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Habermas and the Impasse of Universalism

Abstract

As a contemporary universalist, Jürgen Habermas appropriates Kant's practical philosophy. He insists, however, that no cultural difference may be disrespected in the name of universalism. Rather, only those moral norms that are accepted by every participant, regardless of their cultural background, of a rational-moral debate are universal. My aim, in this paper, is to show that Habermasian universalism is not co-tenable with the cultural differences he endeavors to incorporate into his Kantian paradigm. In order to reach my aim, I shall, first, review Habermasian discourse ethics. In the second section, I shall focus on the history of sexuality to test the tenability of Habermasian universalism.

Key Words:

Moral Cognitivism, Discourse Ethics, Communication, Homosexuality, Cultural Differences.

Habermas ve Evrenselcilik Çıkmazı

Özet

Evrenselciliğin çağdaş temsilcilerinden Jürgen Habermas, söylem-etik kuramını Kant'ın ahlak felsefesi üzerine kurar. Bununla birlikte Habermas, evrenselcilik adına hiçbir kültürel farklılığın dışlanmaması gerektigini savunur. Dolayısıyla, ancak ve ancak rasyonel-ahlaki tartışmanın tüm katılımcıları tarafından kabul edilen normların evrensel normlar olabileceğini söyler. Bu yazıda Kant felsefesi üzerine kurulan Habermasçı evrenselcilik ile kültürel farklılıkların bir arada var olamayacakları savunuluyor. Bu doğrultuda cinsellik tarihi üzerinden Habermasçı evrenselcilik değerlendiriliyor.

Anahtar Sözcükler:

Ahlaki Bilişselcilik, Söylem Etiği, İletişim, Eşcinsellik, Kültürel Farklılıklar.

I

Habermas calls any moral theory which does not take moral questions to be the subject of rational-critical debate a product of the "pathology of modern consciousness" (Habermas 1990: 45). In other words, he condemns any non-cognitivist moral theory such as positivism, emotivism, or decisionism. He believes that no positivistic theory which reduces moral questions to two other questions, i.e. "What do I want to do? And

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How can I do it," is capable of giving an account of our everyday moral feelings (Ibid., 49). For we feel guilt or indignation when the moral norms we hold are transgressed. That is, we take moral norms to be intersubjectively binding, but not to be the subject of purposive rationality. On the other hand, Habermas continues, since cognitivist moral theories accept moral norms as "fact[s] of reason," they can account for the binding-character of moral norms (Habermas 2003: 239).

Defending his cognitivist stance, Habermas follows a formalist tradition of Kant. He works on a principle which makes rational-moral argumentation and rational-moral agreement possible. The principle Habermas appeals to is the Principle of Universality (U-principle). To wit, a norm is valid if it is impartial and universally acceptable; or, as Habermas puts it, if "*[a]ll* affected can accept the consequences and the side effects its *general* observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of *everyone's* interests" (Habemas 1990: 65). However, Habermasian universality test is different from Kant's. For Habermas, it is not sufficient to test a norm *individually* and contemplate on the possibility of its being accepted by every rational-human being in order to find out if the norm in question is universalizable. Rather, what is required is a genuine moral argumentation by means of which it is possible to see if every participant of such a moral debate accepts the norm in question.

Habermas calls such an argumentative interaction between diverse participants "communicative" if the participants arrive at an agreement or "consensus" on the validity of the norm discussed (Ibid., 57). If a norm proposed by a participant can resist every attempt to invalidate it, and thus, be accepted by every participant, then it is a valid norm. However, an argumentation process is not genuine, and an agreement reached in this process does not validate any norm "[i]f those affected are excluded, certain topics suppressed, relevant contributions disregarded, evident interests not sincerely articulated or convincingly formulated, if others are not respected in their otherness" (Habermas 2003: 259).

Moreover, in a genuine argumentation process, every participant has to defend her claim by some rational arguments "that could convince anyone irrespective of time or place" (Habermas 1995: 52). That is, Habermas believes that rational arguments must seem rational to every participant of a moral debate regardless of whether these participants belong to the similar or different cultures. Thus, for him, it is possible and also required to find a "single right answer" in moral debates since moral norms are *universal* and categorical (Habermas 2003: 260). Searching for a single answer, Habermas presupposes a "single social world that includes all claims and persons" (Ibid.). However, this world is not the objective world to be discovered. Rather, an intersubjective and intercultural world must be created by the participants of a moral dispute through "mutually taking one another's perspectives" (Ibid.).

