

## DISCOURSE OF CRITICAL THEORY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Ecaterina PATRASCU\*, Zahoor Ahmad WANI \*\*

\*Department of Foreign Languages, "Mihai Viteazul" National Intelligence Academy, Bucharest, Romania,

\*\* Centre for Studies in International Politics and Governance, School of International Studies, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, India

**Abstract:** *The endeavour of critical theory is to endorse self-reflexive examinations of the experiences we have and the ways in which we make sense of ourselves, our cultures, and the world. Critical theory refuses to identify freedom with any fixed forms of thought or institutional arrangements. It focuses scrutiny on the effects of power on the differential ability of actors to control their own circumstances. The theory goes beyond that theoretical contribution to provide momentum for realistic political action in challenging, resisting, and disrupting existing relations of power. Thinking about the theories of International Relations (IR), critical theorists also raised questions concerning how rationalists (both neo-realists and neo-liberals) IR serve the interests of dominant elites. Therefore we must re-imagine critical theory in international relations because it is ultimately concerned with what is possible to know, given that the ontological status of neither the subject, nor the object of theory, can be taken for granted. Critical theorists elucidate how international relations among states make possible (and tend to conceal) the unfairness of a global capitalist system. They are interested in the relation between freedom and power. One part of this paper will critically address how Karl Marx's critique of ideology is linked with immanent critique and how it assists us in re-imagining critical thinking in conjunction with international relations in the contemporary era. Further, the paper will critically analyze how Jurgen Habermas and critical theory stand explicitly in the line of development, reaction and counter-reaction to the philosophy of Hegel and Karl Marx.*

**Keywords:** *critique, self-reflexive, Habermas, Marx, capitalism*

### 1. WHY CRITICAL THEORY

The genesis of the Frankfurt School emerged in the 1920s and early 1930s, during an era of extremely complex intellectual activity in Germany. The school developed what is called critical theory (what makes it critical is self-awareness as a theory), and reflected a synthesis of various traditions of modern theories including historical materialism, German idealism, psychoanalysis and modernism. Critical theorists are influenced intellectually by Karl Marx; many critical theorists drew from his analysis of human inequality and his normative goal of eliminating exploitation. Critical theorists were deeply influenced by Marx's argument that

men make their history, but they do make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past (*apud* Linklater, 1990:22).

The initial group of theorists continues to exercise important influence on modern-day

theorists and their ideas concerning social change, conflict and identity. Besides this, there was also the imprint of classical Greek thought on democracy and autonomy to be considered, as well as the thoughts of Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Weber. The notions of dialectics, domination, exploitation, legitimating and contradiction are central in the arsenal of critical theory. When Karl Marx argued that *philosophers have only interpreted the world: the point is to alter it*, this, in a nutshell, is the commitment to emancipatory social science that is defended by the Frankfurt school.

What all critical theorists have in common is that they share a concern with emancipatory politics-bringing about fundamental changes for the least advantaged groups within societies by removing hierarchical social structures. The school constitutes one of the major intellectual traditions of the 20th century and has been centrally important for political theory, philosophy, literary criticism, aesthetics, history of art and ideas, media studies, sociology, cultural studies and international relations. It is still an imperative philosophical and political perspective which

refers an intellectual tradition that characterizes an epistemological priority to the notion of critique. It raises questions concerning the social construction of knowledge. Raymond Geuss (1981) in his book *The Idea of Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School* argues, “the major goal of the school is the criticism of positivism and the rehabilitation of ‘reflection’ as a category of valid knowledge” (1981:2). It is a very comprehensive theory made with emancipatory and enlightenment intent. The very heart of the critical theory of society is its criticism of ideology. Just the theory recognises that it is itself a product of society, but at the same time it tries to distance itself from society, in an attempt to comprehend and alter it. It tries to comprehend the central features of contemporary societies by understanding its historical and social development and tracing contradiction in the present which may open up the possibility transcending contemporary society; it is built in pathologies and forms of domination. By doing so, it scrutinizes the existing social order and the boundaries of knowledge. To engage in critical theory is to perform a theoretical and a political act (Griffiths, O’ Callaghan, 2002:59).

