Chapter 3
Rational Planning.
Principles and Contexts[1]

Emmanuel Picavet
Franche-Comté University, Besançon, France

Caroline Guibet Lafaye
Maurice Halbwachs Center, CNRS, Paris, France

ABSTRACT

Practical rationality, when collective choices are at stake, should certainly rely on principles. These principles are perhaps not without effect on our representation of the problems to be addressed in collective action. The authors investigate how this structuring role of pragmatic principles accounts for notable context-dependent features of governance procedures. In the field of social policies, for example, the enhancement of personal autonomy has come to the forefront of collective challenges. Capacity-based approaches indicate a way to put into question those conceptions of autonomy which lead to an excessively uniform treatment of individuals. Following these approaches, the beneficiaries of social policies should be treated as concrete beings with their personal history, living in specific social contexts and so on. The authors analyse the individualizing logic which is exemplified in interactive problem-structuring and institutional decision-making about the provision of apt, context-sensitive care and services for ageing handicapped persons. It is suggested that the sought-for adaptation to specific circumstances is made possible through a complex process of description of problems and challenges for collective action, in which procedural aspects are important. This process is by no means reducible to a passive process of adjustment to independent states of affairs. If the authors' analysis is correct, there is no such thing as the "real" nature of individual situations, as opposed to the fictions associated with ordinary social policies: the process under scrutiny really redefines the nature of institutional interactions, responsibilities and the underlying picture of the individual person.

INTRODUCTION

Practical rationality is, among other things, a matter of pragmatic principles which have a guiding role for individuals and groups. The benchmark principles are usually quite general and the rationality of collective choices has to do, presumably, with the ability to turn the principles into reality with relevance, in an efficient way. How should we conceptualize this ability in the first place?

Pragmatic principles for collective choices could be identified, it seems, with the selection of desirable states of the world, chosen among the possible ones. Then we would be induced to look at the administrative or political implementation mechanisms as if they were more or less neutral instruments, by means of which we see to it that the world exhibits the desired patterns. But the following statements, if true, complicate the matter:

First of all, pragmatic principles undergo interpretative changes. This, of course, may impact representations of the collective implementation process, when it comes to spelling out the details of action problems with a view to the effectivity of principles[2]. Turning goals into reality depends on one's views about the meaning of those principles which help articulate the goals. It can be argued, in this respect, that pragmatic principles have distinctive properties when it comes to interpretation needs: for example, they have an unequal potential for being made precise in a useful way, or in an objective way[3].

In addition, pragmatic principles have a role to play in problem-structuring activities (and hence in decision-facilitation tasks at the prescriptive level), if only because they channel and format the information which is used in decision-making (this was emphasized in A. Sen's pioneering contribution to the information analysis of moral

principles – see Sen [1979]). The chosen benchmark principles determine a selective awareness to specific features of the social context and personal situations; this enables them to play a crucial role in the development of joint work and inter-organizational (or inter-institutional) collaborative relationships[4].

Among these properties, it is perhaps fair to say that only the correlation of principles with their respective information needs has been the object of systematic inquiry up to now. In this joint research, we take a broader view. The noted characteristics are investigated with reference to the *autonomy*, *dependence* and *capacity* (or *capability*) concepts. The institutional use of these notions in social policies gives support, we believe, to our initial statements. Such notions, in their concrete use, are related to a constructive social process; this process, we'll argue, illustrates the characteristics we have just mentioned.

We'll highlight the notions of « dependence » and "autonomy" and their role in spelling out principles of collective action, with respect to the challenges of old age and the aging. We'll investigate the type of context dependence and some of the procedural features or governance which can be associated with dependence-based or autonomy-based principles for collective action. More particularly, we ask whether context dependence and the procedural features are impacted by those dominant interpretations of "dependence" and "autonomy" which rely on the "capability" notion (and the related principles for collective action)[5]. With this goal in mind, we'll examine the involvement of personal autonomy and individual capacities in governance processes. A case study will be provided by an institutional interactive process for answering the needs of the aging population of handicapped persons in France.

9 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/rational-planning-principles-contexts1/77178

Related Content

IT Governance in Public Organizations: A Systematic Literature Review
Gideon Mekonnen Jonathanand Lazar Rusu (2018). *International Journal of IT/Business Alignment and Governance (pp. 30-52).*
www.irma-international.org/article/it-governance-in-public-organizations/220439

The Impact of IT Resources on the IT Business Value: Evidence From a Systematic Literature Review
Janusch Patas, Jens Bartenschlagerand Matthias Goeken (2011). *International Journal of IT/Business Alignment and Governance (pp. 48-62).*
www.irma-international.org/article/impact-resources-business-value/62096

Prioritising and Linking Business Goals and IT Goals in the Financial Sector
Steven De Haesand Wim Van Grembergen (2012). *Business Strategy and Applications in Enterprise IT Governance (pp. 123-144).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/prioritising-linking-business-goals-goals/68048

Auditing Agile Release Management: Balancing Speed and Control
Nikitha Agnew, Manish Guptaand Raj Sharman (2023). *Modernizing Enterprise IT Audit Governance and Management Practices (pp. 25-67).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/auditing-agile-release-management/333177

The Impact of IT Governance Compliance on Enhancing Organizational Performance in Abu Dhabi
Zoheir Ezzianeand Abdulla Al Shamisi (2017). *Strategic IT Governance and Alignment in Business Settings (pp. 209-236).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-impact-of-it-governance-compliance-on-enhancing-organizational-performance-in-abu-dhabi/166894