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HABERMAS COMMUNICATIVE ACTION and CRITICAL MODERNITY

Introduction

Jürgen Habermas is one of the most prolific thinkers of our age, he has been making remarkable contributions to many fields of humanities and social sciences like sociology, philosophy, political and legal theory, communication, and linguistics. His theories and arguments are widely discussed in the academic circles and serves as theoretical background for many social scientific researches. Especially with his two-volume masterpiece “*Theory of Communicative Action*”¹ he sets the conceptual and theoretical tools of a comprehensive programme in social theory. Habermas’s theory is very comprehensive in terms of his references to the basic theoretical traditions in sociology. The theories of Weber, Mead, Durkheim, Parsons, and, as well as Marxism, provide the system of reference within which the basic ideas for a theory of society are historically justified and at the same time tested by argument (Honneth, & Joas, 1991, p: 1). Unfortunately, Habermas’s theories and concepts are not operationalized and utilized in the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution. In this paper I try to outline the key conceptual frames of Habermas’s “Theory of Communicative Action”. My emphasis will be on his definitions of different modes of social action; role of language and communication for reaching a mutual understanding; lifeworld-system differentiation and dilemmas of modernity related to system- lifeworld interaction; and deliberative conception of democracy.

¹ Jürgen Habermas (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1, “Reason and the Rationalization of Society,”* Boston: Beacon Press. Jürgen Habermas (1987). *Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 2, “Lifeworld and System,”* Boston: Beacon Press. From now on I will refer to first volume as TCA, and second volume TCAII.

In his theory of action, Habermas puts an emphasis on the communicative processes, common language and linguistic interaction, rather than on human nature, rationalistic² human agencies or structures of social action. Unlike structuralist and functionalist approaches, which put a great deal of emphasis on social/material structures and the determinants of human action; or unlike agency oriented rational action approaches that define agencies as goal oriented actors, he conceptualizes a communicative and intersubjective process of social action. His ideal definitions of human actions are always process oriented. According to Habermas, main processes of emancipatory social action are: processes of communication, processes of political participation, processes of discussion and processes of opinion and will formation. Rather than oppressive systemic and structural instruments such as money and power, which also serve for the sustenance and maintenance of structures of modern capitalist societies, language serves as a constructive instrument of mutual understanding and collective will formation in the process of communicative interaction.

His notion of communicative action and processes of social interaction are not simply goal oriented processes, on the contrary he considers communicative process, and processes of communicative action as the main constructive elements of society formation, institution and norm formation. According to Habermas, communicative action is an inclusive, consensual decision-making process, which integrates interests as well as lifeworlds of participants through unconstrained social interaction. Whereas strategic action is a goal oriented (teleological) action. Language and communication are only instrumental means in the notion of goal-oriented action and they do not embody any kind of integrative understanding, and decision-making process. As a critical theorist who has been part of the “Frankfurt School”, Habermas analyzes and identifies the pathologies of modernity in relation to the failures and obstructions in the process of communicative interaction. In

² Rationalism in terms of goal oriented, utility maximizing agencies (teleological rationality), not Habermas’s revised version of communicative rationality.

Habermas's work, social theory as a critical theory of modernity and philosophy as the theory of rationality are dependent on one another (Schnadelback, H., 1991, p: 8). The concept of "communicative rationality" is the middle term, and the concept is intended to link a theory of rationality and social theory in a way that a social life context that is tailored to the paradoxes of modernity. A theory of communicative action places understanding in language, as the medium of coordinating action at the focal point of interest (TCA, p: 274, pp: 86-94).

I think Habermas's theory and conceptual framework are also relevant for the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution³. In the CAR field, action modes of human agencies are defined as either instinctually or socially driven to fulfill the basic human needs (Burton, 1979, 1990), or to attain a certain goal oriented⁴ objectives (Axelrod, 1970; Fisher, & Ury, 1981). Although main objectives of the practitioners in the CR field are formulated as reaching or helping the conflicting parties to reach mutual understanding, mutual decision-making and integrative goal attainment; there is no systematic action mode and means of interactions offered for the fulfillment of these goals⁵. Rather than putting the emphasis on the resources and goals of agencies, or the normative and structural dynamics of the system; *communicative action* and *communicative rationality* puts the emphasis on the inclusive processes of intersubjective mutual understanding and "problem solving". Language and the communicative rationality are not only the intermediary instruments within this communicative process, but they are also constructive elements of lifeworld and system as well. Conflict Resolution⁶ dimension of the field of CAR can be considered as science and praxis of designing and practicing integrative, interactive and communicative decision-making models. Habermas's "Theory of Communicative Action" and other related works can provide new insights and approaches to both

³ From now on I will refer CAR to Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

⁴ Usually materially driven.

⁵ Except mechanistic tools or practitioner guides such as "Getting to the Yes".

