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roles, and identities based on particular rules. Rule-driven behavior associated with successes or survival is likely to be repeated. Rules associated with failures are not.

A common interpretation of rules, institutions, roles, and identities is that they exist because they work well and provide better solutions than their alternatives (Goodin 1996; Hechter, Opp, and Wippler 1990; Stinchcombe 1997, 2001). They are, at least under some conditions, functional and consistent with people's values and moral commitments. In contemporary democracies, this interpretation is reflected in high learning aspirations. Appropriate rules, in both technical and normative terms, are assumed to evolve over time as new experiences are interpreted and coded into rules, or less attractive alternatives are eliminated through competition. Lessons from experience are assumed to improve the intelligence, effectiveness, and adaptability of the polity and be a source of wisdom and progress. The key democratic institution for ensuring rational adaptation of rules is free debate where actors have to explain and justify their behavior in public through reason-based argumentation, within a set of rules defining appropriate debates and arguments.

In practice, however, the willingness and ability of democracies to learn, adapt rules, and improve performance on the basis of experience is limited (Neustadt and May 1986; March 1999). Rules are transmitted from one generation to another or from one set of identity holders through child rearing, education, training, socialization, and habitualization. Rules are maintained and changed through contact with others and exposure to experiences and information. Rules spread through social networks and their diffusion is constrained by borders and distances. They compete for attention. They change in concert with other rules, interfere with or support each other, and they are transformed while being transferred (Czarniawska and Joerges 1995; March, Schulz, and Zhou 2000). Change also takes place as a result of public discourse and deliberate interventions. These dynamics reflect both the effects of change induced by the environment and endogenous changes produced by the operation of the rule system itself.

Yet, as is well known from modern investigations, such processes are not perfect. For example, the encoding of history, either through experiential learning or through evolutionary selection, does not necessarily imply intelligence, improvement, or increased adaptive value. There is no guarantee that relevant observations will be made, correct inferences and lessons derived, proper actions taken, or that imperfections will be eliminated. Rules encode history, but the coding procedures and the processes by which the coded interpretations are themselves decoded are filled with behavioral surprises.³

We assume that new experiences may lead to change in rules, institutions, roles, and identities and yet we are not committed to a belief in historical efficiency, i.e. rapid and costless rule adaptation to functional and normative environments and deliberate political reform attempts, and therefore to the functional or moral necessity of observed rules (March and Olsen 1989, 1995, 1998). Democratic institutions,

³ March and Olsen 1975, 1989, 1995, 1998; Levitt and March 1988; March 1994, 1999; March, Schulz, and Zhou 2000; Olsen and Peters 1996.

for example, are arranged to both speed up and slow down learning from experience and adaptation. Democracies value continuity and predictability as well as flexibility and change, and usually there are attempts to balance the desire to keep the basic rules of governance stable and the desire to adapt rules due to new experience. The main picture is also one of renewal and continuity, path departures and path dependencies. Different rules, roles, and identities are evoked in different situations and when circumstances fluctuate fast, there may be rapid shifts within existing repertoires of behavioral rules based on institutionalized switching rules. However, the basic repertoire of rules and standard operating procedures change more slowly.

Change in constitutive rules usually requires time-consuming processes and a strong majority, a fact that is likely to slow down change. The same is true when the basic rules express the historical collective identity of a community and embody shared understandings of what counts as truth, right, and good. Deliberate reform then has to be explained and justified in value-rational terms; that is, in terms of their appropriateness and not solely in efficiency terms (Olsen 1997); and change in entrenched interpretative traditions and who are defined as the authoritative interpreters of different types of rules, are also likely to change relatively slowly.

Core political identities are not primordial and constant. Nevertheless, barring severe crises, processes of identity formation and reinterpretation are likely to be slow. All political rulers try to transfer naked power into authority. Civic virtue and shared internalized principles of rights and obligations⁴ and identities are to some degree accessible to political experience, reasoning, and action. They can, for example, be affected through policies of nation building, mass education, and mass media, even if the causal chains are long and indirect. In democracies, where the authority of law is well established, identities may also be fashioned through political and legal debates and decisions (Habermas 1996). Legalization may in some settings be a prelude to internalization of rules of appropriateness, even if they in other settings may substitute for internalized rules.

