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Abstract/Résumé

A growing number of scholars view organizational and individual “rationality” as institutionally defined. By so doing, they recognize that individuals and organizations are routinely driven by multiple forms of rationality rather than by only a single, and necessarily instrumental or utility-maximizing, form of rationality. What are the implications, both theoretical and methodological, of taking a pluralistic view of rationality in organizations? How do multiple, and quite often competing, rationalities co-exist? How do these dynamics impact our broader understanding of organizations generally, and of organizational decision-making more specifically? In light of such questions, the present article: 1) presents an overview of the different ways in which rationality has been conceptualized in the extant literature 2) discusses the practical and theoretical implications of taking a less narrow interpretation of rationality in organizational analysis; and 3) describes and compares the various alternative approaches or methodologies used by scholars for teasing out rationality in a variety of organizational contexts. By so doing, the article serves both as a theoretical and methodological toolbox for researchers interested in applying a multiple rationalities lens to their ongoing research and as a springboard for those interested in developing new and novel approaches for doing so.

Mots-clefs/Key words:

Rationality; Institutional logics; Multiple rationalities; Competing Rationalities; Conventions

INTRODUCTION

Friedland and Alford, in their seminal article (published in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (1991)), argued that there was an urgent need to “bring society back in” to our understanding of organizations, as it was “impossible to understand individual and organizational behaviour without locating it in a societal context.” Fully understanding organizations required, in their view, taking a closer look at what “ultimately shaped individual preferences and organizational interests as well as the repertoires of behaviours by which they may attain them.” Doing so, in our view, requires taking a closer look at what underscores “rationality” in organizations.

Friedland and Alford's argument draws attention to the very narrow conceptualization of rationality that still tends to dominate the management literature and a good deal of management teaching as well. Indeed, unless explicitly stated otherwise, it is the utilitarian or instrumental take on rationality that holds sway, often unconsciously, when judgements must be made as to which organizational decisions are deemed “best.” From this perspective, it often seems to be taken for granted that the sole purpose of organizations is to maximize utility, which in an organizational or business context is generally understood to mean “growth” or “profit.”

A growing number of scholars reject this view however, preferring to view organizational and individual “rationality” as institutionally defined (Friedland & Alford, 1991p. 245; Scott, 1995, 2001; Townley, 2002; Lounsbury & Ventresca, 2003). By so doing, they recognize that individuals and organizations are routinely driven by multiple forms of rationality (each underpinned by different, and frequently incompatible, institutional norms) rather than by only a single, and necessarily instrumental or utility-maximizing, form of rationality. Discussions on the theoretical, methodological and empirical implications of opting for an institutional, and thus pluralistic, take on rationality in organizational analysis have been limited however. The purpose of this paper is to kick-start a scholarly conversation on these implications and their consequences for organizational and management research.

Our paper is organized as follows. We begin with a brief overview of the various ways that rationality has been conceptualized in the literature. We then discuss the theoretical and methodological implications of taking an institutionalist perspective on individual and organizational rationality, present four frameworks that researchers have used in the past to typify higher-order institutional logics and/or rationalities, and discuss methodological issues for doing so, namely ideal data sources and methods of analysis. Examples of empirical research which has used each of the four frameworks are then presented. The paper concludes with a discussion on some of the avenues that a pluralistic take on rationality opens up for future research, focusing in particular on rationality conflict, and how such conflict is resolved, as key issues for future research and theory development.

RATIONALITY: A SIMPLIFIED PROSPECTUS

For myriad reasons, ranging from the (sometimes erroneous) legacies attributed to Smith (Arrow, 1986; Sen, 1995), Weber (Bryman, 1984) or even early management theorists such as Chandler (Thornton, 2004, p. 5) to the supposed want of an alternative or better model (Simon, 1979), means-end rationality, and its even more narrowly defined utilitarian and “economic man” derivatives, have clearly dominated the management landscape from its earliest beginnings (Bryman, 1984). This is not to mean that alternate forms of rationality have not been proposed in the management or organizational theory literatures. On the contrary, one finds in this and related literatures a long and ongoing history of effort to adapt, fine-tune or displace the rationalist view of human behaviour, in an effort to propose more realist accounts of the bases upon which actors justify their opinions, decisions and actions, and by association, make decisions in organizational contexts. Such efforts have led to multiple and controversial perspectives on what are thought to be the ultimate foundations or drivers of “rational” behaviour (Sen, 1995, p. 2), the institutional view being one among many.

Proponents of means-end rationality have tended to hold fast to *homo economicus* (Kahneman, 2003), and take, in the wake of criticism, systematic refuge in Friedman’s (1953, p. 41) celebrated assertion that theories need not be any more realistic than is necessary to make good predictions (Simon, 1979; Vanberg, 1993). In response, opponents have argued that *homo economicus* is too unrealistic and that behaviour deemed “rational” is more likely to be guided by rules or routines than by case-by-case judgements of what maximizes individual interests, and in particular economic interests. Although in agreement against rationalist assumptions, opponents disagree however over what an alternative, supposedly more accurate, conceptualization of rationality might be. One therefore finds among opponents those who believe that individuals’ incapacity to be fully rational in the utility-maximization sense is due to the limited abilities of the human brain (the view favoured by cognitivists or behaviouralists, which has blossomed under the banner of “bounded” rationality (Vanberg, 1993; Simon, 1997; 1945) and which has given rise to research into cognitive framing (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Tversky & Kahneman, 1986; Kahneman, 2003), cognitive bias (Staw, 1980; Schwenk, 1984, 1986), escalation of commitment (Staw, 1981) and groupthink (Janis, 1972) as examples) and those who believe that such incapacity is due to a profound misunderstanding of how the human mind generally works (the view advanced by institutionalists and further developed here.)

From an institutional point of view, proponents of means-end rationality (in its utilitarian or economic sense) have paid little, if any, attention to the multiple, very diverse and equally valid criteria by which interests are formed and choices might be deemed “rational” in various contexts: criteria which are socially constructed and institutionally defined, and which reflect multiple, rather than singular, grounds or “norms” by which decisions or actions are judged to be “good” or “right” (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p. 250). In other words, it has not always been recognized that institutions effectively set the rules or norms of rationality (Scott, 1995; Townley, 2002) and that utility formation is institutionally specific (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p. 234). By portraying decision-making as simply a “calculus of costs and benefits” (Scott, 2001, p. 67), an overly narrow interpretation of rationality dismisses “the extent to which individual choices are governed by normative rules and are embedded in networks of mutual social obligations” (Scott, 2001, p.68). Institutions have indeed become “an important combat zone in

the broader, ongoing disputation within the social sciences centering on the utility of rational choice theory for explaining human behaviour” (Scott, 2001, p. 69).

As opposed to other models or definitions of rationality, a view of rationality as institutionally defined provides explanation for behaviours that are driven not only by self interest, but also by such non-self-interested motivations as commitment (Sen, 1977, p. 329), altruism (Margolis, 1984; Simon, 1993), reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960); or simply goodwill (Sen, 1987, p. 1). As such, it is a conceptualization that is considerably richer than those presented above (means-end, utility maximizing or bounded rationality), even if considerably more complex to operationalize, as will be discussed next.

MULTIPLE RATIONALITIES: LEVEL OF ANALYSIS, FORM AND METHOD

Conceptualizing rationality as institutionally-defined (and thus multiple) entails a number of theoretical and methodological considerations. What is the appropriate level of analysis? How many “rationalities” are there? What are their boundaries and what form do they take? How are they related? How does one go about recognizing which of several rationalities is at play in a given empirical context? Establishing a reasonably coherent framework for studying multiple rationalities in organizational contexts, which could then serve as a springboard for exploring the impact of higher order meaning systems on organizational structures, processes and outcomes. necessitates tracing at least some preliminary boundaries around the core concept itself. Three considerations for doing so are highlighted here: level of analysis, form and method.

Level of analysis

The various ways that rationality has been conceptualized in the literature draws attention to the difficulty of establishing an appropriate level of analysis for assessing what indeed the predominant or fundamental drivers of rationality are. Accepting that norms or beliefs underpin rationality, or that rationality is institutionally defined, does not help clarify the issue, as norms and beliefs arguably exist at all levels of society: thus as much at the micro (individual, family, or group), meso (organization or, industry) or more macro levels (field, country, or society). From this perspective, there is a danger that rationality as a concept becomes tautological. Considering rationality in a way that is meaningful imperatively requires focusing attention on a specific, appropriate and particularly revealing level of analysis.