⁶ What I mean by conflict resolution dimension are the practical conflict resolution processes such as mediation, negotiation, problem solving workshop, etc.

Conflict Analysis and Conflict Resolution. I will try to elaborate the themes in Habermas's works (mainly *The Theory of Communicative Action*) that are also relevant to the field of CAR.

Habermas's definitions of ideal speech situation, and process of understanding and consent formation through communicative interactions (within a linguistified media) may help us to conceptually and theoretically sophisticate the notions of dialogue and problem solving workshops in CR field. According to Harold Saunders, dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take other's concerns into her or his own picture, even when disagreement persists (Saunders, 1999). Unlike negotiation, which requires parties who are ready to try to reach agreement on some problems and issues, sustained dialogue systematically puts substantial issues and problems a second item on the agenda and focuses on the underlying relationships that causes these problems. The differing premise of dialogue is that serious problems are unlikely to be resolved for the long term by practical agreements-that they will be resolved only as deeply conflictual relationships are changed. The outcome of dialogue is to create new human and political capacities to solve problems. Dialogue may change relationships in ways that create new grounds for mutual respect and collaboration through a process of mutual understanding and consent formation (Saunders, 1999).

Habermas's definition of communicative action ideally fits to the objectives of dialogue processes that are defined in the CR field. On the other hand aims of negotiation and many of the mediation practices are to reach an agreement rather than reaching an understanding through a linguistified communicative interaction processes; therefore they correspond to Habermas's definition of strategic or instrumental action category. Communicative action processes that reflexively

incorporate system and lifeworld spheres through a linguistic media may be the ideal definition of practice in the CAR field. While criticizing power⁷ and money as exploitative and disruptive media for social interactions, Habermas proposes the media of language and discourse as constructive media for the integration of system and lifeworld. In that sense he is more than a pure critical theorist.

In his later works he defines the concept of discourse theory of procedural democracy and he defends this model of democracy against liberal and republican versions of democracy. His notions of discourse theory and procedural democracy are closely related to communicative rationality. Habermas claims that legitimacy of political authority can only be secured through broad popular participation in political deliberation and decision-making or, more succinctly, that there is internal relation between rule of law and popular sovereignty (Habermas, 1998). Forms of argumentation and reasoned justification in practical discourse provide the normative validity of discourse theory of democracy. Everything depends on the conditions of communication and the procedures that lend the institutionalized opinion and will-formation their legitimating force.

Rational acceptability of a statement rests on reason in conjunction with specific features of the process of argumentation. He defines the four most important features of argumentation process as follows: i) nobody who could make a relevant contribution may be excluded; ii) all participants are granted an equal opportunity to make contributions; iii) participants must mean what they say; iv) communication must be free from external and internal coercion so that yes or no stances that participants adopt on criticizable validity claims are motivated solely by rational force of better reason (Habermas, 1998, p: 44). With his discourse theory he tries to shift the domain of politic from individual or state to civil society, and

⁷ In the CAR field power and money are also criticized to be the inappropriate tools to deal social interactions.

the legitimation basis of politics from interest aggregation, or norms to the process of opinion and will-formation. His theoretical arguments in discourse theory of democracy, which is reframed and more practically relevant version of his theory communicative action, are very relevant and useful for the field of CAR.

Habermas and Critical Theory

One of the missing dimensions of the CAR field is its critical dimension. Habermas makes very systematic criticisms for the oppressive structures and procedures of modern capitalist societies. His theory is first and foremost a critical theory and it can give us insights to identify the distortions in the communicative processes. Habermas's criticisms may extend the critical insights of CAR specialists farther beyond Johan Galtung's "Structural Violence Theory" or John Burton's "Basic Human Needs Theory". Habermas is generally considered to be the leader of the Frankfurt School's second generation⁸ (Brown, & Goodman, 2001, p: 202).

Main themes of Frankfurt School are:

1. The forms of integration in postliberal societies;
2. family socialization and ego development;
3. mass media and mass culture;
4. the social psychology behind the cessation of protest
5. the theory of art and the criticism of positivism and science (TCA, p:378-99)

Like the Marxist theory of value, Habermas's theory focuses on the replacement of communicative action by media steered interaction. The transition to modernity is characterized by a differentiation of spheres of value and structures of consciousness that make possible a critical transformation of

⁸ Most famous members of the first generation Frankfurt School are Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin and Eric Fromm.

traditional knowledge in relation to specifically given validity claims" (TCA, p: 340). According to Habermas this disunity of reason is the danger of modernity. Not only through the creation of institutional entities but, something that Weber overlooks, the specialization of cognitive, normative and aesthetic knowledge that then permeates and fragments everyday consciousness. This, all pervasive rationalization has negative effects on socialization, social integration and cultural production (Ibid). Process of rationalization implies that culture moves from a traditional base in a consensual collective endeavor to forms, which are rationalized by commodification and led by individuals with interests, which are separated from the purposes of the cultural producers.