There is, however, modest knowledge about the factors that govern targets of political identification and codes of appropriate behavior, and where, when, and how different types of actors obtain their identities and codes—for example the relative importance of specific political ideologies, institutions, professions, and educations, and belonging to larger social categories such as nation, gender, class, race, religion, and ethnicity (Herrmann, Risse, and Brewer 2004). Neither is it obvious how well different institutions today embody and encourage democratic identities and make it more likely that citizens and officials act in accordance with internalized democratic principles and ideals. Furthermore, an improved understanding of rule dynamics may require better insight into how the dynamics of change may be related to normal, new, and extraordinary experience in different institutional settings.

⁴ As observed by Rousseau: “the strongest man is never strong enough to be always master unless he transforms his power into right, and obedience into duty” (Rousseau 1967/1762/1755, 10). In modern society, Weber argued, the belief in legality—the acceptance of the authority of law, legal actors, reasoning, precedents, and institutions—is the most common form for legitimacy (Weber 1978, 37).

Consider normal experience and routine learning. Experiences are routinely coded into rules, rules into principles, and principles into systems of thought in many spheres of life. Routine refinement of rules can be imagined to improve their fit to the environment, and one study showed that the stability of rules is related positively to their age at the time of last revision. However, changes in rules can also create problems that destabilize rules, and the current stability of rules is related negatively to the number of times they have been revised in the past (March, Schulz, and Zhou 2000).

In some spheres, i.e. Weberian bureaucracies and court systems, these processes are systematic and institutionalized (Weber 1978; Berman 1983); in other spheres they are less so. Conflict between competing situational accounts, conceptions of truth and justice, and interpretations of appropriate behavior is also routine in contemporary democracies. Democracies are at best only *partly* communities of shared experiences, communication, interpretative traditions, and memory that give direction and meaning to citizens. They are glued together by shared debates, controversies, and contestations and by fairly broad agreement on some basic rules for coping with conflicts.

In fragmented, or loosely coupled systems, competing rules of appropriateness may be maintained over long time periods due to their separateness. As long as rule following meets targets and aspiration levels, rules are unlikely to be challenged, even if they are not in any sense “optimal.” Reduced slack resources may, however, call attention to inconsistencies in rules and produce demands for more coordination and consistency across institutional spheres and social groups (Cyert and March 1963). Comparison across previously segmented institutional spheres or groups with different traditions, rules of appropriateness, and taken-for-granted beliefs, may then trigger processes of search and reconciliation or dominance and coercion.

Consider new experience and settings. Processes of search and change may also be triggered when an existing order, its institutions, rules of appropriateness, and collective self-understandings, are challenged by new experiences that are difficult to account for in terms of existing conceptions (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 103). Entrenched accounts and narratives then do not make sense. They no longer provide adequate answers to what is true or false, right or wrong, good or bad, and what is appropriate behavior; and there is search for new conceptions and legitimizations that can produce a more coherent shared account (Eder 1999, 208–9).

Account and concepts may be challenged because new institutions and meeting places have developed. An example of a new institutional setting generating increased contact and challenging national traditions is the integration of sovereign nation-states into the European Union. Challenges may also follow from institutional collisions between previously separated or segmented traditions, for example the invading of market rules of appropriateness into institutional spheres traditionally based on different conceptions, such as democratic politics, science, and sport. Increased mobility or massive migration across large geographical and cultural

distances may likewise create collisions that challenge established frames of reference and institutionalized routines. Such collisions may generate destructive conflicts, but they may also generate rethinking, search, learning, and adaptation by changing the participants' reference groups, aspiration levels, and causal understandings.

Consider the unacceptability of the past and institutional emancipation. Actors are likely to learn from disasters, crises, and system breakdowns—transformative periods where established orders are delegitimized, are challenged, or collapse. Then, institutions and their constitutive rules are discredited as unworkable and intolerable and change initiatives are presented as emancipation from an order that is a dysfunctional, unfair, or tyrannical relic of an unacceptable past, as was, for example, the case when Communist regimes in central and eastern Europe collapsed (Offe 1996; Wollmann 2006).