In the opening paragraph of this review, we highlighted Friedland and Alford’s (1991) call to “bring society back in” to organizational analysis. With them, we argue that although, as indicated above, institutions can be found at multiple levels of analysis, it is those institutions which are operating at the level of wider society which seem the most appropriate for defining “rationality” in the general sense proposed here. Of interest are those institutions which serve to set general standards of “morally acceptable” behaviour, and which have invariably evolved and taken shape gradually over the course of the history of humanity. In the literature, we find such institutions alternately referred to as “moral orders,” “systems of logics and ethics” (Haveman & Rao, 1997), “social systems” (Whittington, 1992), the “central institutions of the contemporary capitalist West” (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p. 232), “value-spheres” (Weber as discussed by

Brubaker (1984, p. 69) “theories of moral sentiments” (Smith, 2004 (1759)) or “master frames” (Snow & Benford, 1992). These are the institutions which permeate society at its highest level, and in which lower levels of institutions are nested.

Form

Brubaker suggests that each of Weber’s “value spheres” is a “distinct realm of activity which has its own inherent dignity, and in which certain values, norms, and obligations are immanent” (Brubaker, 1984, p. 69). For their part, (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p. 248) propose that each of the most important institutional orders of contemporary Western societies is based on a different central logic or “set of material practices and symbolic constructions”, which in turn “constitutes the interests of actors and thereby shapes cognition and action” (Lounsbury & Ventresca, 2003, p. 464). As a second consideration, accepting that rationality is institutionally defined requires determining what sort of values, norms and obligations are indeed “immanent” or what sets of material practices and symbolic constructions constitute each institutional order. Doing so requires not only providing substance to each “type” of rationality, but also deciding how many higher-order institutional orders exist, what the boundaries between each type are and how the different identified orders relate to each other.

Different authors have tackled these issues in different ways, by either developing their own idiosyncratic frameworks for qualifying the core institutions that underpin rationality in wider society, or by adding to or building on the skeletal frameworks developed by others. More about these will be discussed below. Despite their differences however, there are noteworthy commonalities across approaches, in particular as regards assumptions. One thus finds relative agreement that the number of higher-order institutional orders is small (the most proposed being seven), and shared consensus that such orders are *by definition*, mutually exclusive. Weber was perhaps one of the first to underscore the irreconcilability of conflicting or contradictory judgements over what is rational or not, as reflected in his belief that social life “is marked by perennial, and indeed intensifying conflict over ends (especially ultimate ends) and beliefs (especially life-orienting meta-physical beliefs) – conflict that cannot be resolved through any neutral procedure” (Brubaker, 1984, p. 4).

Conceptually speaking, this notion of contradiction or competition between institutional orders is a critical one, grounded in two fundamental ideas. First, because they are based on core ideologies and values, each of which points to an ultimate “truth” about what is “right,” “appropriate” or “reasonable” behaviour, scholars have posited that the multiple sets of logics that underpin rationality must be viewed as discrete (and thus mutually exclusive). Second, many scholars share the assumption expressed in the quotation above, that there can be no universal hierarchy among institutional orders. Although hierarchies may arise among certain individuals or groups (and in fact, often do), over time these can be and are frequently challenged.

Given the inherently collective nature of organizational processes, the existence of interplay between multiple, and even competing, rationalities is therefore likely to be the norm, rather than the exception, in organizations. This of course makes intuitive sense, as anyone who has worked in an organization, whether large or small, formal or informal, has inevitably witnessed situations where actors simply could not see “eye to eye.” Not that one was “right” and the other was

“wrong,” but only that each had, for the specific situation or event at hand, a different, but equally defensible, view on what was important. Furthermore, in circumstances when decisions or actions must be openly justified, conflict between forms of rationality is almost inevitable as norms of rationality effectively provide the grounds for such justification. Indeed, from a multiple rationality perspective, as Friedland and Alford (1991, p. 235) put it “opposition is not between rational and irrational, but between different trans-rational orders.”

Conceptualizing the norms underpinning rationality as inherently contradictory is immensely appealing, both theoretically and methodologically. It is coherent with contemporary views of culture as fragmented (Swidler, 1986; Martin, 1992; DiMaggio, 1997), where individuals are no longer viewed as “cultural dopes.” This in turn draws particular attention to “the ways in which differing cultural frames or understandings may be situationally cued” (DiMaggio, 1997), or in other words, it is the *context* which determines which norm of rationality an individual will call upon in order to pass judgement or justify action rather than, or at least as much as, stable dispositional biases for particular sets of rational norms. Finally, the conceptualization of norms as contradictory also provides a useful framework for shedding light on the hidden tensions that often underscore organizational decision-making and action and that potentially are, at the core, the outcome of profound and irreconcilable institutional conflict (Bryman, 1984; DiMaggio, 1997). The study of such tensions and/or conflicts, as well as how they are accommodated, could lead to compelling explanations as to what triggers institutional change, and by association, structural and organizational change more generally.

Method

A third and final consideration regards method. Recognizing, from a theoretical perspective, the existence of multiple rationalities in organizational contexts clearly poses a much lesser challenge to management scholars than recognizing and labelling, in a scientifically rigorous manner, the actual institutionalized norms that underpin the various forms that rationality can take. Bryman (1984, p. 398) for example, worried that a multi-faceted conceptualization of rationality was “too soft, lacking a clear impetus for empirical and theoretical elaboration.” Despite the idea’s intuitive attractiveness, the challenges associated with “teasing out” rationality from organizational contexts may be an important reason why a conceptualization of rationality as multiple has not gained as much momentum in the mainstream management literature as might be expected.

Within existing empirical research on the topic, methodological approaches vary. Certain researchers have identified institutional logics (that may underpin norms of rationality in a given context) from the “ground up,” based primarily on the discursive analysis of texts (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999b; Thornton, 2004; Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005; Thornton, Jones, & Jury, 2005). Others have used relational methods such as multidimensional scaling, cluster analysis, network analysis and correspondence analysis for doing so (Lounsbury & Ventresca, 2003), and yet others (Dyck, 1997; Townley, 2002) have preferred using a typology or framework of logics, such as Kalberg’s (1980) typology of weberian “rationality” types, for identifying multiple rationalities at play in various organizational contexts. And finally, a fourth group of scholars have proposed their own, more or less richly described, typologies of logics underpinning rationality generally in Western society (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991; Friedland & Alford, 1991;

Whittington, 1992; Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006), which other scholars have then applied variously to different empirical settings.

In sum, we argue that a conceptualization of rationality as institutionally-defined requires considering principally those institutions operating at the highest level as rationality-defining, and qualifying these higher-order institutions as both inherently contradictory and relatively few in number. Building on these assumptions, the next logical step is to adopt or develop some sort of taxonomy (DiMaggio, 1997, p. 277) or typology of higher-order institutions that provides definition and substance to the institutions thus identified, and provides the basis from which rationality can then be “teased out” from organizational contexts.

FOUR FRAMEWORKS

In this section, we present four conceptual approaches to understanding competing rationalities in organizational contexts. Although most of these were not published under the banner of “rationality,” they nonetheless represent potentially convincing approaches for giving shape and substance to those higher order norms which underpin rationality (as defined herewith) in Western society.

Weber-inspired approaches

As one of the few organization scholars from outside the field of economics who has spent time reflecting on rationality as a concept, it is only natural that researchers interested in including rationality as an independent variable in their studies should turn to Weber for inspiration. Indeed, two of his core ideas – in particular his definitions of “rationality” (Brubaker, 1984, introduction and pp. 49-50) and his concept of “value spheres” (Brubaker, 1984, Chpt 3) – have been used by researchers to give substance to the concept of rationality in their work.

Both Dyck (1997) and Townley (2002), for example, used Kalberg’s (1980) typology of Weberian “rationality” types – based on the different meanings that Weber accorded to the concept of rationality - as a conceptual framework for shedding light on the multiple rationalities driving decisions and actions in organizational contexts. Dyck (1997) used the framework notably as a backdrop to help explain why transformational change attempts failed or succeeded, and Townley (2002), to analyze and explain organizational responses to rationalized myths.