Habermas argues that "purposive rational action" is steered by the 'media' of the state and money, which substitute for language as the medium of the coordination of social action. According to the Habermas's notion of critical theory there is competition between these two principles of societal integration - language, orientated to understanding, and "media steered action", which are systems of success oriented action. Use of steering media during social interactions does not serve the goal of societal integration; it may rather perpetuate the societal structures that generate conflicts and disparities. Rather than solely criticizing problematic action modes and structures of modern capitalist societies, with his "Theory of Communicative Action" Habermas also offers a new linguistic mode of action, which is emancipatory and integrative in nature.

Theory of Communicative Action (Major Themes)

It is difficult to layout major themes of Habermas's two-volume work. I will basically use Outwaite's summary:

- 1-The sphere of human activity mapped out by the notions of communicative action, coming to agreement, contrasted with other types of social action.
- 2- The emergence of communicative action and its role in the evolution of human sciences.
- 3- The development of the concept of communicative action in social theory.
- 4- The erosion of sphere of communicative action and communicative rationality by the market and administrative processes characteristic of the modern world.
- 5- The critique of 4, thus reformulating in a more adequate form the critique of capitalist modernity since Marx (Outwaite, 1994, p: 69).

Like Anthony Giddens's attempts to integrate structure and agency oriented approaches in sociological theory (Giddens, 1984), Habermas also develops a two level theory of modern societies within which he attempts to integrate action-theoretical and system-theoretical sociological perspectives. Notion of communicative action has action-theoretical foundations but Habermas constructs the concept of "life-world" as the social background to communicative action. He critically reviews the system-theoretical concepts (Baxter, 1987, p: 39). His construction of model of society integrates action theoretical and system theoretical approaches through a highly generalized model of social process of interchange between the functionally organized economic and administrative systems on one hand, and communicatively structured "*lifeworld*" on the other (Ibid). Unlike classical social theorists, Habermas attempts to understand society from the vantage point of language. Structures of argumentation and structures of discourses interact between the spheres of system and lifeworld and society is explained by referring to the structures of discourses (Taylor, 1991, p: 23). Habermas argues that human beings' communication with one another is only possible in the trusted surroundings of the lifeworld; moreover knowledge of the lifeworld is contained in language. In the process of

communication, we have at our disposal a comprehensive surrounding for our lifeworld.

Four Types of Action

Habermas' theory is fundamentally grounded in agency, in actors' choices about how they establish their social relationships. He bases this position initially in the work of Weber ultimately in Mead, although he is able to incorporate a much wider range of influences (Waters, 1994, p: 43).

With reference to works of other theorists of social action, Habermas defines four basic sociological models of action (agency):

i- The teleological (strategic) action model: Here the actor is said to be motivated by an orientation to success, choosing between alternative courses of action in relation to a short run purpose (telos) or goal, located in the material world. Given a certain interpretation of a situation, goal oriented action involves a decision based on means-ends rationality. In the variant, which he calls strategic action the actor takes into account the likely behaviour of other goal directed actors (TCA, p: 85). This utility maximizing model underlies game theory and decision theory.

ii- Normatively regulated action model: Here the actor is guided by values and norms shared between the members of a social group- the actor is motivated by conceptions of what ought and ought not to be done. Members of a social group orient their action to common values' and comply with agreed norms, fulfilling agreed behaviour expectations- as in functionalist role theory. The best- known examples are structural-functional theories. Common values, customs and roles define the sphere and scope of action.

iii- Dramaturgical action model: The actor is claimed to express the contents of the subjective consciousness to an audience of other actors. Dramaturgical action is a form of self-expression and involves the presentation of self; "participants in interaction constitute a public for one another, before whom

they present themselves” (TCA, p: 86). Attributes of style, aesthetic expression, formal qualities in general have great weight in dramaturgical action" (Ibid, p: 92).

iv- Communicative action model: In communicative action model, actors are conceptualized as being engaged in relationships with other actors in facing practical problems: “the actors seek to reach an understanding about their action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement. Communicative model of action presupposes the use of language as a medium for a kind of reaching understanding, in the course of which participants, through relating to a world, reciprocally raise validity claims that can be accepted or contested (Ibid, p: 99). Language here seems to be broadly defined as action upon which you can be reflective. The examples, which influenced Habermas are the theories of the symbolic interactions and phenomenologists. The most open definition of communicative action given is that it is action in which:

"the actors seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement... A type of interaction that is coordinated through speech acts and does not coincide with them" (Ibid, p: 101).