In situations of disorientation, crisis, and search for meaning, actors are in particular likely to rethink who and what they and others are, and may become; what communities they belong to, and want to belong to; and how power should be redistributed. Often the search for legitimate models and accounts is extended far back to possible glorious periods in own history, or they are copied from political systems that can be accepted as exemplary. Short of revolution or civil war, there may be shifts in cognitive and normative frames, in who are defined as legitimate interpreters of appropriateness, in interpretative traditions, and in the system for collecting, communicating, and organizing knowledge (Eder 1999), as well as in resource distributions and power relations.

In sum, an improved theoretical understanding of the dynamics of rules, institutions, roles, and identities requires attention to several 'imperfect' processes of change, not a focus on a single mechanism. Change is not likely to be governed by a single coherent and dominant process. Except under special circumstances, rules of appropriateness develop and change through a myriad of disjointed processes and experiences in a variety of places and situations, even when the result is normatively justified post hoc by rational accounts (Eder 1999, 203). For example, decrees, command, and coercion have a limited role in developing and maintaining legitimate rules, roles, and identities. The internalization of rules and identities is usually not a case of willful entering into an explicit contract either. In practice, processes such as learning, socialization, diffusion, regeneration, deliberate design, and competitive selection all have their imperfections, and an improved understanding of these imperfections may provide a key to a better understanding of the dynamics of rules (March 1981).

Required then is the exploration of the scope conditions and interaction of such processes as purposeful reform, institutional abilities to adapt spontaneously to changing circumstances, and environmental effectiveness in eliminating suboptimal rules, institutions, and identities (Olsen 2001). In the final part, we explore how an adequate understanding of politics may also require attention to the scope conditions and interaction of different logics of behavior.

5. RECONCILING LOGICS OF ACTION

Action is rule based, but only partly so. There is a great diversity in human motivation and modes of action. Behavior is driven by habit, emotion, coercion, and calculated expected utility, as well as interpretation of internalized rules and principles. Here, focus is on the potential tension, in the first instance, between the role- or identity-based logic of appropriateness and the preference-based consequential logic; and in the second instance, between the claims of citizenship and officialdom and the claims of particularistic roles or identities.

Democratic governance involves balancing the enduring tensions between different logics of action, for instance between the demands and obligations of offices and roles and individual calculated interests (Tussman 1960, 18). Political actors are also likely to be held accountable for both the appropriateness and the consequences of their actions. A dilemma is that proper behavior sometimes is associated with bad consequences and improper behavior sometimes is associated with good consequences. From time to time, democratic actors will get ‘dirty hands.’ That is, they achieve desirable outcomes through methods that they recognize as inappropriate. Or, they follow prescribed rules and procedures at the cost of producing outcomes they recognize to be undesirable (Merton 1938; Thompson 1987, 11).

Partly as a result of the tensions between them, there are cycles between logics of action. Compared to the *Rechtsstaat*, with its traditions and rhetoric tied to the logic of appropriateness, twentieth-century democracies (particularly the welfare states of Europe) embraced practices and rhetoric that were more tied to the logic of consequentiality. Consequence-oriented professions replaced process-oriented ones, and effectiveness and substantive results were emphasized more than the principles and procedures to be followed. Governance came to assume a community of shared objectives rather than a community of shared rules, principles, and procedures (March and Olsen 1995).

More recent reforms have continued that trend. Governments in the 1980s generally tried to change concepts of accountability even more toward emphasis upon results and away from an emphasis on the rules and procedures (Olsen and Peters 1996). While several reforms were processual in character, rules were often seen as instrumental rather than having a legitimacy of their own. In particular, they aimed at binding and controlling elected politicians and experts. One reason for the reforms was the conviction that individuals needed better protection against political interventions. A second reason was the conviction that consequence-oriented professions such as medical doctors and teachers in welfare states were ineffectively subjected to public accountability and that obligations to report and being subject to audit had to be expanded (Power 1994).

Nevertheless, there is no uniform and linear trend making rules of appropriateness outdated. Scandals in both the private and public sector have triggered demands for legal and ethical rules and an ethos of responsibility. The European Union is to a

large extent a polity based on rules and legal integration; and in world politics there is a trend towards legal rules and institutions, including an emphasis on human rights, even if the trend may be neither even nor irreversible (Goldstein et al. 2000).