Kalberg’s typology identifies four types of rationality used in Weber’s work. *Practical* rationality (or “self-interest” rationality as labelled by Dyck), refers to a way of life that views and judges worldly activity only in terms of the individual’s purely pragmatic and egoistic interests. *Formal* rationality refers to means-end rational action, as understood in its mainstream and weberian “bureaucratic” sense, that is, as based on universally applied rules that do not take into account individuals’ self interests or values. While according to Kalberg, this might imply adherence to a range of types of universalist laws, procedures and regulations, both Dyck and Townley interpret the concept more narrowly in terms of *economic* utility-based calculation. Thus, in his work, Dyck uses the term “efficiency-based” rationality as synonymous with formal rationality. *Substantive* rationality (equated with “values-based” rationality by Dyck) refers to a way of life where behavior, framed by clusters of values, is valued for its own sake, independently of its prospects of success (Townley, 2002), of self interest or of impersonal rules

(Dyck, 1997). Substantive rationality may rely on a variety of different coherent value sets (Kalberg, 1980). Finally, *theoretical* rationality refers to “a cognitive template that informs understandings of how the world works and informs action on this basis” (Townley, 2002). While the first three types of rationality are directly action-oriented, theoretical rationality refers to abstract conceptualizations and causal deductive linkages that may serve to explain and support the other three (Kalberg, 1980).

The use of a Weberian framework based on the various definitions or meanings that Weber attributed to the concept of rationality such as Kalberg’s, is not without its limitations however. To begin with, there is some disagreement among scholars as to whether there are two, three, four or more rationality types represented in Weber’s work (Kalberg, 1980; Brubaker, 1984). In addition, as hinted above, the distinctions among the different types of rationality are not always interpreted uniformly by different authors, reflecting perhaps the complexities, ambiguities and indeed quite scattered nature of Weber’s own writings on the topic. The notions of “theoretical” rationality and “practical” rationality explored by Kalberg (1980) in an attempt to enrich more simplistic renderings of Weber’s ideas based on the two “classic” and well-known headings of “formal” (*zweckrationalität*) and substantive (*wertrationalität*) rationalities seem to be particularly ambiguous in the light of subsequent operationalizations. Interestingly, Dyck (1997) dropped theoretical rationality from his study’s framework but does not explain why he did so. His derived tripartite typology of self-interest rationality, efficiency-rationality and value-based rationality seems, however, sharper and cleaner than Kalberg’s (1980). Although Townley (Townley, 2002) does use all four of Kalberg’s rationality types to describe the underlying rationalities at the organization she studied, her operationalizations seem somewhat distinct from Dyck’s and Kalberg’s and the empirical nuances between each type – and particularly between theoretical rationality and the others – are not always easy to grasp.

A second approach is to build a typology of rationality ideal-types on the basis of Weber’s concept of “value spheres.” As mentioned above, a value sphere is a “distinct realm of activity which has its own inherent dignity, and in which certain values, norms, and obligations are immanent” (Brubaker, 1984, p. 69). According to Weber, value spheres have an “objective existence, based on the objective requirement of particular “forms of life” (Brubaker, 1984, p. 72) and stand in irreconcilable conflict with each other (ibid, p. 69) as there is “no ultimate value sphere from which to arbitrate between conflicting obligations immanent in different spheres” (ibid, p. 72). This is the approach favoured by Thornton (2004) who built her typology of ideal type societal-level institutional logics on six societal sectors (or values spheres) derived from Weber. The author’s full table is reproduced in Appendix 1.

Although considerably more content-rich than Kalberg’s typology, the Thornton et al typology has yet to be substantiated empirically. Indeed, in the two studies for which the typology was developed, the authors use it only as a very loose guide for developing, from their empirical data, what they call “industry specific instantiations” (Thornton, 2004; Thornton et al., 2005, p. 131) of the typology’s society-wide logics. Furthermore, for each the three empirical settings studied (accounting, architecture and publishing), these industry-specific instantiations are reduced to two “logics” in presence, some of which are presented as hybrids of the typology’s higher-order logics, thus making it difficult to assess the actual impact of society-level logics on industry level dynamics, and by association, the usefulness of the typology itself. This being said, although not substantiated empirically or used to its full potential by the authors, the Thornton et al typology

is a particularly rich one that appears to offer considerable promise as a useful and functional framework for teasing out rationality from a variety of organizational contexts.

Institutional logics

If it is accepted that institutions set rules of rationality, as discussed above, then capturing all of “the major social influences which the institutionalists have already identified as important” (Whittington, 1992, p. 704) and which often appear “as highly disparate variables” (ibid: 694) into a single framework would provide the necessary foundations from which a typology of the major rationality types underscoring human behaviour can be built. A construction on institutional grounds has the advantage of allowing “the diverse influences of all systems, even the economic, to be described in the same language of structural rules and resources” (ibid.:704) and thus making it possible to overcome Weber’s more limited dual conceptualization of rationality (instrumental versus values-based). Thornton’s typology above, based on Weber’s value spheres (as opposed to his definitions of “rationality”), represents a comprehensive effort in this sense. Interestingly, Thornton’s repertoire of higher-order logics are almost identical to those proposed both by Whittington (Whittington, 1992 - see Table 1) (1992 – see Table 1) and Friedland and Alford (1991) (whose central institutions of the contemporary capitalist West were identified as capitalist market, bureaucratic state, democracy, nuclear family and Christian religion), though neither makes any specific reference to Weber.

Insert Table 1 about here

Friedland and Alford’s article in the *New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (1991) seems to have triggered scholars’ interest in studying the potential impact of higher-order institutions on individual and organizational behaviour, a body of research that has come to be known under the banner of “institutional logics.” In this body of work, institutional logics have been defined variously, but remain nonetheless close to Friedland and Alford’s (1991, p. 248) original conceptualization of central logics as the “set of material practices and symbolic constructions” which constitute each institutional order’s “organizing principles” and which is “available to organizations and individuals to elaborate.” Thus, for example, Rao, Monin and Durand (2003, pp. 795-796) define institutional logics as “belief systems that furnish guidelines for practical action,” and Scott, Ruef, Mendel and Caronna (Scott, Ruef, Mendel, & Caronna, 2000, p. 170) as “belief systems and associated practices that predominate in an organization’s field.” In this approach however, higher-order institutions such as those proposed by Weber, Friedland and Alford or Whittington are not used as such, but serve only as rough guidelines or as a source of inspiration (sometimes explicitly, sometimes not) for identifying logics in presence “from the ground up” at the field or industry levels. The researcher’s goal is to identify field or industry-level instantiations of these higher order logics, the latter of which are invariably viewed as hybrids or variations of the former, which are conceptualized as ideal-types that do not (or cannot) exist empirically as such.

In this manner, studies focusing on institutional logics have brought to light the presence of “editorial” and “market” logics in the higher education publishing industry (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999a; Thornton, 2002, 2004; Thornton et al., 2005), “aesthetic” and “market” logics in the field of symphony orchestras (Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005), “trustee” and “performance” logics in the

mutual fund industry (Lounsbury, 2007); “professional”, “public” and “corporate” logics in the healthcare industry (Scott et al., 2000); "trustee" and "expert" logics in professional law and accounting services (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005) to name a few; all with their own idiosyncratic set of attributes which are derived primarily from narrative and historical data and which are specific to the field or industry under study. Logics are often presented in narrative form, but occasionally, authors produce a template to summarize those attributes illustrating specific logics. An example of one such field-specific institutional template is reproduced in Table 2.

Identifying higher order institutions as they manifest themselves at the field or industry levels is an interesting and pragmatic way of operationalizing Friedland & Alford’s call to “bring society back in” to the social sciences. Identifying logics at the field or industry levels is decidedly less abstract than doing so at the level of wider society, and perhaps also more manageable, for want of convincing and analytically rich typologies that scholars might use in place of their more idiosyncratic and highly localized ones. Of the four frameworks outlined here, the institutional logics approach is also the one that has been the most used to date. Creating one’s own template (whether narrative or in table form) of institutional logics is a time-consuming process however, which requires investigating historical phenomena over relatively long periods of time, sufficiently long for logics to manifest themselves in a clear enough fashion so as to be identified as such. Most of the studies quoted above have undertaken significant historical analyses of the fields or industries studied so as to identify, in a convincing enough manner, the logics in presence. Most have limited themselves to two (dominant) logics per study, not because these were the only ones in presence, but perhaps because identifying more (presumably secondary) logics would have posed too arduous a task. As well, generalization across fields or industries is also not possible, given the field or industry-specific nature of the templates used.