Rationality Reconsidered

Habermas criticizes these four models of social actions, first of all non of the models exhausts the possibilities of human action- each of the types of action specified is a possibility or in Weber’s terms “ideal types”. Secondly, only the first model appears to make any claim about the rationality of human agency, understood as the application of reason to courses of action (Waters, 1994, p: 43). He wants to develop and explore the rationality of communicative action in order to balance the

narrow and one-sided view of as solely purposive or instrumental.

Rationality is attacked from many directions. Post-structuralists insist that it is a form of power, feminists suggest that rationality disguises male domination; postmodernists argue that rationality itself historical, a language game that constructs its own domains of application (Brown, & Goodman, 2001, p: 201). Habermas aims to restore an *ethical rationality* to civic discourse by recovering rationality from its reduction to calculations of efficiency, on the one hand, and fending off postmodern skepticism on the other. Habermas considers modernity as an unfinished project; he still has the belief for the success of modernity project. He tries identifying the problems of modern societies and finding cures for these pathologies.

Brown, & Goodman (Ibid), and Outwaite (Outwaite, 1994) argue that Habermas sees his work as an attempt to appropriate Weber in the spirit of Western Marxism. Instrumental reason; according to Weber, western culture has been characterized by the inescapable growth of peculiar type of reasoning. Western rationality is tied only to efficiency, calculability and control. This formal, instrumental rationality inevitably results in the loss of meaning and the growth of bureaucracy so evident in capitalist modernity. Habermas argues that the “tragedy of dialectic of enlightenment is that we end up repressing and controlling the very human nature that is the motivation for our freedom”.

Taking into account all these criticisms, he makes his critical but constructive preliminary definition of the *process of communicative rationality*: this is communication that is “oriented to achieving, sustaining and reviewing consensus - and indeed a consensus that rests on the intersubjective recognition of criticizable validity claims” (TCA, p: 17). With this key definition he shifts the emphasis in our concept of rationality from the abstract and conceptual understanding to an

interactive and social understanding. This shift is fundamental to the theory of communicative action. His notion of *communicative rationality* is based on assumptions about "the implicitly shared and imminent rationality of the speech.

Communicative rationality is the processes by which different validity claims are brought to a satisfactory resolution. The relations to the world that people take to forward validity claims for the expressions they deem important (TCA, p: 75). The concept of reaching an understanding suggests a rationally motivated agreement among participants that is measured against criticizable validity claims. The validity claims (propositional truth, normative rightness, and subjective truthfulness) characterize different categories of a knowledge embodied in symbolic expressions (Ibid). According to Habermas, theorists in sociological tradition have never succeeded in capturing the force of what he calls *validity claims*. His implicit argument is that when we act in accordance with a particular social norm, we do so because we recognize the norm as in some sense rationally compelling (Heath, 2001, p: 26). We are not permitted to reject norms arbitrarily or simply be indifferent to them. If an agent is going to accept or reject a norm she must do so for a reason. Traditional sociological theory proposes that normative authority arises when agents internalize the sanctions associated with the violation of socially generalized behavioral expectations (Ibid). According to Habermas, the fact that a person has been conditioned to behave in certain way does not give him a good reason to continue behaving in that way. If we eliminate the dimension of validity and the logical rules of the agents it may be impossible to reconstruct the normative authority that certain kinds of inferences for us. The validity claims raised in communicative action relate to three worlds which speakers relate: The objective world of physical things, the subjective world of inner experience and the social world of roles and norms (TCA, p: 83).

According to Habermas's *communicative rationality*, ultimate source of validity is language. Certain key practices associated with language use, such as argumentation, have a special sort of normative authority, because language is the vehicle of thought. Our ability to think is an ability to manipulate linguistic symbols (Heath, 2001, p: 27).

Habermas argues that the basic truth or correctness or morality of any action is neither absolute nor arbitrary but is defined by the social context in which it is established. Truth and morality are human social constructions, they are the consequences of agency. The agency is intersubjective, involving interactions with other. The interaction is mediated through linguistic utterances or "speech acts". Habermas's notion of understanding is coming to a common definition of a subject (TCA, p: 139) and the telos of communicative action and communicative rationality is to reach understanding.

As medium for reaching understanding, speech acts serve: a) to establish and renew interpersonal relations, whereby the speaker takes up a relation to something in the world of legitimate social orders; b) to represent states and events, whereby the speaker takes up a relation to something in the world of existing states of affairs; c) to manifest experiences that is, to represent oneself- whereby the speaker takes up a relation to something in the subjective world to which he has privileged access (TCA, p: 308).

The process of reaching an understanding means being able to rationally accept or reject the validity claims made by speech acts. This is normal function of language and communicative action of this kind allows social action to be coordinated in a non-pathological way. The purpose of *normal communication* is the achievement of an agreement regarding the validity claim, which does not necessarily conform to the expectations of either

party. All true communication takes the form of validity claims that call for a reflective attitude and bind social action through their demand for recognition. Understanding is part of the form of communicative action and does not require that actual agreements be reached (Brown, & Goodman, 2001, p: 206).