The idea of taking other's perspective is in accordance with Habermas' U-principle, since what make a norm valid are not *subjective* life-stories or culturally *exclusive* values, but rational argumentation process and consensus between *all* of the participants. What this means is that, for Habermas, moral norms may be validated *just* by objective and rational arguments. In the process of moral validation, the lifeworld of the participants must be left behind. As Habermas puts it, "[m]oral-practical

discourses… require a break with all of the unquestioned truths of an established, concrete ethical life, in addition to distancing oneself from the context of life with which one's identity is inextricably interwoven" (Habermas 1995: 12).

However, one question comes to mind immediately: Is it possible for participants of an argumentation process to reach consensus or universal norms in the age of "*pluralism of ultimate value orientations*" (Habermas 1990: 76). How can Habermas answer skeptical concerns regarding the universality of moral norms? Similar to his appropriation of Kantian universality test, Habermas also appropriates Kant's transcendental idealism. He tries to show that both the universalist and the skeptic must accept some transcendental conditions of communication. These conditions are not relative to different cultures, but they are unavoidable for any communicative action to take place. Thus, his "discourse ethics"

> attempts to show that the meaning of the basic principle of morality can be explicated in terms of the content of the unavoidable presuppositions of an argumentative practice that can be pursued only in common with others. The moral point of view from which we can judge practical questions impartially is indeed open to different interpretations. But because it is grounded in the communicative structure of rational discourse as such, we cannot simply dispose of it at will. It forces itself intuitively on anyone who is at all open to this reflective form of communicative action (Habermas 1995: 1).

Among others, the most important condition of a genuine communication is that no *relevant* argument, objection, and participant may be excluded from an argumentation process. If, for example, a skeptic communicates with a universalist to *convince* the latter that there is no universal norm, she, for Habermas, must presuppose such transcendental conditions. Accordingly, the validity or the invalidity of a norm cannot be *agreed upon* by either party if they do not accept the Principle of Universality.

However, Habermasian universalism as it is described above has encountered with many criticisms. These criticisms are mostly based on the incommensurability of ethical values and on the impossibility of real individuals' leaving their lifeworld behind. For example, Steven Lukes (1982) asks "*[w]ho* are the participants in the unconstrained discourse that is held to offer the possibility of rational consensus?" (p. 141). If these participants are actual individuals, then there is no reason to suppose that real individuals would distance themselves from their traditional narratives, ethical values, or prejudices, so as to reach an agreement on a moral norm. Or as Albrecht Wellmer (1991) claims, in a non-ideal situation, we cannot have any universal agreement even on a basic maxim such as "Thou shalt not lie" since the consequence of such a universal norm would be severe for the suppressed than the suppressor in a non-egalitarian society (p. 155). In other words, Habermas does not give any reason for having faith in a rational-moral consensus. On the other hand, if the participants in question are ideal participants in an ideal situation, then rational-moral consensus is not only possible, but also unavoidable "only because it has been so formulated that it must do so" (Lukes 1982: 140). In other words, such an ideal situation with ideal participants is just a theoretical construct not corresponding to reality. Furthermore, suppose that some rational participants are discussing the moral value of abortion, and suppose that

they are eager for taking every *relevant* aspect of the subject into account. In such a situation, there is again no reason to believe that there would be an agreement, since Habermas does not give any *criterion* to decide which aspects are *relevant* in determining universally valid norms. Moreover, in discussing the moral value of abortion, it seems quite difficult to find out which aspects are *relevant* without appealing to incommensurable "evaluative orientations," i.e. if what is *relevant* is the *sanctity* or the *quality* of human life (Warnke 1995: 131).

However, I claim, we should not limit ourselves to actual individuals within different cultures with incommensurable value orientations in evaluating the tenability of Habermasian universalism. We should also focus on real individuals within different scientific and ethical paradigms with incommensurable *ways of reasoning* to see if Habermasian universality is cotenable with cultural differences; and if it is possible to prevent every *relevant* aspect, every *relevant* argument, and every *relevant* participant from being excluded from an argumentation process if we hold Habermasian universalism. And against this background, we should find out if Habermas' appeal to a sort of transcendental idealism can rescue his universalism. In this respect, I will review the history of sexuality in the next section. And since Habermas claims that rational arguments must be convincing irrespective of time and place in order to validate norms, I will focus on three different eras: Ancient Greece, late eighteenth century and the second half of the nineteenth century.