Insert Table 2 about here

Frame analysis

Frame analysis is an approach developed in the social movements literature inspired initially by Goffman's (1974) notion of a frame as an interpretation that makes events and situations meaningful. Specifically, Benford and Snow (2000, p. 614) define collective action frames as *"action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization."* Frames are sets of ideas that draw elements of a situation together in a coherent way leading to a logical story that justifies social action. Analysts generally identify frames from the content analysis of texts developed by members of a specific social movement organization or from reports of discourse in the media. With its focus on meaning and justification, frame analysis thus appears to qualify as another interesting approach to characterizing and identifying competing rationalities in organizations.

Frames have been characterized in the literature in a variety of different ways. One approach is to use the "signature matrix" developed by Gamson and Lasch (1983) and illustrated by Creed, Langstraat and Scully (2002a). A signature matrix identifies the metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, visual images, roots, consequences and appeals to principle associated

with a frame. Another way to characterize the elements of a frame is to consider it in terms of three components: diagnosis (the specification of the problem and the identification of those to blame for it), prognosis (an argument concerning what would happen if no action was taken) and motivation (a definition of the action required) (Benford & Snow, 2000; Creed et al., 2002a). This second formulation has been used in a variety of contexts and seems to be dominant in the literature.

In contrast to the literature on institutional logics and on Weberian competing rationalities that focus more centrally on more generic modes of justification, the frame analysis literature tends for the most part to refer to highly issue-specific frames. For example, Gamson and Lasch (1983) identified four different frames that justify different positions about social welfare policy: the "welfare freeloaders" frame that constructs welfare recipients as lazy and promotes a moral principle of just deserts; the "working poor" frame that emphasizes the need to provide incentives for work; the "poverty trap" frame that promotes a principle of right to a life of dignity; and a "regulating the poor" frame that essentially supports the maintenance of a welfare system without work incentives. These frames are quite clearly competing within any policy field and frame analysts tend to study "frame disputes" (between members of the same social movement) and "framing contests" between different groups promoting different modes of action. They also analyse the factors that lead to the acceptance or rejection of different frames. In analysing such conflicts, analysts will look amongst other things at the degree of "resonance" of frames with target individual's interests and values, and also at broader levels of "cultural resonance."

From this viewpoint, Benford and Snow (2000, p. 619) note that recent work has generated a certain number of frames that are "*sufficiently broad in interpretive scope, inclusivity, flexibility, and cultural resonance to function as master frames.*" They name "rights frames", "choice frames," "injustice frames," "environmental justice frames," "culturally pluralist frames," and "return to democracy" frames as some of the frames that have this broader "master frame" status. These "master frames" are clearly closest in content to the notion of competing rationalities as we have defined them in this review. Nevertheless, whenever these or other more specific frames are invoked, they are generally still focused on the *action*-oriented initiatives. For example, authors have suggested that a broad "injustice" master frame enables bridging between different social movements with a variety of missions (Carroll & Ratner, 1996), potentially broadening the constituency that will support the actions promoted by all these groups. Thus the frame analysis approach tends to be more strategically oriented than the other approaches described: alternate frames are not simply "out there" in society, but they are deliberately constructed sets of arguments aimed at achieving particular effects, although part of the means by which they achieve this is through resonance with underlying societal values or acceptable rationalities.

Frame analysis has so far been applied mainly in the literature on social movements. However social movements traverse business, public sector and third sector organizations and therefore may have an important impact on them (e.g., social movements concerning the environment, feminism, human rights, etc.). Moreover, there is no *a priori* reason why the notion of "frame" might not have application to interest group movements both within and across organizations that would not normally be defined as social movements (e.g., professional associations, political factions within organizations). Multiple frames in the sense of the frame analysis literature seem likely to be found in pluralistic settings where different groups promote or defend different

strategic projects (e.g., see Chreim (2006) for an example from the banking industry). We shall provide more examples of organizationally-based applications in a subsequent section.

Conventions

The conventionalist or "economies of worth" (EW) framework is based on the thinking of French sociologist Luc Boltanski and economist Laurent Thévenot on the dynamics of collective action as articulated in their book *On Justification* (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991; 2006), which was first published in French in 1991. Although underscoring a theory of *coordination*, that is, of how actors manage to work together despite their different motivations and interests and despite their uncertainty about the future and how others are likely to act, the EW framework provides interesting grounds from which a useful conceptual framework for shedding light on the possible institutional foundations of "rational" behaviour can be built.

EW thinking is anchored in conventionalist thought, which argues that "rational" behaviour can only be understood in its collective context because "in ordinary life, the point is not so much to be "objectively" rational for its own sake, but to appear reasonable to others" (Gomez & Jones, 2000). Its fundamental premise is that individuals cannot make decisions (or "rationalize") autonomously, because their choices depend on the choices of others (Gomez, 1997). On these premises, and taking inspiration from the core thinking of seminal philosophical texts (see Table 3 below), the authors develop a detailed typology of six institutionalized, quasi-universal and equally valid grounds (termed "worlds" by the authors) upon which opinions, beliefs and actions of individuals are, in their opinion, typically justified (or rationalized) in a collective context.

Insert Table 3 about here

How do individuals, despite their different – and often contradictory motivations, logics and interests - manage to get along, work together, compromise? It is in exploring the relation between accord and discord that Boltanski and Thévenot were inevitably confronted by the question of "judgement," and in particular the grounds for judgement, that is, the grounds upon which an individual justifies his or her opinions (about what is "right" or "true"), as well as decisions or actions from which he or she could express "agreement" or "disagreement." What the authors observed over the course of a series of empirical studies that they conducted, was that when asked to justify their reasons for harbouring a given opinion or taking a particular action, particularly in situations of discord (in one case for example, the authors looked at critical and denunciatory letters to the editor of a major, national newspaper), individuals inevitably referred to some *external* higher order of "values" or "standards" that explained why the said situation or event was "wrong" or "unfair." Never were the "logics" that individuals called upon in these acts of justification idiosyncratic, but rather, they seemed to always be based on some sort of broadly institutionalized value set that a large number of people could understand and identify with. The authors then set themselves the task of identifying and describing the structure and content of these value sets, a process which the book documents in considerable detail. A summary table of the six worlds, along with the complex grammar and descriptors that were developed for each, are presented in Appendix 2.

It is also interesting to note how similar the EW framework is with Thornton's, Whittington's and Friedland and Alford's institutional typologies presented above. The EW framework's use of a very rich, descriptive language for delimiting each world, although certainly unconventional, has the distinct advantage, from a heuristic standpoint, of giving readers a good "feel" for each world, which should facilitate coding and categorization of empirical data, and thus enhance inter-coder reliability both within and across studies. The framework is sufficiently detailed that the identification of worlds in presence from empirical data using discourse analysis is much more straightforward than with other frameworks (e.g. (Kalberg, 1980)), and the detailed structure of each "world" (what the authors have coined "grammar") can be useful for validating the presence of a "world" from more than a single perspective. On the other hand, the framework's unconventional language, particularly in the organizational domain may be confusing and perhaps even off-putting for some. Furthermore, there are as yet only a handful of studies, few of which have been published in English, which have made use of the framework, and so the framework's functionality from an empirical perspective remains to be fully assessed.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS

The approaches presented above provide different means for putting "meat" on the bones of rationality as an institutionally-defined concept. They highlight the "relevant set of cultural items" (Mohr, 1998, p. 352) that make it possible to identify the presence of one form of rationality over another. Although interesting in themselves, such general typologies are only stepping stones toward a research agenda on the sorts of impacts that rationality, and in particular multiple or competing rationalities, might have on various organizational phenomena. A next essential step is the actual "teasing out" of rationality from specific organizational contexts.

