



The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society: Reason and the Rationalization of Society Vol 1

Jürgen Habermas

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Here, for the first time in English, is volume one of Jürgen Habermas's long-awaited magnum opus: *The Theory of Communicative Action*. This pathbreaking work is guided by three interrelated concerns: (1) to develop a concept of communicative rationality that is no longer tied to the subjective and individualistic premises of modern social and political theory; (2) to construct a two-level concept of society that integrates the 'lifeworld' and 'system' paradigms; and (3) to sketch out a critical theory of modernity that explains its sociopathologies in a new way.

Habermas approaches these tasks through a combination of conceptual analyses, systematic reflections, and critical reconstructions of such predecessors as Marx and Weber, Durkheim and Mead, Horkheimer and Adorno, Schutz and Parsons. *Reason and the Rationalization of Society* develops a sociological theory of action that stresses not its means-ends or teleological aspect, but the need to coordinate action socially via communication. In the introductory chapter Habermas sets out a powerful series of arguments on such foundational issues as cultural and historical relativism, the methodology of *Verstehen*, the inseparability of interpretation from critique. In addition to clarifying the normative foundations of critical social inquiry, this sets the stage for a systematic appropriation of Weber's theory of rationalization and its Marxist reception by Lukacs, Horkheimer and Adorno.

This is an important book for degree students of philosophy, sociology and related subjects.

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