Max Horkheimer, one of the founders of this school, saw its mission as one of investigating the relationship between reason and authority. He argued that the theory proposed not only to eliminate one or other abuses, but to analyze the underlying social structures which result in these abuses with the intention of overcoming them (1972:206). Critical theory interconnected series of particular insights bound together by its “inherent interest in the transcendence of class domination” (*apud* Therborn, 1970:68). His essay on “Traditional and Critical Theory” anticipated the basic themes in the most recent critique of realism. He tried to describe the division between traditional and critical theories. Traditional theory (positivism) was distinguished from critical theory by endeavours to explain regularities and social laws. The major aim of critical theory was to comprehend how these ‘socially-created’ restraints upon the freedom of human subjects could be diminished and if plausible, eradicated (Horkheimer, 1972). Horkheimer argued that positivism represented an instrumental theory, “that makes peace, in principle with every kind of superstition” (Horkheimer, 1972:38). Initially, Horkheimer believed that the work of the Institute could contribute to developing a degree of critical social consciousness latent in the masses (Held, 1980:38) and, in so doing, assist to turn the means

of production and technological development towards emancipatory rather than exploitative ends.

By challenging *bourgeois scientific thought*, critical thinking is therefore, for Horkheimer, a form of “transformative activity” (Horkheimer, 1972:232). The key object of Adorno and Horkheimer’s analysis is ‘enlightenment’. As distinct from the common usage, the concept of ‘enlightenment’ has, for Adorno and Horkheimer, a very specific meaning that only partially relates to the likes of Descartes and Kant (Edkins, Vaughan-Williams, 2009:12). Horkheimer’s critique of positivism was predicated on two objectives: first, to critique instrumental logic and reason as a foundation of manipulation that had become quiet within the holistic procedure of historical materialism and second, to assess the historical divergence between science and philosophy by situating the emergence of instrumental reason within this divergence. For him the social task of critical theory was to link the revitalisation of subjective reason with the actualising autonomy of critical theory (Roach, 2010), to show how subjective reason could, in this sense regain, “all spontaneity, productivity, power to discover and assert new kinds of content” (Horkheimer, 1996:55). In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno presented the pessimistic view about the project of enlightenment as a whole and the possibilities for transformation in the contemporary perspective. They contested with Kant and the positivity of the project of enlightenment.

The question arises why we are dealing with critical theory? The basic logic behind it is that it offers us a key set of insights into the changing dynamics of dogmatism and authoritarian political structures. However, the intended aim of critical theory is not a chilly description but a radical transformation of the social world of advanced capitalism that will bring freedom for all from such constraints. For critical theorists, science, culture, and technology are ideological forces that distort consciousness and, thus, prevent the individuals from recognizing and gratifying their true human interests. The theory introduced many of the ideas that have produced debates about postmodernism and postmodernity (see especially the work of Fredric Jameson 1990, 1991, 1998), but there have not been sufficient changes to the modern world for it to be safe to declare the arrival of postmodern social formations (Dante, 2003: 3).

It is in the work of Max Horkheimer & Theodor Adorno (1972), Herbert Marcuse (1972), Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Jurgen Habermas

(1971), Lukacs and Gramsci (1971) that critical theory obtained a renewed strength and in which the term critical theory came to be used as the emblem of a philosophy which questions modern social and political life through a method of 'immanent critique'. It provides a comprehensive and extensive critique of many of the main concerns that one might encounter in the contemporary era. The concept of 'immanent critique' refers to the method of critiquing a concept, theory or situation by critically evaluating it on its own terms, highlighting the contradictions inherent within it. The method *immanent critique* is seen as a tool of enlightenment, is used to critique enlightenment itself and illustrate that "social freedom is inseparable from enlightened thought" but that enlightenment simultaneously surrounds the seed of its own problem (Horkheimer, Adorno, 1972:xiii).