One of the key components of the communicative action is argumentation. Evaluations of validity claims are made through a process of argumentation. Argumentation is a situation in which competing validity claims are tested against each other on each of the three dimensions of morality, truth and sincerity (Waters, 1994, p: 44). Argumentation reproduces social life both by grounding it in relation to communicative criteria and by serving as a context for learning. It is impossible to test the validity claims and reach a common understanding without a free and undistorted argumentation during the process of communicative interaction.

Strategic vs Communicative Action

In his definitions of different models of action, primary intention of Habermas is to distinguish communicative action from all other actions. He considers all other forms of actions belonging to one class under the title of teleological or success-oriented actions. He then divides teleological action into “instrumental” actions, (if non-social) and strategic actions (if social) (Tugendhat, 2002, p: 216). In contrast to the goal-oriented action, the communicative actions are called consent oriented.

In *strategic action* the goal of social action is pre-established and often hidden. The intent of strategic communication is not to reach an agreement about the goals of the action or to reach an understanding, but simply effectively to carry out the plans of the speaker, especially where the hearers may not agree with the speaker intentions (Brown, & Goodman, p: 203). Although strategic action uses language and involves other people, its goals are not inherent to language use, and other people are

treated as if they were objects. Social norms and even the speaker's own subjective expressions become tools to be used to further the speaker's predefined goals. Rationality of the communication is judged in terms of its efficiency in getting others to do what the speaker wants them to do, rather than its effectiveness in creating a common understanding. Strategic communication does not create, or does not intend to create a linguistically-constructed sphere of shared meanings.

Communicative action aims at achieving understanding, which Habermas takes to be the inherent telos of human speech (TCA, p: 287). The key to what Habermas means by communicative action is his special use of the term *understanding*. Reaching understanding is considered to be a process of reaching agreement among speaking and acting subjects (TCA, 286-7). In communicative action, human beings are not objects to be used to further predefined goals; instead goals are mutually agreed upon through a process of communication that recognizes the autonomous humanity of all persons involved. Social action is the very process through which understanding is achieved also generates cooperative goals and agreements. Communicative action offers a form of rationality that escapes the spell of instrumental reason and provides a definition of non-pathological communication upon the basis of which social crises can be diagnosed as pathologies (Brown, & Goodman, 2001 p: 204).

The difference between strategic action and communicative action is not that one is goal oriented and other is not. Both forms involve coordinating action to achieve predetermined objectives. The difference lies in the distinct relation between the goal pursued and the *language* used. In strategic action, the relation between language and goal is one of means to end, with language reduced to a mere instrument for achieving any posited goal. In communicative action, however, the goal is one understanding and the precise nature of that goal is inseparable from the processes of language use through which it is achieved,

language is not directed to other ends (Habermas, 1991, p: 241). In sum, language is the constructive element in the process of communicative action and it defines means, ends and validity claims of communicative actions, but there are also certain conditions necessary for the fulfillment of undistorted communicative interaction, which I will elaborate below.

Ideal Speech Situation

According to Habermas, all consensuses and all understanding that is reached out of communicative process may not be true consensus or true understanding. Ideal speech situation is necessary presupposition of communication. Each consensus that is achieved under ideal speech conditions is valid as a true consensus per se (Horster, 1991, p: 35). Habermas elaborates the ideal speech situation as follows:

We can only distinguish, as a matter of principle, between a genuine and a false consensus if we presuppose the possibility of an unconstrained dialogue to which all speakers have equal access and in which only the “force of the better argument prevails”. (TCA...)

The anticipation of the ideal speech situation is a guarantee that we may associate the claim to a true consensus with a consensus that has actually been attained. Only if we make reference to the ideal speech situation in every discourse, do “the individual informal constraints of the better argument” dominate in discourse. Habermas argues that for normal communication, participants must be able to take a stand based only on the rationality of the argument; and second, there must be reciprocity predicated on the mutual recognition of all competent subjects (Brown, & Goodman, 2001, p: 207). He then mentions about the basic conditions of ideal speech situation:

- 1) All potential participants to a discourse must have the same chance to employ communicative speech acts so that at all times they may open discourse, as well as perpetuate it through address and reply, question and answer.
- 2) All participants in a discourse must have the same chance to put forward interpretations, assertions, recommendations, explanations and justifications, and problematize their validity claim, to establish or reject it, so that no preconceived opinion escapes discussion or criticism for any length of time
- 3) The discourse allows only for speakers that have an even chance as active subjects to employ regulative speech acts, that is, to command and to resist, to allow and to forbid, to make and retract a promise, to account for something and to owe an explanation. Only complete reciprocity of behavioral expectations that exclude privileges in the sense of one-sided binding behavioral and evaluative norms can guarantee that the formal even distribution of chances to open and continue and address can actually be used to suspend the constraints of reality and move to the area of communication that is free from experience and the burden of action (Habermas, 1991, p: 34).