II

The Greeks did not conceptualize sexuality by means of the sexual-object chosen. They did not see any *qualitative difference* between a *desire* for girls and a *desire* for boys. Therefore, they did not classify sexual-desire into different kinds with special characteristics. As Michel Foucault (1992) states, "they believed that the same desire attached to anything that was desirable—boy or girl" (p. 192). Thus, they did not see the one who enjoyed boys as having a different nature from the one who enjoyed girls. Accordingly, they did not construct the concept of homosexuality as referring to *peculiar* desires, drives, inclinations, or character traits. Of course, "The Greeks were aware… that individuals differ in their sexual preferences," although they had no term corresponding to homosexuality and heterosexuality (Dover 1989: 1). Yet, such preferences were regarded as matters of taste.

Sexuality was conceptualized by means of the modality of sexual *deeds*. What this means is that what mattered for The Greeks was the dichotomy between activity and passivity, rather than psycho-sexual nature, implicit inclinations, or innate desires. Accordingly, the moral value of sexuality was not based on the nature and object of desire. But, first, it was based on the intensity of the *sexual act*. That is, what concerned The Greeks was moderation. *One had to act on his desires* in order to control them, in order not to be enslaved by them, in order to dominate them, and in order not to be passive in front of them. That is, one had to have mastery over his desires if he wants to act morally. Second, no active male member of the Greek society may accept the passive role in a sexual intercourse. For The Greeks saw an

isomorphism between sexual relations and social relations. What this means is that sexual relations—always conceived in terms of the model act penetration, assuming a polarity that opposed activity and passivity—were seen as being of the same type as the relationship between a superior and a subordinate, an individual who dominates and one who is dominated, one who commands and one who complies, one who vanquishes and one who is vanquished (Foucault 1992: 215).

In this respect, one of the most important subjects of a moral debate on sexuality among The Greeks was whether boys as passive partners of a sexual intercourse were *to be touched*. For, as Foucault states, The Greeks "couldn't accept that a young boy who was supposed to become a free citizen could be dominated and used as an object for someone's pleasure" (Foucault 2000: 257). Hence, for any moral debate regarding the moral value of man-to-man sexual relationship, supposedly moral arguments based on the nature of the act (active penetration)—i.e. if such an act was natural when it is directed to boys—or based on the nature of desire—i.e. if being attracted to young boys without touching them was moral— had secondary, if any, importance. Even male-prostitution was evaluated in terms of the dichotomy between activity and passivity, and in terms of the isomorphism between social relations and sexual relations. As Eva Cantarella (2002) points out, male-prostitution was not a breach of law *per se*, since performers were taxed. However, any male prostitute would lose his right to work as a priest, as an advocate for the state, as an officer, and as a speaker in assembly. For he was dominated; and he, as being passive object of someone's desire, "made a woman of himself" (p. 46). In a similar way, any moral question regarding femininity would not accept any answer as *relevant* if the answer was based on the nature and the desire-object of a pederast. Yet only those answers that were based on the modality of the deed, i.e. if performer was passive, if he was dominated by his or other's desire, were *relevant* to a moral discussion. As a result, any moral question, argument, or objection regarding the nature of desires, pleasures, or inclinations would be *irrelevant* for the participants of a moral debate on man-to-man sexual relation.

However, this does not mean that The Greek *lifeworld* was so pervasive that it determined the value of every moral question and argument, yet it could be left behind in order for scientific or objective reasoning to dominate the moral-practical discourse. For The Greek lifeworld was intertwined with scientific reasoning such that one's elimination would be devastating for the other. For example, pseudo-Aristotle asked "[w]hy do some men enjoy sexual intercourse when they play an active part and some when they do not?" (Aristotle 2000: 26). Then, he gave a scientific explanation of the phenomenon: every "waste product" has a natural destination; for example, "semen passes into the testicles and privates," and "blood into the veins" (Ibid.). And if the passages into the testicles are blocked, "such moisture flows into the fundament"—this is the reason why "the naturally effeminate" desires "friction" in that part of his body (Ibid.). In other words, even such a scientific explanation within the Aristotelian tradition was based on the dichotomy between activity and passivity, since the former was not problematized in pseudo-Aristotle's text, and the latter was taken to be the sign of contemptible effeminacy.