Mohr's (1998) article provides some insights into where and when rationality is more likely to surface in conscious or semi-conscious ways from various contexts. In the examples he gives of empirical research that focuses on measuring meaning in a variety of contexts, *situations or circumstances of conflict or discord* appear as particularly rich grounds from which rationality in many forms is likely to become salient. Mohr cites Tilly (1997) for example, who in seeking to explain the parliamentarization of British politics from a cultural perspective, chose to focus his attention on meanings as they surfaced during "contentious gatherings" between groups making various claims to the government. *Community rituals* are a second potential source of interesting data, as exemplified by Di Maggio and Mullen's (1993) work. In particular, the underlying meanings of and justification for such rituals may be another potentially rich context from which rationality might be made salient, and thus easier to "tease out." Finally, a third source of potentially meaningful data, as derived from Mohr's examples, can be found around the alternate meanings that different institutional actors attribute to various *institutional activities*. Thus for example, in his own work (Mohr & Guerra-Pearson, 1998), Mohr analyzes different organizational interpretations of community social problems and how these affect what are proposed as effective or appropriate solutions to those problems. Similar analysis of meaning-rich concepts and activities are another source of data from which "rationality" might be made particularly salient: contentious interpretations over concepts such as "effectiveness" (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983) "performance" (Karpik, 1978), "success" (Karpik, 1978) or "quality" (Moursli & Cobbaut, 2006) for example, and the actions necessary to achieve these, when examined closely are wrought with conflicting definitions and interpretations which go beyond the rhetorical, and thus offer ideal grounds from which to undertake work on rationality.

In terms of where to look for manifestations of rationality, other research examples offer several ideas. For example, Glynn & Lounsbury (2005) used critics' reviews to document shifting logics, Boltanski & Thévenot (2006) used critical or denunciatory letters to the editor, Zilber (2006) used want ads and newspaper articles to identify what she has termed "generic rational myths," Creed et al. (2002b) draw on public testimony, media accounts and position papers to detect different legitimating frames for positions on gay rights and Hoffman (1999) looked at lawsuits (which, although not used for this purpose in his study, are nonetheless revelatory mechanisms for imparting blame and assigning responsibility). Based on these examples, one might extrapolate that newspaper editorials generally, the contents of motivational speeches, corporate value statements or stakeholder position statements, are other possibilities where multiple, and potentially competing rationalities are likely to be most salient. Interview data can also be a good source, especially if interview questions are formulated in such a way as to encourage respondents to justify their beliefs and actions (Why this decision? Why this particular action? Why this action as opposed to some other action? Why is this important?).

What all these examples suggest is that the notion of conflict, tension or discord, whether covert or overt, subtle or forthright, is indeed critical for the determination of rationality. Exploring organisational situations where there is tension, as made apparent and committal by means of various tangibles (such as a critical review, a letter to the editor or a lawsuit) and attempting to bring to light, at a fairly deep level, what the underlying sources of such tensions might be, is at least a preliminary means for ensuring legitimacy and credibility of the data gathered and analyzed, and thus veridicality of a concept as intangible and nebulous as is rationality.

Once appropriate data is obtained, it is through analysis that the actual rationalities in presence are revealed, a process which can be done using qualitative or quantitative approaches. Researchers using existing frameworks (Weberian or conventionalist for example) have tended to adopt a qualitative approach, using primarily text and discourse analysis to sift through and categorize data into the various forms that rationality might take (e.g., Moursli & Cobbaut (2006); Townley (2002); Dyck (1997)). A key consideration when using such an approach is how richly described the chosen typology is, as a rich typology facilitates coding and, by association, increases reliability. Researchers creating idiosyncratic typologies or frameworks have used either qualitative approaches or a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. For example, Lounsbury (2007), Thornton & Ocasio (1999a) and Thornton (2002; 2004) and Thornton, Jones & Kury (2005) used qualitative analysis of interview and historical data to generate typologies (see example Table 2 above) or analytical narratives. Scott, Ruef, et al, (2000) is an example of a combined approach, where the authors use primarily qualitative data to identify primary logics, but then use quantitative methods (mainly exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, see p. 376) to validate them and estimate their relative salience or dominance over time. Table 4 reproduces the table of logics generated by the authors using this approach. Here, variation in the prevalence of various indicators was used as an indication of which logic became "dominant" for each of the time periods observed.

A key difficulty across approaches revolves around how "purely" a given pre-defined higher order institutional logic manifests itself in the data, a difficulty certain researchers (Boisard & Letablier, 1989; Thornton, 2004; Thornton et al., 2005; Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) have circumvented by proposing the concept of "hybrid" logics – logics which combine the attributes of different logics or rationalities, a solution that entails certain drawbacks if comparisons across

studies are to be made, but that may also prove helpful for understanding how tension between logics or rationalities are potentially resolved, as will be discussed later.

Insert Table 4 about here

Finally, across approaches, careful consideration must be given to questions of time and space. In data gathering and analysis, details about when, where and for whom various discourses, texts, or documentation are produced must be diligently noted, as different forms of rationality might manifest themselves differently depending on the time frame or the context considered. Thus, given the research objective, it may be relevant to conceptualize a study in terms of rationality *dominance* – that is, in terms of which specific logic or rationality tends to dominate or prevail at various moments along a given time continuum or within a given space/context, and why this is so. The examination of shifting logics over time, which characterizes the work of many authors under the banner of institutional logics (DiMaggio, 1991; Scott et al., 2000; Lounsbury, 2002; Thornton, 2004; Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005; Thornton et al., 2005) is an example of the former. Lounsbury’s (2007) study of how institutional logics shape practice in the mutual fund industry or Dyck’s (1997) study of how multiple rationalities impact organizational change attempts would be examples of the latter. Conversely, it may be relevant to examine how multiple rationalities *co-exist* within the same time frame or space, paying close attention to the requisite interplay, compromises or consequences that ensue. Boisard & Letablier’s (1989) study of the appearance of the AOC label (appellation d’origine contrôlée, a label traditionally reserved for wine) for use with camembert cheese, or Labelle’s (2005) study of various stakeholders’ differing interpretations of the meaning of corporate social responsibility would be examples of work done along this latter vein.

EMPIRICAL APPLICATIONS

Although interesting and informative, identifying logics or rationalities in presence does not a study make. Teasing out rationality from various contexts is not an end in itself, but rather a means for arriving at a different order of analysis, which allows for a different kind of understanding of organizational phenomena. In this section we review examples of studies which have applied the four frameworks presented above and discuss the kinds of research questions that these studies have sought to address. Only particularly illustrative examples are discussed here. A more complete review of studies using all four approaches appears in Table 5.

Weber-inspired

Although Weberian thinking seems to permeate work on rationality generally, only a very small number of studies to date have specifically used Weber’s various conceptualizations of rationality as a base for exploring the impact of multiple rationalities on organizational phenomena. These studies reveal interesting dynamics however, in particular by providing a means of highlighting the value dimension of organizational decisions.

Insert Table 5 about here

An interesting application of a Weber-inspired framework (using Kalberg's typology of weberian rationality types) was undertaken by Townley (2002) in her study of the adoption of business planning as a practice in a division of a government department (which was responsible for museums and other cultural sites). Townley's particular interest was to disentangle which forms or dimensions of rationality seemed to encourage the acceptance of business planning as a practice by the particular division, and which, on the contrary, prompted resistance. Her findings illustrate how certain forms of rationality (in this case, the theoretical and formal rationalities of business plans and performance measures) interact to destabilize other forms of rationality (the substantive and practical rationalities of cultural preservation and interpretation), an observation which offers a fresh perspective on the dynamics underscoring institutional change.

In a similar vein, Dyck (1997) uses Kalberg's typology to help explain why certain transformational change attempts (proposed changes that substantially change the configuration of an organization) are implemented, while others are rejected. Dyck's analysis of 11 transformational change attempts in a single organization over a period of 40 years shows that while most change attempts are rejected, such attempts are more likely to be implemented if they are primarily based on value rationality, that is, when discussions around a given change attempt tend to revolve around value-heavy issues, which for the organization studied (the Canadian Mennonite Bible College) was reflected in the use of language such as "principles," "Anabaptist perspective," "values" and "right and wrong" ways of doing things. Although Dyck's findings may be tributary of the very particular nature of the organization he studied and thus not generalizable to other sorts of organizations, they certainly merit further testing and consideration in other contexts.

Institutional logics

Studies which frame multiple rationalities in terms of institutional logics are somewhat more prevalent in the literature than those using a Weber-inspired approach. These studies for the most part have concentrated their efforts on documenting higher-order institutional change over fairly long periods of time, and studying the impacts of such change on organizational structures and practices.

