reaching Paris is a bad means for protecting the environment, which takes precedence; so the environmentalist reasons that she should not go to Paris. The place of such reasoning in Habermasian discourse is accepted by Rehg (1994, 47-8, 71) and Chambers (1996, 90-1), although they depict it differently to me.

Of course, means-ends rationality cannot itself tell us whether reaching Paris or protecting the environment is more important. The environmentalist’s use of means-ends rationality to cancel the Paris trip was only possible because protecting the environment had already been prioritized. Means-ends rationality can help us evaluate ends, but only in a limited way. As discussed above, then, means-ends rationality is merely one part of a broader theory of rationality. Still, this second face of means-ends rationality helps in some small way to deflect the view that means-ends rationality assumes completely fixed ends. Ends are being chosen – even if only to a limited extent – in non-social situations.

A fifth gap in Habermas’s pre-1990 typology involves what he himself would later see as the most important way of choosing ends rationally – *discursive* rationality, or discourse. Communicative rationality is the rationality of reaching genuine understanding and agreement. In Habermas’s first extended example of communicative rationality, which I draw on several times below, an older worker on a building-site tells a younger worker to buy him a drink (TCA2, 121-3). The older worker makes implicit or explicit reference to subjective feelings (‘I’m thirsty’), empirical facts (‘a shop is nearby’), and social norms (‘on this building-site, older workers can tell younger ones what to do’). In communicative

rationality, questioning these ‘validity-claims’ means probing them until the speaker does or could answer ‘yes’ to specific questions, such as ‘do you just mean you’re thirsty, or are you also saying you want a drink? Do you mean this shop or that one? Is it really the norm on this building-site that younger workers can be told what to do?’

We enter into discourse when discussion moves from what validity-claims *are* to whether they are *right* – whether a subjective claim actually is honest (‘are you really thirsty, or are you just playing with me?’), whether an empirical claim actually is correct (‘is that a shop or an empty building?’), whether a social norm actually is legitimate (‘is it actually fair that younger workers can be bossed around like this?’). This third kind of question, involving discourse about norms, is by far the most important for Habermas and for political theorists more generally. Habermas’s position is that such questions implicitly invoke an appeal to resolution by ‘the force of the better argument’ in an ‘ideal speech situation’ or, as he now prefers, an ‘unlimited communication community’ (TP 19; LC 105-8; RC 235, 246, 272; TCA1 26, 42; MCCA 88, 202; PDM 323; JA 53, 57, 163-4; BFN 15-16, 161-2, 228, 322-3; TJ 86-7, 101-2, 105). (There are occasional exceptions: ST 36, 54; CES 209; ASI 90; TCA2 1-2.)

So, communicative rationality is merely about clarifying, understanding and accepting *claims* to honesty, truth and normative rightness; discourse is about establishing whether something *is* honest, true or normatively right (TCA1, 302; MCCA 58-9). I suspect this is also the message at the start of *Between Facts and Norms* (BFN 1-5), although I confess that I find these pages dyspeptically unclear. But overall, while Habermas’s meaning is often hard to determine, I am confident that Habermas does not now equate communicative rationality and discourse (see especially BFN 21; OPC 236; RC 235). This is also recognized by leading Habermas scholars (e.g. McCarthy 1978, 288-92, 306-14, 323-7; Chambers 1996, 95-101; Finlayson 2005, 323; Bohman and Rehg 2007, section 3).

So, although rational communication can easily turn into discourse, and although discourse involves communicative rationality, the two ideas are analytically separate. Habermas is clear that discourse is rational (LC 107-8) and later writes about it as discursive rationality (OPC 309-11), rational discourse (e.g. PMT 102, BFN 107), or pragmatic, ethical and moral discourse, which are types of practical reason (JA 10-17, BFN 160-4). Yet while Habermas often mentions this idea of rationality before 1990, it is missing from his pre-1990 typology of rationality.

Why does this matter? Without wishing to sound like a broken DVD, this shows another major gap in Habermas's pre-1990 typology – a gap overlooked in most secondary accounts. No one should read these works of Habermas and think that they come anywhere close to an exhaustive or workable typology of rationality; nor can we be convinced by defences of Habermas which ignore such gaps. Note too that many critical theorists conflate communicative and discursive rationality, as the introduction noted. Such misleading interpretations of Habermas are understandable, of course, because Habermas is often unclear and because he has no explicit place for discourse in his pre-1990 typology.