Critique refers to a type of theory first developed by Marx. The critique of ideology by Marx is linked with immanent critique. The notion that is most important is to judge societies by the terms they use to defend themselves. The main alternative is to criticise society by appealing to moral standards that are said to be inherent in the human reason or human nature. Marx had himself learned from Kant and Hegel. It seeks not to refute other theories, but to establish the limits of their validity, by depicting that they unwittingly reflect a social reality which is itself a distorted and estranged and impoverished version of what it could become. Traditional theory presupposes a contemplative stance vis-a-vis an autonomous, pre-given reality which it can interpret, not transform. On the other hand, Marxist theory styles itself as the understanding of reality which is also the necessary of self-consciousness of an element in that reality working toward its transformation. In technical terms, at the heart of the theory was the aspect of subjectivity i.e., 'social change conceived as the potential act of identifiable human agents' conscious of their historical mission to liberate all of society from the thrall of class domination (Leiss, 1974).

Critical theory is also a dialectical thinking. The concern with empiricism and positivism is that they have the capability or ability to describe but not understand. The difficulty with interpretative social sciences is that these disciplines have the competence to comprehend but not to critique the limits or boundaries of understanding. It is this dialectical movement which gives rise to the need for critical theory to shift the bases of both empirical and interpretative knowledge (Hoffman,

1987). If critical social theory offers us a logical opportunity for comprehending social alteration, then the term dialectics can be seen as the medium for strategy in our understanding, along this chance. In modern social critical theory, dialectics serves as a scientific and holistic method of analysis (Roach, 2008). This method is more inspired by and derived from the writings of Kant, Hegel, Marx and recently Habermas.

## 2. FROM CRITICAL THEORY TO CRITICAL IR THEORY

International Relations as an academic discipline has moved through a series of debates. It is the study of the origins and consequences (both normative and empirical) of a world divided among states. It is a very broad discipline, including a multiplicity of sub-fields such as comparative politics, foreign policy analysis, historical sociology, international political economy and history, strategic studies and military affairs, ethics, and international political theory. It has been undergoing constant changes and modifications. Many of the conceptual contributions of critical theory perspective have received critical attention in IR theory debates and these are still ongoing.

Since the 1980s, critical theory has been present within international relations. The major reason for the emergence of a critical-theoretical approach to world politics is only one manifestation of the emergent salience of Marxism in the study of international relations. The recent critical turn in international theory has been profoundly influenced by the Frankfurt School's critique of mainstream sociology. Its significance is illustrated by Cox's distinction between 'problem-solving' and 'critical' theories of international relations (Linklater, 1990). The earlier proponents of critical IR theory were mainly concerned to rebut the major argument of realism (Linklater, 2007). There are four general positions that could claim to be examples of critical theory in the context of international relations. First, there is neo-Gramscian work on global political economy and international politics, most notably exemplified by the work of Robert W. Cox. Second, there is normative and explanatory theory, such as that of Andrew Linklater, which draws on the work of the Frankfurt School and of Jurgen Habermas in particular. Third, there is postmodernist work, such as that of Richard Ashley (1988), R. B. J. Walker (1993), Ashley and Walker (1990), James Der

Derian (1987), Der Derian and Shapiro (1989) – that draws on a range of postmodernist and poststructuralist philosophers, of which Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault are the most notable. Fourth, there is the feminist work, such as that of Jean Elshtain (1987), Cynthia Enloe (1990), Christine Sylvester (1994), Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland (1991), and Ann Tickner (1992) which draws on a very wide range of traditions (including Marxism, the Frankfurt School, and postmodernism). All these diverse perceptions are of the same motto since they are involved with the critical aspect. They share certain features that have particular theoretical and practical consequences (see also Hutchings, 2001).

The mainstream IR scholarship remains essentially conservative, connected with the maintenance of state power. Critical IR seeks explicitly to expose the historical structures of international power and develop knowledge that might contribute to the progressive and emancipatory transformation of world order (Jones, 2001). The theory is best understood as a constellation of different approaches rather than an approach, all seeking to illuminate the question of emancipation in world politics (Ibid). It is a kind of theory that allows comprehending ‘how social structures come into being and how they may be changed’. In this sense, it is a type of theory for those who are concerned with the alteration of the society, as it is largely including those whose ambitions and interests are not served by global structures as they are – the excluded, the powerless and the unheard (Murphy, 2001: 70-71). For critical IR theory, as Richard Devetak has recently noted,

emancipation can be understood as the establishment of a community which allows and protects the development of universal autonomy... The question [thus] arises as to how...to reconstruct world politics so as to extend to the entire species a rational, just and democratic organization of politics (Devetak, 1996:169).