Habermas's ideal speech situation is "ideal" in real sense, in real life social interactions it is very hard to find this kind of dialogic communicative interaction. Habermas does not give any clue about the ways to reach this ideal speech situation, whereas he devotes the second volume of the Theory of Communicative Action, which is subtitled as "Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason", for analyzing the structural and systemic processes and problems of modernity that leads to distortions in ideal speech situations and communicative processes.

SYSTEM-LIFEWORLD

With his theory of system and lifeworld, Habermas tries to move beyond the fragmentation between theories of social action and theories of social structure. There are four stages in his development of the theory of system and lifeworld:

1. Action-theoretical foundations in the notion of communicative action
2. Habermas's construction of concept of the lifeworld as the social background to communicative action
3. His critical review of systems-theoretical concepts
4. His construction of a model of society that can integrate insights from both the action-theoretical and systems theoretical approaches (Baxter, 1987, p: 39).

Lifeworld refers to those interpretive patterns that are culturally transmitted and linguistically organized, which for Habermas includes the formation of group identities and the development of individual personalities. From the sociological perspective the lifeworld provides the necessarily assumed intersubjective ground upon which all conflict is acted out (Brown, & Goodman, 2001, p: 207). *System* represents those parts of society where interpersonal actions are coordinated through their functional consequences in accordance with the adaptive goals of instrumental action. A system achieves social order through the functional integration of the consequences of actions of anonymous individuals based on media.

The term lifeworld, or original German correspondent *Lebenswelt*, draws upon Edmund Husserl's reference to the "world as given in experience" prior to operations in science and phenomenological philosophy (pdf, p: 281). Habermas uses the concept to suggest "societies reproduce themselves by continuing the interpretive acts of proceeding generations in which members intersubjectively exchange world orientations and situational definitions that are stored in the lifeworld (McCarty, 1978). Concept of lifeworld embodies cultural reproduction (continuity of tradition, coherence and rationality of knowledge), social integration (stabilization of group

identities, solidarity) and socialization (transmission of generalized competences for action, harmonization of individual biographies with collective forms of life) (TCA II, p: 87). Lifeworld is crucial for securing and sustaining social identity and cultural tradition.

Structural components of lifeworld are culture, society and personality. Structural components of the lifeworld are gained from an *action-theoretical* perspective under *system-theoretical* concepts. Habermas argues that sociology with a system-theoretical orientation considers only one of the three components of the lifeworld, namely, the institutional system, for which culture and personality merely constitute complementary environments (TCA II, pp: 153-158). These three spheres of the lifeworld are symbolically/ linguistically reproduced or rationalized through communicative action. Reproduction of the lifeworld also maintains the legitimacy of the components of system. The contributions of the reproduction processes to the maintenance of the structural components of the lifeworld are represented in the figure.

Reproduction process of structural components of Lifeworld⁹	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Society</i>	<i>Personality</i>
<i>Cultural Reproduction</i>	Interpretive schemes fit for knowledge	Legitimations	Socialization Patterns Educational Goals
<i>Social Integration</i>	Obligations	Legitimately ordered interpersonal relations	Social Membership

⁹ Reproduced from TCA II, pp: 142

<i>Socialization</i>	Interpretive accomplishments	Motivations for actions that conform to norms	Interactive Capabilities (personal identity)
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The structures of the lifeworld, with their own inner logic place internal constraints on system maintenance. Components of the lifeworld have to be gotten at by a *hermeneutic approach* that picks up on members' pretheoretical knowledge such as language, historical consciousness and normative and spiritual convictions (TCA II). Structuralist or functionalist approaches may draw the logic of inner interactions of a social system's components, but they can not help understanding the antecedents¹⁰ of communicative interaction, which are embedded in the linguistically structured lifeworld and influence the whole process of communicative interactions. Therefore Habermas's approach is a hermeneutic approach.

The failures in the system, lifeworld interaction takes the form of loss of meaning, crises of legitimation and orientation, in the cases of cultural reproduction, anomie and absence of social solidarity in the case of social integration, psychopathologies (especially those of ego) in the case of specialization (TCA II, p: 141). Integrating Weberian and Marxian arguments, Habermas defines the pathologies in the system/ lifeworld interaction as loss of meaning, the growth of bureaucracy, alienation and reification. Although in practice Habermas always considers system and lifeworld together, he analytically separates them for full understanding of modern societies.