In the context of the current paper, discourse is important for another reason: far from means-ends rationality being opposed to discourse, the two can overlap. When we make a claim about means to ends, we implicitly or explicitly appeal to a discursive justification of these pragmatic claims, just as with ethical or moral claims (JA 10-11, 16; BFN 160-1, 164, 180, 186).

In summary, criteria A, B and C do not overlap well, in five ways: we can achieve understanding in non-social situations; we can pick means to ends in social situations; we can pick ends in non-social situations; means-ends rationality does not require completely fixed ends; and the means-ends/communicative distinction ignores discourse, which Habermas would later see as the ideal way of choosing ends in social situations. These gaps show that

Habermas's pre-1990 typology is weaker than his critics suggest, and *far* weaker than his defenders suggest.

5. Means-ends rationality and egocentrism

I now turn to the assumed overlap between criteria A and D. Habermas regularly depicts means-ends rationality as egocentric, and implies that actions aimed at genuine understanding and agreement cannot be egocentric. This section challenges that argument.

As far as I know, Habermas never says exactly what 'egocentric' means. There are four likely possibilities: ignoring others' interests, treating others merely as means, being motivated by self-interest, and not being motivated by duty in a Kantian sense. I will call these, respectively, solipsistic egocentrism, instrumentalizing egocentrism, egotistical egocentrism, and non-duty egocentrism. Only non-duty egocentrism, I will show, is part of means-ends rationality, but since it can also be part of communicative rationality, it cannot distinguish the two ideas.

Solipsistic egocentrism, following Kohlberg, means that an egocentric actor 'doesn't consider the interests of others or recognize they differ from the actor's, and doesn't relate [the] two points of view' (MCCA 128). But this is not a necessary part of means-ends rationality. A parent can seek good means to satisfy her children's interests in the full knowledge that her own personal interests are suffering. Indeed, strategic rationality as Habermas and game theorists depict it requires individuals to consider others' interests, recognize when they differ, and choose an appropriate strategy (Johnson 1991, 190; Schiemann 2000, 4-5).

Instrumentalizing egocentrism means that 'other persons are accorded merely the status of means or limiting conditions for the realization of one's own individual plan of action' (JA 5-6). Whether or not Habermas is referring to egocentrism here – the text is

ambiguous – this form of egocentrism must be addressed because some critical theorists think that means-ends rationality involves treating others merely as means (e.g. Alker 1990, 174). Philosophers still dispute what it takes to treat someone merely as a means (Parfit forthcoming, ch. 9), but for us all that matters is that just as means-ends rationality may or may not be solipsistic, so too it may or may not involve treating someone merely as a means, as discussed above. However similar the terms sound, treating others ‘instrumentally’ is not a necessary part of instrumental rationality in particular or means-ends rationality in general. Moreover, communicative rationality can involve treating others as means to one’s ends. In Habermas’s building-site example (TCA2, 121-3), an older worker who gets a younger worker to fetch him a drink could easily be treating the younger worker as a means.

Egotistical egocentrism is the most obvious way to interpret the term ‘egocentric.’ Habermas equivocates here, as the next section discusses, but he often depicts means-ends rationality as self-interested. He writes that means-ends rationality in general and strategic rationality in particular are ‘oriented only to each’s own success’ (CES 41, 117), a claim he makes repeatedly after 1990 (JA 5-6, 15; BFN 25, 27, 90, 161, 337; TIO 12-13, 21, 24, 25, 31, 32). He also implies that strategic rationality is egocentric while communicative rationality is not (TCA1 285-6; RC 263-4; PMT 192; OPC 233).

It is simply wrong to think that means-ends rationality must be egotistic. One can clearly choose means to non-egotistic ends, as when a parent acts in the interests of an unborn child, or a consumer uses environmentally-friendly shopping methods. Both involve individuals in non-social situations acting instrumentally but not selfishly. True, non-selfish motivations can have a selfish element, as when people get satisfaction from paying taxes out of empathy or duty. But that is very different to the self-interest of people who pay taxes for fear of punishment, say. Rational choice theorists need not assume narrow self-interest (e.g. Brennan and Hamlin 2000, 6-10). Strictly speaking, rational choice theory only implies that

individuals pursue ‘their preferences,’ which may include ‘empathy for family, friends, whales, trees, or random strangers’ (Shepsle and Bonchek 1997, 17). This point has been made in Habermasian circles (Johnson 1991, 190; Heath 2001, 57; see also Dryzek 1992, 406) but some critical theorists overlook this (e.g. Risse 2000, 3). Writers should stop linking means-ends rationality to narrow self-interest. Nor should adherents of means-ends rationality talk of ‘rational self-interest’ (e.g. Moe 1990, 219), which invites readers to conflate means-ends rationality and self-interested ends.