The development of critical theory within IR has had two sources, internal and external. Internally, the development of critical theory was driven by a reaction to the re-articulation of realism in Kenneth Waltz’s seminal contribution *Theory of International Politics* (1979). As externally, there was the expansion of critical theory perspectives independent of the theoretical developments within international relations that were then used to critique neo-realism from a “point already arrived at”, with Cox being the best example. Both drew from the development of

critical theory and saw this as providing the basis for an attack on the epistemological foundations of the discipline (Roach, 2008).

Critical theory is a *Para-Marxist* movement. It refers to a set of Marxists-inspired critical analyses of international theory and practice. Critical international theory observes an intimate connection between cognitive processes and social life. It rejects the positivists’ distinction between fact and value, subject and object dichotomy. There is ongoing a gap in critical IR studies between the tradition of critical theory and critical IR theory and to encourage IR scholars, practitioners and students to see a global realm as a new context for applying and engaging dialectic to understand social change (ibid). The theory might be distinguished from a “traditional” theory according to an explicit practical purpose: a theory is critical to the extent that it seeks human emancipation, “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (Horkheimer, 1972:244). It has resided primarily in the space of criticism and scrutinises, rather than facilitating a journey through the realms of concrete imagination and utopia (Torres, 1999: 688).

Mark Hoffman’s essay, *Critical Theory and the Inter-paradigm Debate* (1987), signifies one of the first efforts to locate critical theory in the IR domain. His major argument is that critical theory remains limited in some respects, while it represents an emerging paradigm of IR theory. After Hoffman, Andrew Linklater, in his essay *The Question of the Next Stage in International Relations Theory* (1992) argued that the emancipatory assignment needed to be situated within IR theory, or structured in terms of the immanent modes of inclusion and exclusion in international relations. His questions of inclusion and exclusion are central to IR. He advocates a kind of community of human kind (Griffiths, O’Callaghan, 2002:60). Linklater is the most incisive critical IR theorist inscription in the tradition of the ‘Frankfurt School’. Linklater’s work has much in common with Robert Cox’s. In one of his seminal book *Beyond Realism and Marxism*, Linklater argues that analysis in international relations that is restricted to interstate relations fails to recognize the role of sub-and trans-state political and economic forces in conditioning the possibilities of international politics (Linklater, 1990:1-7). Like Cox again, Linklater seeks to bring history into the ahistorical assumptions of traditional international relations theory and to challenge the claim to impartiality in its methodological and theoretical framework. However, in Linklater’s case there is a

specific alternative of the challenge to the fact/value and politics/morality differences that are constitutive of classical idealism and realism. Whereas Cox works with the notion of hegemonic and counter hegemonic discourses, Linklater draws on Habermas's discourse ethics and theory of historical development to identify the potential of modern states to transcend the major reason of the state system reflected by realism (Linklater, 1990:163-164; 1992:35-36).

He formulates three modes of critical IR theory: normative, sociological and praxeological. The normative and sociological domains, for instance, refer to the individuals, groups, and states, shared moral commitments to international justice and freedom, and to the historical and social structures of the international system, respectively. The third domain, praxeological, refers to human governance, and how actions of individuals are being directed towards the cosmopolitan ideals of justice, freedom, and equality (Linklater, 2007). Central to these three modes is the idea that open-ended dialogue between and among citizens validates the chances for reasoned harmony at the global level (Roach, 2010:80). In brief, he outlined that critical theory has four main achievements. These are as follows:

- a) Critical international theory takes concerns with the methodology of 'positivism' (as critical theorists of all stripes tend to refer to the supposedly logical mainstream of IR theory).
- b) It contests the idea that the existing structures of the social world are immutable and 'examines the prospects for greater freedom immanent within existing social relations'.
- c) It ascertains from and overcomes the flaws intrinsic in Marxism by emphasising forms of social learning (drawing on Habermas' reconstruction of historical materialism) and opening up new possibilities for constructing an 'historical sociology with an emancipatory purpose'.
- d) Linklater suggests that critical theory, "judges social arrangements by their capacity to embrace open dialogue with all others and envisages new forms of political community which break with unjustified exclusion (...). Critical theory (...) envisages the use of an unconstrained discourse to determine the moral significance of national boundaries and to examine the possibility of post-sovereign forms of national life (1996: 279-80, 2007: 45-46) The theory maintains with the faith of the project of enlightenment and 'defends its universalism by advancing the ideal of open discourse not only between fellow citizens but between all members of the human race' (Roach, 2010:59).