If we turn to the nineteenth century "style of reasoning," we encounter with a completely different conceptualization of sexuality. In the second half of the nineteenth

century, sexuality was conceptualized by means of psychiatric terms such as "impulses, tastes, aptitudes, satisfactions, and psychic traits," or tendencies to behave like a woman or man, to enjoy dressing like a woman or man as if these characteristics were naturally given (Davidson 2001: 35). This style of reasoning preconditions the possibility of conceptualizing homosexuality as the third sex containing peculiar desires, character traits, and a nature *sui generis*. It was impossible to conceptualize homosexuality as such before, since sexuality had been conceptualized, in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, by means of anatomical terms. To wit, if, for example, sexual identity is defined by "spermatozoon," such questions are totally meaningless: "Can a spermatozoon be heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual? Can it suffer from deviant sexuality, or abnormally increased or decreased sexuality? Can it have masochistic, sadistic, or fetishistic desires?" (Ibid., 38).

Then it was *this* homosexuality as the third sex with a peculiar nature that has became the target of both moral-legal and scientific discussions on man-to-man sexual relationships in the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. Therefore, what pseudo-Aristotle explained about the nature of passive participant of pederasty was to be neglected and labeled as *irrelevant*, regardless of whether what pseudo-Aristotle said was empirical or speculative. For what pseudo-Aristotle referred to was not the homosexual of the nineteenth century with unconventional *feelings* and *desires*, but the passive boy with unconventional *acts*. To elaborate this point, I shall turn to two heroes of the nineteenth century conceptualization of homosexuality: Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Karl Heinrich Ulrichs.

Krafft-Ebing is the nominator of the concepts of homosexuality, sadism, and masochism. He defines sexual identity by psychiatric terms as opposed to anatomical ones: "[t]he form of the sexual glands is therefore not the qualifying element of sex-determination, but we must look rather to sexual sensations and the sexual instinct" (Krafft-Ebing 1924: 45), i.e. what matters are "psychical dispositions," "sexual consciousness," "psychical characteristics," and sexual predilections (Ibid., 42). Defining sexual identity as such, he becomes potent to conceptualize homosexuality: homosexuality is a product of discrepancy between bodily constitution and psycho-sexual identity. In Krafft-Ebing's view, homosexuals have "the instinct of the female" with the opposite sex's psycho-sexual characteristics (Ibid., 54). Since homosexuality refers to a kind of "psychical anomaly," "*[t]he determining factor* [of homosexuality] *here is the demonstration of perverse feeling for the same sex; not the proof of sexual acts with the same sex*" (Ibid., 286). Therefore, sexual intercourse with boys without any desire for or inclination towards them is not sufficient to call one homosexual if the motivating factor of his act is, say, over-stimulated sexual hunger or shortage of women. This point is illustrated by Krafft-Ebing by means of some case studies. For example, in his *Psychopatia Sexualis*, Krafft-Ebing calls one of his patients homosexual, because when the patient was a child, he was playing with girls' toys and enjoying toilettes; he is now jealous of women's "quite manner" and chic; he has "woman's disposition" since he is "tenacious," "mild," and "forgiving" (Ibid., 304-324). In another case study, Krafft-Ebing believes that his patient is homosexual although she has no sexual desire for women, because she prefers masculine sports, "intellectual conversation" rather than dancing or talking about jewelry or perfume—that shows that she has "the character of a

man" (Ibid., 324-328). As a result, any argument, moral or scientific, given by pseudo-Aristotle, regarding man-to-man sexual relation, based on the *act* itself, would be *irrelevant* in any debate within the paradigm of Krafft-Ebing. For what was crucial for pseudo-Aristotle, i.e. homosexual *act*, did not concern Krafft-Ebing. Therefore, it would be unwise to expect a genuine communication between pseudo-Aristotle and Krafft-Ebing which would end up with consensus. Rather, both of them would see each other's arguments as *irrelevant* in discussing man-to-man sexual relationship.

The problem of the *relevancy* of arguments in moral questions can be grasped more clearly if we turn to Ulrichs who was the first defender of homosexual rights in Germany. He fought for homosexual rights even in "the Congress of German Jurists" (Kennedy 1988: 89).