The fourth form of egocentrism, non-duty egocentrism, is a Kantian interpretation implied by Habermas’s post-1990 writings.² Kant describes three motivations for action: self-seeking, as in the shopkeeper who keeps prices low to maximize profit; inclination, as in the shopkeeper who keeps prices low out of love for his customers; and duty, as in the shopkeeper who keeps prices low because it is the right thing to do and reason tells him to do the right thing – the ‘good will’ (Kant 1997, 7, 10-12).

While Habermas’s pre-1990 writings only touch on Kant (the main exception being MCCA 195-211), Habermas now places discourse ethics ‘squarely in the Kantian tradition’ (JA 1), moral discourse being a dialogical variant of Kant’s categorical imperative (JA 6-10). I am far from certain that non-duty egocentrism is what Habermas has in mind after 1990, but it is compatible with what he says in the crucial section of *Justification and Application* where he distinguishes pragmatic, ethical and moral forms of practical reason (JA 5-8), the former being equivalent to means-ends rationality.

Unfortunately, non-duty egocentrism cannot distinguish communicative and means-ends rationality, because communicative rationality too can be egocentric in this sense: it is the rationality of genuine understanding and agreement, and has nothing to do with duty.

² I thank a reader of a previous version of this paper for pushing me to pursue this interpretation, which I now see as the most plausible.

Habermas never says, or implies, that we are communicatively rational only when driven by duty. And his examples of flight attendants and building-site workers simply involve people trying to understand each other in order to coordinate their actions (TCA1 300-1; TCA2 121-3). Both scenarios are entirely compatible with each participant acting for non-duty-based reasons.

So, even if Habermas's post-1990 comments about egocentrism involve non-duty egocentrism, which is plausible, and even if this also applies to his pre-1990 comments, which is possible but unlikely, it does not distinguish instrumental, strategic and communicative rationality.

In sum, instrumental rationality as Habermas defines it – choosing means to ends in non-social situations – is not necessarily egocentric, and non-duty egocentrism can apply also to communicative rationality. There is nothing wrong with critical theorists attacking the choice of means to self-interested ends, say. But this is only one application of means-ends rationality. Worse, Habermas's unjustified and unjustifiable stipulation about means-ends rationality's egocentrism has led some applied critical theorists to think that avoiding self-interest requires communicative rationality (e.g. Healey 2003, 239-40). This is a normatively crucial error. Self-interest is not a necessary part of means-ends rationality, and it can apply to communicative rationality. So, criterion D – egocentric or non-egocentric motivation – does not distinguish means-ends and communicative rationality, and critical theorists who think otherwise have as a result made unduly harsh attacks on means-ends rationality.

6. Strategic and communicative rationality: sincerity and autonomy

I now turn to strategic rationality, the social version of instrumental rationality and the key to understanding the difference between means-ends and communicative rationality.

Habermas distinguishes strategic and communicative rationality in several ways, and even sympathetic commentators question his account (Johnson 1991, 188-91). I start with egocentrism. Revealingly, Habermas twice discusses means-ends rationality without initially mentioning egocentrism – but then smuggles it in when he tries to distinguish strategic from communicative rationality. He starts by writing that means-ends rationality involves an actor trying to reach ‘an end.’ There is no hint of egocentrism here. But Habermas then states that communicative rationality involves agents who ‘are not primarily oriented to their own individual successes’ and whose actions ‘are coordinated not through egocentric calculations of success but through acts of reaching understanding’ (TCA1 285-6; RC 263-4). This clearly implies that instrumental and strategic action are egocentric, which is not justified.