A notable example is the series of studies done by Patricia Thornton on how shifts in institutional logics impacted the academic publishing industry. Thornton was able to demonstrate how a shift from an editorial to a market logic impacted the industry in multiple ways, including changes in organizational structure (from U to M-form) (Thornton, 2002); organizational power structures and determinants of executive succession (from author-editor relationships and internal growth factors to product market and the market for corporate control) (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999a), as well as managerial focus of attention and organizational strategy more generally. Other examples of research done in this vein include DiMaggio's (1991) study of how prevailing institutional logics shaped the institutional field of art museums over time, Haveman & Rao's (1997) study of how organizational structures shifted along with prevailing logics in the early thrift industry; Scott, et al's (2000) study of institutional change in the U.S. health care industry; Suddaby and Greenwood's (2005) study of change in professional service logics and organizational design; Goodrick's (2000) study of the rise of science-based concepts in the academic management field; and Lounsbury's (2002) study of how shifts in institutional logics opened up possibilities for various actors to make new kinds of status claims in the field of finance.

An example of research undertaken under the institutional logics banner that does not look at the effect of shifts in logics over long periods of time is Lounsbury's (2007) recent study of how institutional logics shape practice (and thus explain practice variations) in the mutual fund industry. Lounsbury was able to show how different logics (each of which prevailed in different cities) led to variation in how mutual funds established contracts with independent professional money management firms. Interestingly, space rather than time, was the principle factor explaining the differences in prevailing logics and the consequent impact on practice.

Frame analysis

There are currently relatively few studies in the management and organization studies literature that draw on frame analysis, although the interest in this framework appears to be growing. Most of the examples available focus on a field or societal level of analysis. For example, Fiss and Hirsch (2005) examine framing disputes concerning the nature of globalization as a positive, negative or neutral phenomenon and show how these frames evolve over time with key events. In another interesting study, Lounsbury, Ventresca and Hirsch (2003) use the notion of "field frame" to study how protagonists in the solid waste industry use frames to promote different forms of technology. They argue that the framing approach contributes a useful strategic and endogenous component to the institutional logic concept. The strategic "impression management" component is also emphasized by Fiss and Zajac (2006) who examine the framings used by German firms in their annual reports concerning stakeholder or shareholder orientations, contrasting these with the concrete actions taken by firms.

The paper by Creed et al. (2002b) presents a particularly interesting empirical application of frame analysis to the organizational literature. They examine specifically how gay rights issues are represented in organizations using content analysis of hearings transcripts and interviews. They identify a large number of different frames emerging from different sources. They then show which "master frames" and cultural resources each of the more specific frames are based on, and they look at the identity characterizations that the frames project for promoters, opponents and neutral others. Some of the frames observed combine more than one "master frame" (e.g., a mix of "civil rights" and "good for business"). These examples show how some specific framings are able to reconcile or combine different and usually competing rationalities without apparent inconsistency. The analysis shows moreover that there are some master frames – such as the "civil rights" frame in this case – that no protagonists were able to ignore. People adopting different positions called on this master frame in different ways, combining it with opposing conceptions of moral order (e.g., democratic freedoms and individual liberties on the one hand vs. family values and sexual morality on the other).

Conventions

Researchers using a conventionalist framework to format their work around multiple or competing rationalities have tended not to focus their attention on how certain logics come to prevail or dominate at specific periods of time throughout a field or an industry's history, but rather are concerned with how different logics co-exist within the same timeframe or space/context. Such a focus has led to interesting insights into the processes whereby competing logics are eventually reconciled. Attention is not limited to those logics that dominate, but is extended to all logics in presence, and to how logics struggle and compete with one another.

Early studies seem to have focused on the conflicting rationalities underpinning agricultural transformation in France. In particular, studies used the EW framework to study the resolution of conflict between traditional producers of agricultural products (artisans) and large industrial concerns. For example, Boisard & Letablier (1987; 1989) used a preliminary version of the EW framework to examine how small, local producers of camembert cheeses, who favoured traditional methods of production, dealt with globalization pressures which required them to “mass produce or die.” The study was presented as a juxtaposition between artisans (who referred to norms of rationality from the domestic world) and large-scale mass producers of dairy products (who referred to norms of rationality from the industrial world), with the artisans arguing that blind mass-production produced bland cheeses that had nothing to do with the taste standards of traditionally produced cheeses. The outcome of this confrontation between the domestic and industrial worlds was the development of new methods which allowed for a certain degree of mass-production but that nonetheless respected traditional, time-tested procedures, as well as the application of the world-renowned AOC label (Appellation d’Origine Controlée) traditionally used for wine, to cheeses produced using these or traditional methods. Had this particular case been examined in light of mainstream “change management” literature, the subtleties of the confrontation *on principles* (time-honoured traditions vs. modernization) may not have stood out as strongly as they did here, nor would the nature of the “compromise” achieved make as much sense as it does in the context above.

More recently, the EW framework was useful for teasing out the conflicting rationalities of multiple stakeholders in the case of an environmentally contentious, large-scale industrial development project (the construction of a plant for the processing of aluminium ore) (Labelle, 2005). By focusing on the various debates surrounding plant construction (and its environmental, regional, political and economic impacts), the author was able to highlight the multiple rationalities at play which underscored the many different ways that various stakeholders defined what each felt were “minimally acceptable” norms of corporate social responsibility, as well as trace how perceptions changed over time in light of media coverage, government interventions and the corporation’s “handling” of the issue.

Finally, the framework was put to fruitful use by Moursli & Cobbaut (2006) who used it to provide at least a partial explanation into the reasons underscoring the co-existence of non-profit, for-profit and public organizations in the area of long-term and respite care in Belgium. Provost was able to show, using the EW framework, that the co-existence of these organizational forms could be attributable to each harbouring different criteria, on the basis of different higher order beliefs, for defining minimally acceptable standards of “quality” for their respective establishments. So for example, the nonprofit long-term care facilities tended to define quality in terms of the living conditions of its patients, how closely their facilities resembled home, how “cosy” it was, and how “at home” residents felt there (thus coming close to a “domestic logic within the EW framework). For-profit facilities tended to define quality along more traditional criteria, including measuring efficiency and ratios around number of beds, number of nurses on duty, costs per bed, etc. a reflection of a more “market” oriented dominant logic. And finally, public facilities seemed to reflect a sort of compromise between multiple logics, in essence trying to maintain in balance various logics, including domestic, market and industrial (around issues such as quality of medical care, competence of medical and management staff, etc.). Although all three organizational forms reflected all three logics, what was interesting was how

each *prioritized* them differently, with the government effectively trying (as it so often does) to be all things to all people.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As illustrated by the examples above, research that takes an institutional view of rationality remains largely exploratory at this stage. The number of studies completed to date is still relatively small, but it is growing – one cannot help but notice the marked increase in studies from 2002 onward. The prospect for future research is clearly promising.

In terms of what has been accomplished, there seems to be sufficient evidence at this stage to advance that prevailing or dominant higher order institutions do seem to have an impact on organizational phenomena, most notably organizational practice and structure. These are fascinating studies that tell compelling stories about the history of different fields and industries, stories which are of interest and of importance in and of themselves, particularly to the fields or industries themselves. There is room for more work of this nature, particularly in areas not yet explored from an institutional logics/rationality perspective. Any industry, field or social movement not yet studied is a reasonable target for future research. Such research would not contribute to new knowledge, but would provide additional empirical validation of the theory that higher-order institutions do help shape organizational structures and practices. An eventual meta-analysis of such studies may reveal general organizational trends, such as a trend in which market logics tend over time to take precedence over a professional or industrial logics.

On the other hand, relatively few studies have attended to the specific processes whereby shifts in institutional logics and consequent changes in organizational structure or practice occur. Those who have done so have brought to light some interesting dynamics, such as Rao, Monin & Durand (2003) who showed that shifts in logics were pre-empted and facilitated by gradual shifts in role identities, Haveman & Rao (1997) who showed how logics shifted in tandem with organizational structures and processes, and Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) who identified rhetorical strategies by which opposing institutional logics of professional behaviour were mobilized in a struggle between law firms and accounting firms concerning the appropriateness of accounting-law firm mergers (again linking the more abstract institutional logic approach to strategic forms of analysis). Further research into the factors triggering, facilitating or impeding shifts in prevailing logics or into the specific processes whereby structures and practices shift along with prevailing logics is warranted, and should yield interesting insights into those factors that explain institutional change more generally.