Steering media

Habermas takes the idea of steering media from Talcott Parsons's system theory, according to Parsons, communications start to become system when they are controlled by steering

¹⁰ Which are the constructive elements of process of communicative action.

media. Steering media are the aspects of social reality that are not fully compatible with a lifeworld perspective; Habermas gives the examples of money and power. These media are the heart of a system and steer interpersonal relations without recourse to traditional norms or communicatively achieved consensus (TCA II, 233). Actors no longer need to agree with or even understand the goal of the system in order for their actions to assume a pattern in pursuit of these goals. Within the media steered domain of social interaction, the domain is no longer subject to control by social consensus (Wilson, 1991, p: 8). Generalized domain of communication becomes non normative and it starts to be governed by technical rules of its own. The system, under the control of steering media, has broken away from the lifeworld. This is what Habermas means by the uncoupling of the system from the lifeworld. Systems such as economic markets are able to coordinate actions in increasingly complex ways without the need for understanding or consensus (Brown, & Goodman, 2001, p: 210).

Even though systems can be seen as increasingly uncoupled from the lifeworld, they must still be connected to processes in the lifeworld in the sense that the steering media of the system, such as money and power, need to be institutionally and more importantly motivationally anchored in the lifeworld. Changes in the system also need to be grounded in the lifeworld for adherence and legitimation (TCA II, p: 173). He then describes the historical process of transformation of system/lifeworld interaction with modernization, with the notion of societal rationalization, which he borrows from Weber.

Societal rationalization:

William Outwaite argues that in the “Theory of Communicative Action” Weber is playing something for Habermas, like the role that Hegel played for Marx. Weber opened up the concept of rationalization and the recourse to system theory (Outwaite, 1994, p: 78). Weber defines the action in terms of the actor attaching a subjective meaning to it. He does not elucidate “meaning” in connection with the model of speech; he does not

relate it to the linguistic medium of possible understanding, but to the beliefs and intentions of an acting subject take to begin with isolation (TCA II, p: 279). This leads him to his well-known distinction between value-rational, purposive-rational, traditional and affectual action. Weber did not concentrate on general structures of the lifeworld to which acting subjects belong but on the orientations of action (Ouwaite, 1994, p: 74). Habermas reframes Weber's notion of action orientations, and connects these motivations and orientations to the lifeworlds of agencies.

Rationalization of the lifeworld means that the further the structural components of the lifeworld and the processes that contribute to maintaining them get differentiated, the more interaction contexts come under control of rationality motivated mutual understanding. Rationalization process involves processes of structural differentiation towards a hypothetical end state in which cultural traditions are constantly criticized, political forms are dependent on formal procedure of justification, and personalities are increasingly autonomous. The relation to tradition, institutions and the contents of socialization processes becomes increasingly reflective and critical. In other words, the rationalization of the lifeworld involves a shift from "normatively ascribed agreement" to "communicatively achieved understanding" (Outwaite, 1994, p: 76). According to Weber rationalization of law (especially private and civil law), along with the Protestant ethic, are the two primary mechanisms of rationalization of action.

Colonization of the Lifeworld and System Crisis

As the society evolves and increases its complexity, lifeworld becomes a subsystem among other subsystems. The lifeworld becomes more complex, differentiating into regions of culture, society and personality; and the system becomes rationalized. This process of complexification of the system gives rise to a second-order transformation by emergence of steering media, in which the system is decoupled from the lifeworld. Systemic

interconnections are established by steering organizations using only the delinguistified media of money and power. Steering organizations contributes to neither normative regulations, nor to the process of identity formation. (TCAII, p: 163). According to Habermas lifeworld concept finds its strongest empirical foothold in archaic societies, where structures of linguistically mediated, normatively guided interactions constitute supporting social structures (TCA II, p: 168-171). In archaic societies there is a commonly experienced social world and worldviews are spread over the social structure as a whole and bound up with daily routines and practices of people.

Collectively shared, homogeneous lifeworld is idealization, but archaic societies more or less approximate this ideal type by virtue of kinship structures of society and mythical structure of consciousness. The kinship is composed of families ordered according to relations of legitimate descent (TCA II, 173)

Process of communicative action serves to transmit and *renew cultural knowledge*. Under the aspect of coordinating action, it serves *social integration* and the establishment of solidarity; finally under the aspect of socialization, communicative action serves the *construction of personal identities*. The symbolic and linguistic structures of the lifeworld are reproduced by way of the continuation of valid knowledge, stabilization of group solidarity, and socialization of responsible actors (TCA II, p: 137). If the actions are coordinated through a delinguistified medium such as money they turn into success-oriented transactions among private legal subjects. In the end, systemic mechanisms suppress forms of social integration.