Habermas definitely errs in his depiction of strategic rationality. He uses the term ‘strategic’ because he thinks it is the rationality of game theory, whose goal is to find strategies to maximize one’s interests (TP 271-2; CES 117). But his grasp of game theory is limited and he overlooks game theorists who model non-selfish interests (Johnson 1991, 189-91, 199). (Habermas’s reply seems to miss Johnson’s point – BFN 554.) Habermas is wrong to see strategic rationality as based on ‘egocentric utility calculations’ (MCCA 133-4; see also RC 237). So, there is no need for game theory’s means-ends rationality to be egocentric, just as there is no need for individuals to be egocentric when choosing means in non-social situations.

Egocentrism is a non-starter. A more promising distinction is autonomy. In three essays from 1985 to 1990, Habermas alters the distinction between means-ends and communicative rationality (AR 240-2; OPC 217-20; RD 130-1; see also ASI 213). His comments are not always clear (see especially AR 241-2). But one set of distinctions is very instructive. For instrumental action, writes Habermas, ‘the goal ... is determined (a) independently of the means of intervention (b) as a state to be brought about causally (c) in

the objective world.’ Communicative action differs in each respect. As regards (a), the linguistic means of reaching understanding are an inherent part of the goal of reaching agreement. ‘Grammatical utterances do not constitute instruments for reaching understanding in the same way as, for example, the operations carried out by a cook constitute means for producing enjoyable meals.’ As regards (b), the speaker cannot herself cause agreement: all interlocutors must agree autonomously. I take Habermas to be saying that a cook can make an omelette but a speaker cannot make an agreement: the speaker cannot make a listener *autonomously* agree. This is essentially the Lockean point that beliefs cannot be coerced, by definition. (See too the similar distinction given by Heath 2001, 78-80.) As regards (c), instrumental actions occur in the objective world, communicative actions in the intersubjective world of language (OPC 217-20; AR 240-2; RD 130-1).

This is more rigorous than the earlier account. But distinctions (a) and (c) are overdrawn. By using examples of instrumental actions in the objective world, such as cooking, Habermas underplays choices of means in communication. A speaker must decide what to say and how to say it. If asked to justify an empirical claim, for example, she should consider how best to do so – personal stories, statistical evidence, and so on. Meanwhile, some instrumental choices are as essential to instrumental action as language is to communicative agreement. You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs. You may have to make choices about how many eggs to use, who should break them, how to cook them, and so on. Similarly, you cannot communicate without using linguistic tools (including not only language but also silence and body posture, of course), and you must choose good means of communicating your ideas – stories, statistics, signing, singing, and so on. This type of means-ends rationality is also implied by Habermas’s comments about speech being ‘a medium in which ... linguistic means ... are employed instrumentally’ (CES 68; also RC

237). Again, my position will not surprise people who see means-ends rationality simply as the ability to choose good means to ends. (For parallel criticisms, see Heath 2001, 51-2.)

Nonetheless, distinction (b) is extremely useful. This must be a key difference between strategic and communicative rationality. In communicative rationality, an individual makes claims about what is honest, true and right, but lets others decide *autonomously*. You can bring your argument to others but you cannot make them believe it. You can bribe or coerce them to *accept* it (strategic rationality) but only their autonomous acceptance amounts to them *genuinely agreeing* with it (communicative rationality).

Autonomy is thus the first key difference between strategic and communicative rationality. Sincerity is a second: communicative rationality requires that participants agree to sincere validity claims. If a speaker is dishonest about subjective feelings, empirical facts or social norms, then even if a hearer autonomously accepts the claim, her understanding is not genuine, and the discussion as a whole is not communicatively rational. (Note that in earlier writings I used the term 'sincere' for subjective validity-claims only. But I now talk of 'honest' here, and use 'sincere' for any validity-claim which is subjectively honest, empirically true and/or normatively right.)

Autonomy and sincerity strike me as clear and useful distinctions between strategic and communicative rationality. Importantly, self-interest is compatible with autonomy and sincerity. A discussant can try to get others to agree with her because she thinks her arguments are right, because she likes to get her way, because she likes to get other people to do what she wants, or in the building-site example because she wants a drink. Again, egocentrism is not a useful distinction between strategic and communicative rationality.