Another interesting line of inquiry, and one that offers considerable potential for future research, is the study of how multiple rationalities co-exist within the same timeframe or space/context. Such a perspective requires foregoing exclusive interest in one or two dominant rationalities (as is the case in the studies described above), and paying systematic attention to the multiple rationalities, both explicit and tacit, at play in a given context. From such a point of view, it becomes possible to empirically explore the dynamics underscoring institutional stability, and those underscoring institutional change. When the inherent tensions between forms of rationality are appeased and when several forms of rationality appear to co-exist relatively peacefully, the task of the researcher might be to determine what configurations of people, objects and resources make such stability possible. Conversely, when tensions flare up, and there is confrontation

between actors or groups of actors harbouring differing beliefs as to what is the right thing or the wrong thing to do in a given context or situation, then the researcher's task might be to understand how such tensions are managed: how configurations of people, objects and resources change because of these confrontations, and how differences are resolved or accommodated in a variety of contexts. Although this line of inquiry (from the specific perspective of competing or multiple rationalities, where rationality is institutionally defined) has been the favoured hunting grounds of researchers using the EW framework (see Moursli & Cobbaut (2006); Labelle (2005); Boivin & Roch (2005) as examples), research to date remains limited and has been, for the most part, published only in French. Work in this vein, which uses the EW or other frameworks for teasing out and making sense of competing rationalities in various contexts and which perhaps combines these with a negotiated order perspective (Day & Day, 1977; Strauss, 1978) for example, looks to be a particularly promising avenue for further developing our understanding of how rationality shapes and forms organizational environments.

Finally, this outline of future research opportunities and possibilities would not be complete without some discussion of how the frameworks and approaches discussed here might be helpful for building on or enhancing work done using structuration theory frameworks (Giddens, 1984; Sewell Jr., 1992; Pozzebon, 2004). Although it is tempting to think of rationality-defining higher-order institutions as all powerful cognitive structures that systematically frame all individual thoughts and actions at the expense of any form of individual or organizational agency, such a view is dangerously limited, and is also in our view, erroneous. Thus, although all "the major social influences which the institutionalists have already identified as important" (Whittington, 1992, p. 704), must be conceptualized as being inherently stable (on account of their having developed over centuries and being so enduring), the fact that the majority of contexts and situations are ambiguous, and that different individuals routinely call upon different forms of rationality (on account of their upbringing, education, and experiences) to justify their beliefs and aid in their day-to-day decision-making and actions suggests that "institutional oppression" is somewhat of an exaggeration. On the contrary, situational ambiguity, as well as the gap between institutional "musts" and institutional "maybes" (Clemens & Cook, 1999) and the contradictions inherent in institutional logics (Seo & Creed, 2002), creates many opportunities for agency, which routinely translate into creative accommodations between the various forms that rationality can take: accommodations which in turn might (and often do) trigger changes in beliefs, structures and actions. Research on the interplays between the forms that rationality can take and the structures and actions they influence and are influenced by is thus another promising (albeit challenging) avenue for future research. This observation also suggests further developing the linkages between more abstract and formalized (i.e. structural) views of rationality such as those represented by the Weberian, conventionalist and institutional logics frameworks and the more strategically oriented (i.e., agential) modes of meaning manipulation represented by frame analysis (Creed et al., 2002a) or rhetoric (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005).

CONCLUSION

In the management context, there is a marked tendency to assume that individual and organizational behaviour is "rational" in the means-end or instrumental sense. Much of management research consequently reflects, usually tacitly, this fundamental assumption. If questioned however, most people, scholar and non-scholar alike, would probably admit that they

do not always act “rationally” in this way. “There are other considerations,” they might say. “It gets complicated.” How to reflect such realities into our research? What tools are available to researchers for integrating a pluralistic view of rationality into their work? Rationality is a difficult concept to grasp, and thus particularly difficult to operationalize. This may be one of the reasons it is so frequently glossed over in empirical work. Our goal with this paper was to take a first whack at the rationality piñata by discussing some of the theoretical and methodological implications of considering the norms underpinning rationality as inherently multiple and contradictory. In addition to a theoretical discussion of rationality as an institutionally-defined concept, we proposed four approaches for conceptualizing and teasing out rationality from a variety of contexts – some elements to constitute a methodological toolbox that we hope will continue to grow as more and more researchers become interested in making explicit the fundamental, and yet frequently tacit, drivers underscoring human cognition and action. These approaches are not perfect, but we do think they are a helpful and pragmatic first step toward “bringing society back in” to our understanding of individuals and organizations.

TABLE 1
Social systems and the structural bases for action (Whittington, 1992)

<i>Activity System</i>	<i>Communal</i>	<i>Economic</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Political</i>	<i>Intellectual</i>
Dominant structures	Ethnic and religious	Capitalist	Familial	State	Professional and academic
Basic resources	Networks	Capital ownership	Patriarchal authority	Legitimate coercion	Expertise and legitimacy
Basic rules	Solidarity	Profit-maximization	Paternalism	Patriotism	Professional codes
Organizations	Clubs and churches	Firms	Households	Executive, legislative, and judicial	Professional bodies and universities

TABLE 2
Two ideal types of higher education publishing (from Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, p. 809)

	Editorial Logic	Market Logic
Characteristics	Personal capitalism	Market capitalism
Organizational Identity	Publishing as profession	Publishing as business
Legitimacy	Personal reputation Rank in hierarchy	Market position Rank in performance
Authority Structures	Founder-editor Personal networks Private ownership	CEO Corporate parent form Public ownership
Mission	Build prestige of house Increase sales	Build competitive position Increase profits
Focus of attention	Author-editor networks	Resource competition
Strategy	Organic growth Build personal imprints	Acquisition growth Build market channels
Logics of investment	Capital committed to the firm	Capital committed to the market
Rules of succession	Family estate plans	Market for corporate control

TABLE 3

Inspirational texts and core values of EW framework (after Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991)

World	Inspirational text	Author	Superior principle
Inspiration	<i>City of God</i>	St-Augustine (354- 430)	To renounce glory and earthly pleasures so as to be touched by “grace.” (pp. 107-112)
Domestic	<i>Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture</i>	Jacques Bossuet (1627-1704)	To know one’s rank is to know one’s self. (pp. 116-123)
Opinion	<i>Leviathan</i>	Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)	To be honourable is to be honoured, loved and feared by many. (pp. 127-130)
Civic	<i>The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right</i>	Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)	The renunciation of personal interest in favour of the common good. (pp. 138-149)
Merchant	<i>The Wealth of Nations</i>	Adam Smith (1723-1790)	Wealth is freedom from oppression (pp. 63-76)
Industrial	<i>Du système industriel</i>	Comte de St-Simon (1760-1825)	The value of a system of order anchored in scientific observation. (pp. 151-157)

TABLE 4

Confirmatory Factor Models of Primary Logics in U.S. Healthcare, 1948-1994 (Scott, et al, 2000, p. 314)

Latent Factor = primary logic	Indicators	Descriptions
<i>Professional dominance</i>	AMA membership	Proportion of active physicians
	Blue Cross/Blue Shield benefit expenditures	Proportion of civilian health plan benefits
	Philanthropy for health and hospitals	Proportion of national private health expenditures
<i>Federal involvement</i>	Medicare & Medicaid enrollees	Proportion of civilian insured
	Medicare & Medicaid benefit expenditures	Proportion of civilian health plan benefits
	Federal health expenditures	Proportion of national health expenditures
	Public medical research funding	Proportion of national medical research expenditures
<i>Managerial-market orientation</i>	Physician executives	ACPE membership
	HMO & independent plan enrollees	Proportion of civilian insured
	HMO & independent plan benefit expenditures	Proportion of civilian health plan benefits
	Medicaid enrollees in HMOs	Proportion of Medicaid enrollees
	Medicare enrollees in HMOs	Proportion of Medicare enrollees