Thinking about theories of IR, a critical theorist might also raise questions concerning how rationalists (both neo-realists and neo-liberals) IR serves the interests of dominant elites. These two provide salient insights regarding the relationship of power to international institutions and the role institutions, particularly regimes, have in overcoming political market failures. The theory is attacked by both right and left, as well as positivists. Critical IR theorists, working out of the IR discipline, also stress the idea of evolving justice. As Max Neufeld in his seminal work *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory* (1995) argues, formulating a critical IR theory requires a self-reflexive normative theory to move beyond positivism and postmodernist relativism.

A fundamental way in which existing critical theory re-opens assumptions that have grounded our political thought has been by questioning the starting point of thinking politically. One of the traditional questions of politics has been how we can live together, or in other words, how individuals with a range of backgrounds, beliefs and interests can or do co-exist, peacefully or otherwise. What forms of organisation, institutional or social, promote what forms of co-existence? (Edkins, Vaughan-Williams, 2009:2). Political theorists are paying growing attention to international politics. Specifically, some scholars working on what they call 'deliberative democracy' have sought to use Habermas' ideas of a public sphere and discourse ethics to show how world politics could be more democratic and deliberative (Dryzek, 2000; Bohman, 2007). Critical theory must re-imagine in international relations because it is ultimately concerned with what is possible to know, given that the ontological status of neither the subject nor the object of theory can be taken for granted. Habermas (and those scholars in international relations who have been inspired by him) aims for progression towards the realisation of human potential by trying to find a way to overcome differences through rational consensus based on rational argument.

### 3. JURGEN HABERMAS AND THE GROUNDING OF CRITICAL THEORY

Jurgen Habermas, German philosopher and sociologist, has had a wide and significant impact on the understanding of social change and social conflict. He is regarded as the leading 'second generation' critical theorist. He provides what has often been seen as the theoretically "strongest" attempt to inquire into the relations of critical

theory to epistemology and philosophical anthropology (Lacapra, 1977:237). His writing comprises a body of literature virtually incomparable throughout the social sciences and humanities, constituting a sustained and systematic defence of the cognitive and normative ideals of the Enlightenment (MacKendrick, 2008). Habermas is often considered as one of the most difficult to comprehend of the critical theorists. One of the reasons that Habermas's theory has emerged as a promising basis of empirical critical theory is that it links non-coercive discourse with the possibilities of reaching mutual indulgence on concerns. In international relations, this notion has found expression in Habermasian-inspired theorists' attempts to situate Habermas in the rationalist/constructivist debate on norms (Roach, 2010). The focus of his work remained broadly faithful to his intellectual origins to the Frankfurt School with the desire to develop a critical theory of society with emancipatory goal. It is evident in his first major work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), as well as taking centre stage in more recent publications such as *The Inclusion of the Other* (1998) and *The Post-National Constellation* (2001). Habermas outlines his general theoretical framework,

There are three categories of processes of inquiry for which a specific connection between logical-methodological rules and knowledge-constitutive interests can be demonstrated. This demonstration is the task of a critical philosophy of science that escapes the snares of positivism. The approach of the empirical-analytic sciences incorporates a technical cognitive interest; that of the historical-hermeneutic sciences incorporates a practical one; and the approach of critically oriented sciences incorporates the emancipatory cognitive interests that were at the root of traditional theories (1971:308).

The technical cognitive interest intends at control and is related with nomological sciences; the practical interest of the hermeneutic-historical sciences seeks at escalating mutual understanding and unhindered communication, while the emancipatory interest of critically oriented science aims at liberating human beings from the relation of force, unconscious restraints and dependence on the concept of powers (Bohman, 1999).