Political systems deal with the multitude of behavioral motivations in a variety of ways and one is separating different logics by locating them in different institutions and roles (Weber 1978). Different logics of action are also observed within single institutions. Individual institutions, on the one hand, separate logics by prescribing different logics for different roles. For instance, in courts of law the judge, the prosecutor, the attorney, the witness, and the accused legitimately follow different logics of action. The credence of their arguments, data, and conclusions is also expected to vary. On the other hand, logics also compete within single institutions. In public administration, for example, there have been cycles of trust in control of behavior through manipulation of incentive structures and individual cost-benefit calculations, and trust in an ethos of internal-normative responsibility and willingness to act in accordance with rules of appropriateness. Historically, the two have interacted. Their relative importance, as well as the definition of appropriateness, have changed over time and varied across institutional settings (deLeon 2003).

A theoretical challenge is to fit different motivations and logics of action into a single framework. Specific logics, such as following rules of appropriateness and calculating individual expected utility, can be good approximations under specific conditions. It is difficult to deny the importance of each of them (and others) and inadequate to rely exclusively on one of them. Therefore, a theory of purposeful human behavior must take into consideration the diversity of human motivations and modes of behavior and account for the relationship and interaction between different logics in different institutional settings. A beginning is to explore behavioral logics as complementary, rather than to assume a single dominant behavioral logic (March and Olsen 1998; Olsen 2001).

If it is assumed that no single model, and the assumptions upon which it is based, is more fruitful than all the others under all conditions and that different models are not necessarily mutually exclusive, we can examine their variations, shifting significance, scope conditions, prerequisites, and interplay, and explore ideas that can reconcile and synthesize different models. We may enquire how and where different logics of actions are developed, lost, and redefined. We may examine the conditions under which each logic is invoked. We may ask how logics interact, how they may support or counteract each other, and which logics are reconcilable. We may also specify through what processes different logics of action may become dominant.

We may, in particular, explore how different logics of action are formally prescribed, authorized, and allowed, or how they are defined as illegitimate and proscribed, in different institutional settings, for different actors, under different circumstances. We may enquire how institutional settings in practice are likely to prompt individuals to evoke different logics. We may also study which settings in practice enable the dominance of one logic over all others, for example under what conditions rules of appropriateness may overpower or redefine self-interest, or the

logic of consequentiality may overpower rules and an entrenched definition of appropriateness (March and Olsen 1998; Olsen 2001).⁵

In the following, focus is on some possible relationships between the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequentiality. An unsatisfactory approach is to *subsume* one logic as a special case of the other. Within the logic-of-appropriateness perspective, consequential choice is then seen as one of many possible rules that actors may come to believe is exemplary for specific roles in specific settings and situations. From the logic-of-consequentiality perspective, rules of appropriateness may be seen as the result of higher-level or prior utility calculations, choice, and explicit contracts. We see this approach as unsatisfactory because it denies the distinctiveness of different logics.

An alternative is to assume a *hierarchy* between logics. The logic of appropriateness may be used subject to constraints of extreme consequences, or rules of appropriateness are seen as one of several constraints within which the logic of consequentiality operates. One version of the hierarchy notion is that one logic is used for major decisions and the other for refinements of those decisions, or one logic governs the behavior of politically important actors and another the behavior of less important actors. It is, for example, often suggested that politics follows the logic of consequentiality, while public administrators and judges follow the logic of appropriateness. The suggestion of a stable hierarchy between logics and between types of decisions and actors is, however, not well supported by empirical findings.

A more promising route may be to differentiate logics of action in terms of their *prescriptive clarity* and hypothesize that a clear logic will dominate a less clear logic. Rules of appropriateness are defined with varying precision and provide more or less clear prescriptions in different settings and situations. For instance, rules are in varying degrees precise, consistent, obligatory, and legally binding. There are more or less specified exceptions from the rules and varying agreement about who the authoritative interpreter of a rule is. Likewise, the clarity of (self-)interests, preferences, choice alternatives, and their consequences varies. Bureaucrats, for example, are influenced by the rules and structural settings in which they act, yet they may face ambiguous rules as well as situations where no direct personal interest is involved (Egeberg 1995, 2003). In brief, rules and interests give actors more or less clear behavioral guidance and make it more or less likely that the logic of appropriateness or the logic of consequentiality will dominate.