Ulrichs conceptualizes sexuality by appealing to the myth narrated in Plato's *Symposium*. He calls homosexuals Urnings—Urning corresponds to the elder Aphrodite, daughter of Uranus, without mother—and heterosexuals Diornings corresponding to the younger Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus and Dione. For Ulrichs, homosexuality refers to the third sex; it is a "special sexual class of people" (Ibid., 57). In Urnings, Ulrichs continues, "male germ" develops physically, but not spiritually—that produces "uranian hermaphrodites" (Ibid., p. 51). Therefore, homosexuals are "women in spirit" (Ibid., 50). That is, belonging to the same paradigm with Krafft-Ebing the psychiatrist, Ulrichs the social activist uses the same *style of reasoning*. Accordingly, for Ulrichs, one's sexual preference and his character traits are parallel: "an Urning is a male in body, but a female in spirit," he has "feminine characteristics," and his love for a man is a love of woman (Ibid., 59). This does not mean that all Urnings display feminine characteristics without exception, but they are still women in spirit because "their inborn love for the male sex is precisely a female part" (Ibid., 72). In other words, love and desire are sexed as opposed to The Greek paradigm based on the modality of deeds. Therefore, as Krafft-Ebing, and as opposed to pseudo-Aristotle, Ulrichs devalues sexual *acts* in determining sexual identity. He accepts the existence of uranized men—those who have sex with boys due to the shortage of women—but for him, they are not genuine Urnings, since what matter are sexual inclinations, desires, and psycho-sexual characteristics.

As a result, in the paradigm of Krafft-Ebing and Ulrichs, moral-legal arguments regarding *homosexuality as the third sex*, would not be about the moral value of an *act performed*, say, in a prison due to the shortage of women, or about the moral value of *touching* boys. Such arguments, which were crucial for The Greeks in discussing the morality of man-to-man sexual relations, would be totally *irrelevant* in the paradigm of the nineteenth century. Therefore, in a moral argumentation regarding the morality of homosexuality, pseudo-Aristotle would be excluded from an argumentation process if the goal of moral argumentation is Habermasian universalism, i.e. consensus, irrespective of time and place. On the other hand, since performers of man-to-man relationship are subsumed, by Krafft-Ebing and Ulrichs, under the category of the third sex as a peculiar class, what might count as a *relevant* argument would be about the *naturalness* of the feelings, desires, inclinations, and character traits of this class—the arguments which would be *irrelevant* for pseudo-Aristotle. Accordingly, Ulrichs' arguments for homosexual rights are based on the *naturalness* of homosexual traits. As

we saw above, he explains homosexuality as a product of male germ's twofold development. If homosexuality is a product of a natural process of development, then homosexuals do and feel and display what is natural to them. And since the nineteenth century laws ban only what is *unnatural*, homosexuals cannot be prosecuted (Ibid., 54-68).

However, Ulrichs' argument would not seem as a *relevant* argument in the late eighteenth century, especially in the eyes of the opponents of Jeremy Bentham—Montesquieu and Voltaire. As Bentham—writer of the first known text for homosexual law reform—testified, both himself and his opponents took man-to-man sexual relationship to be the subject of unconventional *acts*, not of *desires* and *character traits*. In other words, they problematized what was not problematical for Krafft-Ebing and Ulrichs who searched for homosexual desires, not for acts of an uranized man:

> That this practice is the result not of indifference to the proper object but of the difficulty of coming at the proper object, the offspring not of wantonness but of necessity, the consequence of the want of opportunity with the proper object, and the abundance of opportunity with such as are improper is a notion that seems warranted by the joint opinions of Montesquieu and Voltaire (Bentham 1978b: 92).

Therefore, they did not take pederasts to be the people of the third sex with peculiar desires, but the ones who turned to boys due to the shortage of women. Accordingly, showing that homosexual desires and corresponding effeminacy were natural was not a powerful evidence to persuade Montesquieu and Voltaire. For what mattered for them was not desires and character traits, but acts.

Since Bentham and his contemporaries did not classify sexual desire into different kinds but took desire for boys to be the deviation of the same desire for girls, i.e. the desire for boys and the desire for girls were seen as one and the same desire, what was the most convincing argument for homosexual law reform was that homosexual act was not "exclusive of the other," i.e. heterosexual act (Bentham 1978a: 402). Bentham persistently argued that homosexuality could not become so prevalent that would cause women's losing their social importance and domestic rights; *and that even if it became so prevalent it could not destroy the divine institution of marriage*:

> Were the prevalence of this taste to rise to ever so great a heighth the most considerable part of the motives to marriage would remain entire. In the first place, the desire of having children, in the next place the desire of forming alliances between families, thirdly the convenience of having a domestic companion whose company will continue to be agreeable throughout life (Ibid., 400).