TABLE 5
Review of studies adopting all four frameworks

Authors	Research question	Focus	Framework used	Logics/ rationalities
Boisard & Letablier (1987; 1989)	How competing rationalities shaped industry practice	Rationalities/ Structure/Practice	Conventionalist	Industrial vs. market
Boivin & Roch (2005)	How competing logics determine the success potential of strategic alliances	Logics/Practice	Conventionalist	Inspiration (or aesthetic) vs. industrial vs. market
Chreim (2006)	How employees draw on institutional frames to oppose management	Frames/ resistance to change	Frame analysis	Managerial vs. institutional conceptions of customer service
Creed et al. (2002b)	How institutional entrepreneurs build legitimating accounts	Legitimizing accounts/ Cultural resources/ Identity	Frame analysis	Civil rights vs. Good for business; Democratic values vs. family values
DiMaggio (1991)	How prevailing institutional logics shaped an institutional field	Logics/Structure/ Practice	Institutional logics (although not explicitly)	“Gilman” vs. “Dana” models of the art museum
Dyck (1997)	How multiple rationalities impact organizational change attempts	Rationality/Practice	Weberian approach	Efficiency vs. values vs. self-interest
Fiss and Hirsch (2005)	How discourse on globalization evolves	Frames/ Structural context	Frame analysis	Positive vs. negative frames on globalization
Fiss and Zajac(2006)	How German firms legitimate moves to narrower shareholder focus	Legitimizing accounts/ relationships with actions	Frame analysis	Shareholder vs. Stakeholder management
Glynn & Lounsbury (2005)	How shifts in institutional logics shapes the discourse of music critics	Institutional change	Institutional logics	Aesthetic vs. market
Goodrick (2000)	How science-based concepts were diffused in the academic management field	Institutional change	Institutional logics (although not explicitly)	Vocational training vs. science
Haveman & Rao (1997)	How institutional definitions, rules and expectations unfold in tandem with organizational structures and processes in the early thrift industry	Logics/Structure	Theory of moral sentiments (Smith 1976 (1759)) (though akin to institutional logics)	Mutuality and enforced saving vs. bureaucracy and voluntary effort
Labelle (2005)	How competing rationalities help define norms of corporate social responsibility	Logics/Practice	Conventionalist	Multiple
Lounsbury (2002)	How shifts or transformations in institutional logics impact status mobility in the field of finance	Logics/Structure/ Processes	Institutional logics	Regulatory vs. market
Lounsbury (2007)	How institutional logics shape practice in the mutual fund industry	Logics/Practice	Institutional logics	Trustee vs. performance
Lounsbury, Ventresca & Hirsch (2003)	Examines how shifting frames influence the waste treatment industry	Institutional change/ industry creation	Frame analysis	Resource recovery frame vs. recycling frame
Moursli & Cobbaut (2006)	How competing rationalities determine organizational structure	Rationalities/structure	Conventionalist	Domestic vs. market vs. industrial (hybrid)
Rao, Monin & Durand (2003)	How existing institutional logics and role identities are replaced by new logics and role identities in the French gastronomy field	Institutional change	Institutional logics	Classical vs. nouvelle cuisine

Scott, Ruef, Mendel & Carona (2000)	How shifts in logics occurred in health care industry	Institutional change	Institutional logics	Professional vs. public vs. corporate
Suddaby & Greenwood (2005)	How institutional change is legitimated rhetorically	Institutional change/ conflict over structures	Institutional logics (as well as rhetorical strategies)	Trustee vs. Expert logics of professional action
Thornton & Ocasio (1999a)	How shifts in logic impact executive succession in higher education publishing industry	Logics/Structure	Institutional logics	Editorial vs. market
Thornton (2002)	How shifts in institutional logics influences adoption of M-form organization in the higher education publishing industry	Logics/Structure	Institutional logics	Craft vs. professional
Thornton (2004)	How institutional logics affect attention and decision making in organizations and markets	Logics/Practice	Institutional logics	Editorial vs. market
Thornton, Jones & Kury (2005)	How institutional logics motivate the adoption of specific governance arrangements	Logics/Structure	Institutional logics	<u>Accounting</u> : Corporate vs. fiduciary <u>Architecture</u> : Aesthetic vs. efficiency <u>Publishing</u> : Editorial vs. market
Townley (2002)	How competing rationalities influence institutional change in a government division	Institutional change	Weberian approach	Substantive vs. formal vs. theoretical vs. practical
Zilber (2006)	How (field-level) institutional meanings are related to broad socio-cultural frameworks	Institutional translation	Rational myths (akin to institutional logics)	National-Religious vs. Secular-Humanist-Universalistic vs. Individualistic

APPENDIX 1: Society-level institutional logics

	Markets	Corporations	Professions	States	Families	Religions
Economic system	Investor capitalism	Managerial capitalism	Personal capitalism	Welfare capitalism	Personal capitalism	Occidental capitalism
Theories	Agency	Managerial	Neo-institutional	Resource-dependence	Power elite	Authority
Natural effect of symbolic analogy	Market as transaction	Hierarchy as corporation	Profession as relational network	State as redistribution mechanism	Family as firm	Temple as bank
Sources of identity	Faceless	Bureaucratic roles Quantity of production	Personal reputation Quality of innovation	Social class Political ideology	Family reputation Father-son relations	Occupational and vocational association with deities
Sources of legitimacy	Share price	Market position of firm	Personal expertise	Democratic participation	Unconditional loyalty	Importance of magic in economy
Basis of norms	Self interest	Employment in firm	Membership in guild	Citizenship in nation	Membership in household	Membership in congregation
Basis of attention	Status position in market	Status position in industry	Status position in network	Status position in interest group	Communism of household	Relation of individual to supernatural forces
Basis of strategy	Increase efficiency of transactions	Increase size and diversification of firm	Increase personal reputation and quality of craft	Increase community good	Increase family honor, security and solidarity	Increase magical symbolism of natural events
Learning mechanism	Competition prices	Competition training and routines Subunit of firm	Cooperation Apprenticing Relational network	Popular opinion Leadership	Sponsorship	Analogy and parable Formulae of prayer Routinization or preaching
Informal control mechanisms	Industry analysts	Organization culture	Celebrity professional	Backroom politics	Family politics	Worship of calling
Formal control mechanisms	Enforcement of regulation	Board and management authority	Internal and external peer review	Enforcement of legislation	Rules of inheritance and succession	Rationalization of usury and norms of taboos
Forms of ownership	Public	Public	Private	Public	Private	Private
Organization form	Marketplace	M-form organization	Network organization	Legal bureaucracy	Family partnership	Religious congregation Office hierarchy
Logic of exchange	Immediate best bargain	Personal career advancement	Indebtedness and reciprocity	Political power	Family power	As sign of God's grace
Logic of investment	Capital committed to capital markets	Capital committed to the corporation	Capital committed to nexus of relationships	Capital committed to public policy	Capital committed to household	Capital committed to enterprise for salvation

(Thornton, Jones and Kury, 2005, pp. 169-170)

APPENDIX 2. Summary of Attributes of each EW “World”

	Inspired	Domestic	Fame	Civic	Market	Industrial
Higher Common Principle	Inspiration	Tradition, hierarchy	Public opinion	Civic duty	Competition	Efficiency, performance
State of Worthiness	Bizarre, different, original, spontaneous	Benevolent, well-bred, wise, sensible	Celebrity, prestige, public recognition	Representative, free, official, statutory	Desirable, valuable, wealthy	Effective, functional, dependable,
Human Dignity	Love, passion, creativity	Comfort, ease, judgment	Well-known, reputed, visible, persuasive	Freedom, democracy, civil rights	Self-interest, desire, consumption	Work, energy, activities
List of Subjects	Visionary, child, artist woman, fairy, crank	Father, king, superiors, inferiors, boss stranger, chief	Star, fans, spokesperson, thought leader	Elected officials, the party, members, representatives	Competitors, client, buyer, seller	Professionals, experts, specialists
List of Objects	Spirit, body, dream, the unconscious	Good manners, etiquette, titles, rank, gifts	Media, brand, campaign, message	Elections, law, committees, lists, criteria, decrees, codes	Wealth, luxury objects	Tools, resources, methods, plans, norms, tasks
Investment Formula	Risk, detour, calling into question	Rejection of selfishness, duty, obligation	Abandonment of privacy	Renunciation of personal interests, solidarity, struggle	Opportunism	Progress, effort, investment
Relation of Worth	Independence, uniqueness	Respectability, responsibility, authority, honor	Recognition, notoriety, visibility	Membership, delegation	Possession	Mastery
Test	Adventure, quest, journey	Family ceremonies, celebrations, marriage	Presentation, press conference, launch	Demonstration in favour of a moral cause, assembly	Deal, transaction, contract	Test, control, launch
State of being “small” (or “deficient”)	Habit, routine, “reality”	Impoliteness, Inconsiderateness, treason, vulgarity	Banal, unknown	Division, isolation, individualism	Loss, poverty	Amateurism, lack of productivity

(Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991, pp. 177-262)

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