Loss of freedom, loss of meaning and reification are seen as the products of colonization process. Loss of meaning involves the instrumentalization of the communicative practice of everyday

life in what Weber called purposive rationality (TCA II, pp: 325-6). Primary example of colonization discussed by Habermas is juridification. This is the redefinition of everyday situations so that they are subject to legal regulations. Pathologies of colonization process are presented by Habermas as follows¹¹:

disturbances	Structural components	Culture	Society	Person	Di of Ev
Cultural Reproduction		Loss of meaning	Withdrawal of legitimation	Crisis in orientation and education	Ra of kn
Social Integration		Unsettling of collective identity	Anomie	Alienation	So me
Socialization		Rupture of tradition	Withdrawal of motivation	Psychopathologies	Per res

It is hard to define which of the pathologies (reification, alienation, loss of freedom, loss of meaning, anomie, crisis of orientation, structural violence) derives from the system, which others derive from the action orientations. Habermas does not pursue a pure structuralist Marxian approach, neither he takes a pure agency oriented action modes as basis of his theory. He rather reframes Weber's action orientations in order to describe the dynamic procedural interaction between system and lifeworld.

Some of the critiques did not consider Habermas's attempts to integrate structure and agency oriented approaches successful (Outwaite, 1994), or they considered it as an incomplete project (Brown, & Goodman). Habermas's detailed arguments about the primacy of communicative action for the integration of these

¹¹ TCA II, p: 143

two spheres were not taken entirely successful (Baxter, 1987). In spite of all criticisms, he has identified an important sphere of human action, and he then makes connection of communicative action with consensual decision-making, and participatory procedural democracy, as well as about our use of language. In all three, processes of communicative interaction are central, and orientations that derive from structure (fe: power, money) and agency (fe: purposive rationality, human nature) are considered as peripheral. Which is also an ideal kind of definition for the CAR, which is supposedly integrative and process oriented. In his recent works he makes an emphasis on deliberative and procedural democracy, in which he further tries to apply his communicative approach, now with a revised version under the title of discourse theory, to industrialized Western societies.

Discourse Theory of Democracy

In his latest book “The Inclusion of Other”, Habermas elaborates and supports his notion of “discourse theory of democracy”. With its proceduralist orientation, the *discourse theory* places the whole weight of political legitimation on informal and legally institutionalized procedures of opinion and will formation (Habermas, 1998, p: xv). Habermas argues that the legitimacy of legal norms is a function of the formal procedures of political deliberation and decision making which support the presumption that their outcomes are rational. Discourse theory of democracy can be considered as an institutionally reframed version of the process of communicative action.

I proceed on the assumption that the participants do not wish to **resolve their conflicts** through violence, or even compromise, but through **communication**. Thus their initial impulse is to engage in deliberation and work out a shared

ethical self-understanding on a secular basis
(Habermas, 1998, p: 40)

He then presents the discourse theory of democracy as a “better” alternative to liberal and republican notions of democracy. According to the liberal view democratic process takes place exclusively in the form of *compromises between competing interests*. Fairness is supposed to be guaranteed by rules of compromise formation that regulate the general and equal right to vote, the representative composition of parliamentary bodies, their order of business, and so on (Ibid, p: 246). Democratic process accomplishes the task of mobilizing the state in the interest of society. The state is conceived as an apparatus of public administration, and society is understood as a system of market-structured interactions of private persons. There is a purely instrumental and goal oriented notion of political process and state is considered as an instrumental tool.

On the other hand, according the republican view, democratic will formation is supposed to take the form of an *ethical discourse of self-understanding*. In republican notion deliberation can rely for its content on a culturally established background moral consensus of the citizens. Political process constitutes the medium in which the members of quasi-natural solidary communities become aware of their dependence on one another and, acting with full deliberation as citizens, further shape and develop existing relations of reciprocal recognition into an association of free and consociates under law (Ibid, p: 240). Republican view is normative oriented and state is considered as more than an instrument for distribution of interest.

Discourse theory takes the elements from both sides and integrates them into the concept of an *ideal procedure for deliberation and decision-making*. Weaving together

negotiations and discourses of self-understanding and of justice, this democratic procedure grounds the presumption that under such conditions reasonable or fair results are obtained (Ibid, p: 246). Discourse theory works with higher level intersubjectivity of communication process that unfold in the institutionalized deliberations in parliamentary bodies, on the one hand, and in the informal networks of public sphere, on the other. Public sphere and the civil society are the domains through which political will- formation takes place by a process of open discussion.

Habermas's discourse theory of democracy may be an ideal kind of macro level Conflict Resolution process model. It is neither purely instrumentally oriented nor purely normatively oriented; rather it is a kind of integrative and deliberative consent formation process.

Overall, Habermas deals with almost all the issues and concepts that are topics of "Theories of Society" such as power, identity, rationality, institutions and values, agencies and social action. Communicative interaction process and communicative rationality are the key notions that appear as a cure to all distortions and problems of modern societies.

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