What these words imply is that Bentham took pederasty to be a matter of taste. And he argued that there was no reason to prosecute this taste, since it was not dangerous to the society, and not exclusive of heterosexual marriages. Bentham's argument was a *relevant* argument in the paradigm he belonged to. On the other hand, there is no reason to expect that Ulrichs' naturalness-argument would be taken by Voltaire and Montesquieu to be a *relevant* moral-argument in discussing the moral value of man-to-man sexual relations.

Against this background, we can evaluate the tenability of Habermasian universalism. Habermas believes that individuals as members of society are not atomistic entities. They are located in a culture in which certain habits, institutions, rules, and value orientations are conventional. Individuals "move within the horizon of their common lifeworld; this remains in the background of the participants—as an intuitively known, unproblematic, and unanalyzable, holistic background" (Habermas 1992: 298). This background allows individuals to follow or breach conventional rules which receive their meaning and truism thanks to the shared lifeworld. However, "[s]omeone who has not mastered the rules of a game and is not even capable of making mistakes is not a player" (Habermas 2003: 98). Therefore, if, as Habermas believes, moral norms require validation through a genuine argumentation process, and if the arguments used in this process have to be convincing and *relevant* arguments irrespective of time and place, then there is no reason to expect that most of the participants of a rational-practical discourse would not be labeled as non-players not knowing how to play. As I tried to show, pseudo-Aristotle is not a player in the game of the nineteenth century, and Ulrichs is not a player in the game of the eighteenth century. In other words, Habermas encounters with incommensurable cultural differences which contains not only incommensurable value orientations, but also diverse ways of reasoning with incommensurable rules of playing games. Habermas insists that if "*relevant participants* are excluded" and "*relevant contributions* suppressed," we cannot validate norms universally, and we cannot have a genuine communication (Habermas 2003: 108). However, if his system is not capable of elaborating the criterion of *relevancy* and of including *irrelevant participants* into moral discussions, then there is no reason to believe in the universality of moral norms; and there is no reason to take Habermasian transcendental conditions of communication to be the sole and inevitable sources of genuine communication. That is, as Lyotard (1984) puts, there is no reason to accept Habermas' presupposition: "the goal of dialogue is consensus" at the expense of eliminating cultural differences (p. 65).

The reason why Habermas insists that we need a break with unquestioned cultural values at the expense of eliminating cultural differences and appeal to *reason alone* in order to reach what is *universal* is his belief that, in postconventional societies, "the intersubjectively shared worldview is shattered and the traditional form of life disintegrates" (Habermas 2003: 263). However, it is obvious that the world we live in contains traditionalist societies taking religious and traditional values to be the self-confirming *criteria* in justifying moral norms. Therefore, Habermas has two options in the face of these societies. He can either reject that there are such societies by claiming that formalist-universalism, based on value-neutrality, is an ideal of all societies, or he can just *decide* that formalist-universalist ideal is the ideal we should stick to for some reasons we do not know why.

Habermas does not pick the first option. For example, in *the Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere*, Habermas narrates the story of the bourgeois public sphere, preconditioned by liberalism, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Germany, England, and France. In this sphere, the ideal was "the law-based state, namely, the binding of all state activity to a system of norms legitimated by public opinion" (Habermas 1991: 82). Such a legitimation would occur if "*the public*

competition of private arguments came into being as the consensus about what was practically necessary in the interest of all" (Ibid., 83). And such a competition meant that "the authority of the better argument" had to prevail over the shared lifeworld, self-affirming religious dogmas, state authority, and value orientations (Ibid., 36).

However, if the goal is universalism, there is no justification for taking this ideal of liberalist bourgeoisie to be the sole source of justifying norms at the expense of leaving tradition and lifeworld behind. In other words, as Danilo Zolo (2009) claims, what Habermas does is to favor "juridical formalism, individualism and liberalism" as opposed to "order, social harmony, respect for authority, the family" (pp. 62, 67). And the latter, as well as the former, might be a source of justification; therefore, there is no justification for imposing spatio-temporal ideals on humanity as atemporal/universal norms.

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