Interestingly, autonomy is an essentially contestable concept, so communicative rationality is too. (I do not think communicative rationality has previously been depicted as essentially contestable. Indeed, most discussions imply the opposite.) For extreme

Hobbesians, even decisions made at gunpoint are autonomous: virtually all sincere conversational agreement would then be communicatively rational. For Marxists or Freudians, apparently autonomous decisions may reflect false consciousness or subconscious desires: much conversational agreement would then be communicatively irrational. Most people sit between these extremes, but they will often disagree about what is autonomous.

Moreover, some people will see autonomy as all-or-nothing, others as a matter of degree. If autonomy is a matter of degree, so is communicative rationality. Much communication has coercive elements which can reduce autonomy. Imagine that in Habermas's building-site example, the older worker is scary, the younger worker is timid. Saying 'I'm thirsty, get me a drink' could easily have a hint of a threat, conscious or subconscious, which may influence the younger worker, consciously or subconsciously. I would see this as reducing communicative rationality; some will see it as removing communicative rationality; some will say it has no effect. Habermas himself sees communicative rationality as compatible with hierarchy (TCA1 300-1; TCA2 121-3; see too Chambers, 1996, 95-6). Indeed, lifeworld norms can be patriarchal and repressive (Fraser 1995, 24, 35-6). I would say that such background norms can reduce or potentially remove communicative rationality. Clearly, though, there is room for legitimate disagreement here.

My interpretation of communicative rationality is not fully Habermasian. Nonetheless, it perhaps helps us understand some of Habermas's other comments about the rational basis of uncoerced agreement (TCA1 287; TCA2 280; MCCA 58). Note that the above account clearly needs fleshing out, and that there may be other differences between strategic and communicative rationality (see e.g. PMT 192).

7. A new view of communicative and means-ends rationality

The above arguments imply a radical revision of the distinction between means-ends and communicative rationality. Autonomy and sincerity are the keys. Communicative rationality requires autonomous agreement. Crucially, though, means-ends rationality may also require autonomous agreement. If Jack wants to marry Jill and seeks her autonomous assent, threatening her with a gun is not a good means to that end.

Similarly, communicative rationality requires sincere understanding, i.e. understanding based on sincere validity-claims. But again, means-ends rationality too may require sincere understanding. If Jack wants to marry Jill and needs her to understand that he really loves her, telling her only that their marriage would help their water-carrying business is not a good means to that end.

And this leads to the most surprising claim of the paper: *communicative rationality is a subset of means-ends rationality*. This claim will seem outlandish to critical theorists who start with a narrow view of means-ends rationality, such as the ability to pick means to selfish ends. But I take a broad view of means-ends rationality: the ability to choose good means to ends.

It follows by definition that the ends affect which means are good: someone whose immediate end is to go from London to Paris, and whose more general end is protecting the environment, may pick a different means of transport to someone who also wants to go to Paris but has no such environmental concerns.

And it follows that some ends rule out some means. Consider a modified version of Habermas's example of how to get to work when one's bicycle breaks (JA 2-3). Anyone whose ends are broadly liberal cannot use means such as killing someone and stealing her car, even if this is the quickest way to get to work. Such ends act as 'side-constraints' on the

choice of means. The idea of side-constraints will prove central to understanding the relationship between means-ends and communicative rationality.

I thus turn to communication. A subset of means-ends rationality is the rationality by which two or more people reach understanding and agreement. Let us call this 'comprehensive rationality,' meaning not only 'comprehension' (understanding) but also 'comprehensive' (inclusive) in that it covers both understanding and agreement. This is not a very accurate or gainly term; but most alternatives have been taken.

There are two main kinds of comprehensive rationality: strategic-comprehensive rationality and communicative rationality. Strategic-comprehensive rationality is the rationality by which one or more people try to get non-genuine and/or non-autonomous agreement from one or more other people, for example by using misinformation or threats. (Strategic-comprehensive rationality is only one kind of strategic rationality: a chess player trying to outthink her opponent, say, is using strategic rationality but not communication.)

Communicative rationality is the rationality by which two or more people try to get genuine understanding and autonomous agreement. Sincerity and autonomy act as side-constraints on means: misinformation and threats are ruled out, because they preclude genuine understanding and autonomous agreement, in the same way that ends can act as side-constraints in means-ends rationality more generally. Communicative rationality requires both genuine understanding and autonomous agreement. (Unintentional misinformation is compatible with communicative rationality: empirical validity-claims must be honest, but need not be right.)