#### 4. HABERMAS' DISCOURSE ON RATIONALITY

Habermas's idea of a 'radical critique of reason' is an explicit response to the pessimistic

appraisal of enlightenment thinking offered by Horkheimer and Adorno, his predecessors in the Frankfurt school of critical theory. He uses that idea to refute their celebrated work *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, which challenges cherished the liberal and Marxist hypothesis about enlightenment and progress and which links the virtually inescapable advance of instrumental rationality in capitalist societies to progressive worsening of human freedom (Fleming, 1997). He placed them in a skeptical filament of modernity stemming from Nietzsche and reaching forward into postmodernism and he situates the problem of a radical critique of reason within the internal development of the enlightenment tradition and Marxist ideology critique (Habermas, 1981).

Habermas argues that Horkheimer and Adorno were operating with a notion of instrumental reason, which properly identifies subject/object relations with their basis in propositional truth but is too restrictive to be applied to other types of relations. He argued that we need a concept of 'communicative reason', which focuses concentration on 'inter-subjective relations' and 'rightness claims'.

For Habermas, the notion of communicative reason could again put critical theory on the path of a more positive assessment of modernity's critical resources (Fleming, 1997). He considers that their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* indicated mistakes and concerns that were ultimately to lead postmodernists like Jacques Derrida and Michael Foucault to abandon all traces of the philosophy of enlightenment. He maintains that all these theorists, despite their diverse claims, get trapped in the 'paradoxes of self-referential critique' and those complications can be avoided through a conception of 'communicative reason' (Fleming, 1997).

His main objective in his book *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* is to strengthen universalist claims by making them immune to 'genealogical and deconstructionist critiques. Habermas begins his critique arguing that Horkheimer and Adorno joined with the nefarious writers of the bourgeoisie, Sade and Nietzsche, "to conceptualize the enlightenment's process of self-destruction" (Habermas, 1987:106). His critique can be summarised in three steps:

a) By placing 'ideology critique itself under suspicion', Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectics of Enlightenment* 'render critique independent in relation to its own foundations'. While doing so, they arrived at a totalising critique, invoking 'a

reason that is before reason', which is ultimately self-defeating (1987:116; 1981: 382)

b) This 'totalising critique is a performative contradiction', which is both unappreciative of the rational content of cultural modernity and an aestheticization of criticism itself (Habermas, 1987: 119).

c) The normative content of modernity goes unappreciated; Horkheimer and Adorno fail to provide at least one rational criterion intact for their explanation. The failure to do so leads to nowhere. Habermas notes that at this level of reflection ideology critique slides off into the groundless and the distinction between theory and practice is eschewed (1987:128).

He has consistently defended the projection of modernity and enlightenment tradition. His central claim was to the development of critical philosophy as social theory, achieved through a vigorous self-reflective account of the social character of all knowledge (Habermas, 1998). Habermas argues that the critical theory of society prompts critical reflection that exemplifies the relation between the anthropological interests of human beings and epistemological claims in the domains of technical knowledge (objectivity) and practical knowledge (politics and ethics) (see also MacKendrick, 2008:44).

Jurgen Habermas (1965) in his inaugural address, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, initiated a radical critique of knowledge, a project that was intended to have extensive implications for epistemology (theory of knowledge). Arguing that social sciences and sciences have become estranged from their legitimate tasks, he attempts to situate questions of epistemology within the realm of genuine human interests. The concept of knowledge free from human interests, Habermas argues, is an ideological residue of idealism, privileging an instrumental attitude toward all things at the expense of practical concerns and desires. He can be placed definitely within the critical theory tradition. A core objective of his work over the years has been to reconstruct historical materialism in order to reflect more accurately the concerns of the present day and the shifting sands of western politics and economics (Rockmore, 1989). For Habermas, Marxism provides complementary contribution toward a paradigm for a critical theory of society. He challenged all those who regarded Marxism as an objective, scientific theory of history. For him, Marxism is a hypothesis based on the evidence of history concerning ourselves, human beings as the potential makers of history. This meant that Marxism was a theory with a distinctive cognitive

status, for which Habermas coined the rather cumbersome phrase empirically falsifiable philosophy of history with practical intent. Marxism was neither an explanatory theory in the usual scientific sense, nor pure philosophical speculation, but something rather in between the two (see also Dews, 1999). Habermas' relationship to Marxism may perhaps best be described as one of the constructive critique. It embodies a qualified acceptance of historical materialism and the project of human emancipation (Outhwaite, 2009: 16). The major difference between Marx and himself, as Habermas views, centres on the "steering problem" of advanced capitalism (Habermas, 1971: 2).

