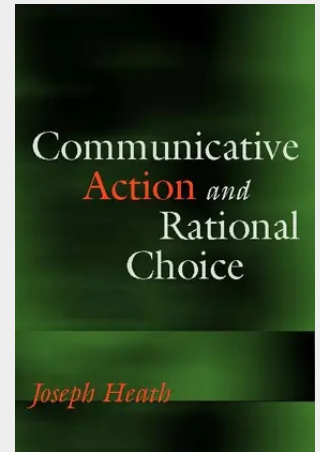


Communicative Action and Rational Choice

In this book Joseph Heath brings Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action into dialogue with the most sophisticated articulation of the instrumental conception of practical rationality-modern rational choice theory. Heath begins with an overview of Habermas's action theory and his critique of decision and game theory. He then offers an alternative to Habermas's use of speech act theory to explain social order and outlines a multidimensional theory of rational action that includes norm-governed action as a specific type. In the second part of the book Heath discusses the more philosophical dimension of Habermas's conception of practical rationality. He criticizes Habermas's attempt to introduce a universalization principle governing moral discourse, as well as his criteria for distinguishing between moral and ethical problems. Heath offers an alternative account of the level of convergence exhibited by moral argumentation, drawing on game-theoretic models to specify the burden of proof that the theory of communicative action and discourse must assume.

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