The key distinction between strategic-comprehensive and communicative rationality is whether validity-claims are sincere and agreement is autonomous. (Or, perhaps, the *extent* to which this applies: following from the discussion in section 6, some theorists will see strategic-comprehensive and communicative rationality as binary concepts, others as two

ends of a scale.) The distinction between strategic-comprehensive and communicative rationality is normatively important: in politics we often want genuine understanding and autonomous agreement, but in reality we often see misinformation and threats (Dryzek 2006, 113-23).

So, communicative rationality and strategic-comprehensive rationality are not fundamentally different kinds of rationality. The only difference involves the ends which govern the choice of means: in communicative rationality, the ends of genuine understanding and autonomous agreement act as side-constraints on the choice of means. This is no different to other cases of means-ends rationality where certain ends rule out certain means, as with the bicycle example above.

Communicative rationality may be seen in terms of speakers, hearers, and intersubjectively. A speaker makes choices about what and how to communicate; some means are better than others at reaching genuine understanding and autonomous agreement. Hearers, meanwhile, must make correct inferences about what speakers are trying to say.

Grasping the nature of hearers' inferences helps us see how communication can be rational. Consider this example:

Larry: Would you like a coffee?

Monique: Coffee would keep me awake.

Monique's response does not directly answer Larry's question. Larry does not need to ask her to clarify what she means, though, because his thought-process runs as follows. 'Monique has not answered my question. But it's now 10 pm, and Monique usually goes to sleep at 11. I assume that she wants to go to sleep at 11 tonight, and that she is implying that coffee would keep her awake beyond 11. So, she means that she does not want coffee.' (This

example is adapted from Wilson and Sperber 1986, 48-50.) Larry's thought-process – virtually instantaneous and largely subconscious – constitutes a series of deductions, inductions and abductions (inferences to the best explanation), including empirical appeals to background information and linguistic conventions.

The same inferences can be found in means-ends rationality, as when someone decides how best to cross a road or where to pass a soccer ball so that the striker has the best chance of scoring. True, means-ends rationality sometimes involves conscious, complex computations, as when bureaucrats weigh up different policy options. But this can also apply in communicative rationality, for example when a writer ponders how best to communicate a complex idea, or when readers think hard about whether they really accept a speaker's claims.

The above account has been essentially monological, focusing on what goes on in each communicator's head. The intersubjective side of communication can be addressed in three ways. First, communication requires shared understandings. For example, in Habermas's building-site example, the older worker says 'I'm thirsty.' This statement is an 'implicature' (Grice 1989, 24-40) or 'indirect speech act' (Searle 1979, 30-1): by saying one thing, the speaker also means something else – here, 'I'm thirsty [so get me a drink].' The older worker implicitly draws on the hierarchical norm allowing him to tell younger workers what to do. If the younger worker does not know of this norm, he may interpret the older worker's words as a description of his thirst rather than a request for a drink; communicative rationality is not achieved. Habermas's 'lifeworld' is similar in this respect to Searle's 'Background' (1983, 143-54) and Bach and Harnish's 'mutual contextual beliefs' (1979, 5). Indeed, much of Habermas's work on communication is consistent with much analytic philosophy of language (Searle 1991, 90).

Second, communicative rationality often requires hearers to ask questions in order to clarify what speakers say. If the bemused younger worker asks what the older worker means, and the older worker explains the hierarchical norm, the younger worker now understands the older worker's statement. We might say that there has been a fusion of lifeworlds.

Third, and most important, communicative rationality is inherently intersubjective, involving agreement. One person cannot make another autonomously agree. When communication simply involves someone trying to win the argument by any means necessary, the rationality governing this is strategic-comprehensive rationality, not communicative rationality. Many monological processes will be the same in both kinds of rationality: for example, hearers must make correct inferences to understand what someone means. But autonomous agreement imposes extra hurdles.

Habermas might respond, following his 1988 essay, that means-ends rationality involves choices of objective means, such as which route to work is shortest, whereas autonomous acceptance of a validity-claim involves something intersubjective which a speaker cannot herself determine. But means-ends rationality can include means which require autonomous intersubjective agreement, for example if your bicycle breaks and you would not use a neighbour's bike without her consent. Your neighbour's bike could be a good means to your end – but not if it clashes with ends such as respecting property and autonomy.