Moving beyond what he sees to be the failures in Kant, Hegel, and Marx, Habermas hopes to recover from the legacy of the enlightenment the abandoned phases of reflection and thus revitalise the ideals found in the bourgeois emphasis on freedom, justice, and reason. The project can only be realised, Habermas claims, through the articulation of a comprehensive social theory (Habermas 1998:78). Habermas draws two forms of investigation that are provisionally paradigmatic for emancipatory fields of inquiry: *psychoanalysis and the critique of ideology*. The former deals with intra-psycho disturbances brought on by deformations in socialization and individuation from within, while the latter deals with structural and institutional bases of power affecting communicative patterns from without. In *On the Logic of the Social Sciences and Knowledge and Human Interests* psychoanalysis is read as a theory of linguistic analysis and as a radical version of the Marxian concept of ideology critique (McCarthy, 1978:56). According to Habermas, psychoanalysis is an exemplary discipline for critical theory because Freud was able to notice, scrutinize, and correct distortions in the linguistic medium; dreams provide an example of such distortions. For Habermas, psychoanalytic discourse promotes the fruitful union of both kinds of inquiry in the form of emancipatory praxis, the unity of theory and practice in self-reflection.

## 5. HABERMAS' CONTRIBUTION IN CRITICAL IR THEORY

Habermas has said very little directly about international relations and world politics. Habermas describes the development of a "global public sphere" and the gradual development of human rights and international law as a "cosmopolitan transformation of the state of nature among states into a legal order" (Habermas, 1998:

149). Diez and Steans (2005) argue that Habermas and other critical and post-structural theorists have been influential in the post-positivist turn in international relations theory.

Habermas developed his hermeneutical dialectic (inter-subjective interaction or communication action) and emphasized the intimate connection between knowledge and interests which is more influential in the contemporary era. It was Habermas who has been particularly influenced by students of IR. The theory provides us with a holistic deliberation approach to studying state authoritarianism, one which is comprised of the following four basic tenets.

a) It addresses the reflexive aspect of an individual's theory/ideas, or the inherent link between one's actions and values as well as ideological orientation. It opposes positivism, or the employment of deductive, inductive and empiricist methods to objectify social phenomena.

b) The theory focuses on the unpredictability of political structures. It demonstrates how political power and ideological controls can endorse the perception of the permanence of political and economic structures.

c) It is an open-ended interdisciplinary approach rooted in both ethical concerns and social and economic relations of production. The examples including Gramsci's writings on the dialectical interaction between civil society and the state, ethics and cultural concerns remain immanent to social progress and equality.

It is an integrative analysis of social reality. To sum these four tenets this theory is applicable and relevant to understanding the intricate interaction of practices, identities and institution at both the domestic and international level (*apud* Roach, 2008:16-17).

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The primary aim of the emergence of critical IR theory is to expose the social and political tensions that have assisted to extend critical theory into the global sphere (regional integration and global forms of communication). The project of critical theory remains relevant for explaining and understanding contemporary problems in a number of ways. It rejects many of the tenets of positive science and makes more knowledge claims. It differs from the scientific theories in which it is irreducibly and resolutely normative as well as reflective rather than objectifying. Also, central to the critical theorists is engaging in a critique of

ideology. It can be seen as a retreat from revolutionary politics and from the field of political action, which attempts to build on Marx's critique but with a different strategy. William Leiss (1974) rightly argued that critical theory was conceived as an element in the ongoing self-clarification of Marxist theory and practice. It contributed profoundly to the study of IR. One of these contributions has been to heighten our awareness of the link between politics and knowledge. It raises questions concerning the social construction of knowledge and is attacked by both right and left as well as positivists. Another contribution made by critical theory is to rethink accounts of the modern state and political community. It remains both applicable and relevant to understanding the intricate communication of practices, identities and institutions at both the domestic and international levels.

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