Even when actors are able to figure out what to do, a clear logic can only be followed when available resources make it possible to obey its prescriptions. Following rules of appropriateness, compared to predicting the future, clarifying alternatives and their expected utility, partly requires different abilities and resources. Therefore, variation and change in the relative importance of the two logics may follow from variation and change in the resources available for acting in accordance with rules of appropriateness and calculated (self-)interest.

⁵ Such questions are raised in several disciplines and subdisciplines, for example by Fehr and Gächter 1998, 848; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 912; Clayton and Gillman 1999; van den Bergh and Stagl 2003, 26; Jupille, Caporaso, and Checkel 2003.

Examples are shifting mixes of public and private resources, budgetary allocations to institutions that traditionally have promoted different logics, and changes in recruitment from professions that are carriers of one logic to professions that promote the other logic. Tight deadlines are also likely to promote rule following rather than the more time- and resource-demanding calculation of expected utility (March and Simon 1993, 11). The relation between level of societal conflict and logics of action is not obvious, however. In democratic settings, confrontations and conflicts usually challenge existing rules and possibly the logic of appropriateness. But protracted conflicts also tend to generate demands for compromises and constitutive rules that can dampen the level of conflict.

Lack of resources and understanding may also be one reason why different logics of action are used for different *purposes*, such as making policies and justifying policies. In institutional spheres and societies where policy making is prescribed to follow the logic of appropriateness, the rule of law, traditions, and precedents, and the prescriptions are difficult to implement, the logic of appropriateness is likely to be used to justify decisions also when it is not used to make them. Likewise, in institutional spheres and societies where policy making is prescribed to follow the logic of consequentiality, rational calculation, and an orientation towards the future, and where following the prescription is difficult, the logic of consequentiality is likely to be used for justifying decisions, whatever the underlying logic of making them. We hypothesize, however, that rationality and the logic of consequentiality is more easily used to justify decisions. This is so because consequentiality is behaviorally more indeterminate in its implications than rule following and the logic of appropriateness in situations of even moderate ambiguity and complexity. It is easier to rationalize behavior in terms of one interest or another, than to interpret behavior as appropriate, simply because rules of appropriateness are collective, publicly known, and fairly stable.

The time dimension is also important. A polity may institutionalize a *sequential* ordering of logics of action, so that different phases follow different logics and the basis of action changes over time in a predictable way. In democracies, an example is the vision of an institutionalized demand for expert information and advice as a precondition for informed political decision, followed by technical-logical implementation, monitoring, and adjudication of decisions. Another example is the Habermasian vision of an institutionalized public sphere, providing an ideal speech situation that makes it necessary even for self-interested, utility-calculating actors to argue in universal rather than particularistic terms. Over time deliberation and reasoned arguments become habitualized and normatively accepted, turning egoists into citizens (Habermas 1989). More generally, Mills (1940: 908) hypothesized that the long acting out of a role or rule of appropriateness 'will often induce a man to become what at first he merely sought to appear.'

Finally, change between logics of action may be the result of *specific experiences*. Rules of appropriateness are likely to evolve as a result of accumulated experience with a specific situation over extended time periods. Therefore, rules and standard operating procedures are most likely to dominate when actors have long tenure,

frequent interaction, and shared experiences and information; when they share accounts and institutionalized memories; and when environments are fairly stable. Consequences are fed back into rules and rules are likely to be abandoned and possibly replaced by the logic of consequentiality, when rule following is defined as unsatisfactory in terms of established targets and aspiration levels.

In particular, rules are likely to be abandoned when rule following creates catastrophic outcomes, and in periods of radical environmental change, where past arrangements and rules are defined as irrelevant or unacceptable. Similarly, recourse to rules and standard operating procedures is likely when consequential calculations are seen as having produced catastrophes. In particular, rational calculation of consequences is easiest when problems are of modest complexity and time perspectives are short. When applied to more complex problems and longer time perspectives they are more likely to create big mistakes, afterwards seen as horror stories (Neustadt and May 1986).

As these speculations show, the scope conditions and interaction of different logics of action and types of reason are not well understood. Accomplishments are dwarfed by the large number of unanswered questions. Nevertheless, the gap may also be seen as providing a future research agenda for students of democratic politics and policy making.

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