Another objection to my position would be to say that communicative rationality has elements not found in means-ends rationality. Consider two people who are sincere but cannot reach autonomous agreement because the hearer makes faulty inferences and thus misunderstands the speaker. These faulty inferences are failures of rationality; but, the objection goes, they are not about choosing bad means to ends, and so communication is not an example of means-ends rationality.

I disagree. Communicative rationality requires that speakers and hearers choose good means to the end of genuine understanding. When speakers are overly ambiguous, hearers should ask questions to clarify what is said. Clarificatory questions may thus be needed to reach one's ends – but they were not asked here, and so communication *is* an example of means-ends rationality. More generally, both means-ends and communicative rationality require individuals to make correct inferences, so individuals lack these kinds of rationality to the extent to which they cannot or do not make correct inferences.

My account of communicative rationality fits much that Habermas says about communicative rationality. But I have discarded most of what he says about means-ends rationality: it is inaccurate, unhelpful, or does not distinguish means-ends and communicative rationality on closer inspection. I place more weight on autonomy than Habermas does, although I believe this is in line with his broader position, and is vital for distinguishing communicative rationality and means-ends rationality. Clearly, though, Habermas would be bemused to see communicative rationality as a subset of means-ends rationality. But my argument is plausible – if we free ourselves from the shackles of caricatured understandings of means-ends rationality.

8. Conclusion

Habermas's political theory is built on finding necessary, deductively valid connections. Rational communicators *must* make certain validity-claims. Norms *must* be justified dialogically not monologically. Rational discourse *must* assume equal and inclusive participation. And so on.

But Habermas's account has many broken links. Means-ends rationality does not *have* to be egocentric. Egocentrism *cannot* be the key difference between strategic and

communicative rationality. Communicative rationality in social settings *cannot* be the only rational way of choosing ends. And so on.

I have thus sought to argue that if we define means-ends rationality broadly, it follows – necessarily – that communicative rationality is simply one kind of means-ends rationality, where sincerity and autonomy act as side-constraints on the means that can be chosen. And since communicative rationality requires genuine understanding, speakers and hearers must choose good means to those ends, such as avoiding excessive ambiguity or asking clarificatory questions if needs be.

The problems in Habermas's account are significant but not destructive. They are significant: Habermas must drop his career-long claim that means-ends rationality is egocentric, and should change other parts of his account. Seeing communicative rationality as a form of means-ends rationality is a huge shift. More generally, critical theorists who oppose rationality which is egocentric, instrumentalising, or anti-participatory, say, should accept that these criticisms do not apply to all forms of means-ends rationality.

The dilemma thus facing critical theorists is this: if they define means-ends rationality narrowly, for example as choosing means to egocentric ends, then they need another category for choosing means to non-egocentric ends. Yet these other types of means-ends rationality are not open to most of the criticisms that these writers want to make. Every time that they describe or criticize a narrow view of means-ends rationality without mentioning broader notions, they imply that this is all it involves. It does not, and we must reiterate this until means-ends rationality is no longer caricatured.

The best solution is to define means-ends rationality broadly, as the ability to choose good means to ends. This radically alters the detail of critical theorists' arguments, especially their criticisms of means-ends rationality and its alleged distance from communicative rationality. But critical theorists can still attack many conceptions and applications of means-

ends rationality, and can still defend the revised idea of communicative rationality. Indeed, I hope that this paper's account of communicative rationality is clearer than that offered by Habermas himself and by many critical theorists. So, a broader view of means-ends rationality and a revised idea of communicative rationality will ultimately strengthen Habermas's theory, by removing untenable criticisms and by improving our understanding of these crucial ideas of rationality.

These changes are not destructive, then. Habermas and his followers can continue to see communicative rationality as an important idea with major implications for theoretical and practical research in politics and elsewhere. Critical theorists more generally can continue to attack the dominance of certain kinds of rationality, as long as these criticisms are not overstated.

So, this article is a constructive critique, not a destructive critique. Nonetheless, the critique is very significant, challenging several decades of critical theory about means-ends rationality in general, and the relationship between means-ends and communicative rationality in particular.

Overall, I would say that too many writers have been too quick to accept Habermas's account of rationality. But there is still so much value in it that we should not reject it. That is the spirit in which this paper has sought to revise and resubmit Habermas's account of rationality.

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