

Kinds of norms

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ARTICLE

Kinds of norms

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Abstract

This article provides an overview of recent, empirically supported categorization schemes that have been proposed to distinguish different kinds of norms. Amongst these are the moral-conventional distinction and divisions within moral norms such as those proposed by moral foundations theory. I identify several dimensions along which norms have been and could usefully be categorized. I discuss some of the most prominent norm categorization proposals and the aims of these existing categorization schemes. I propose that we take a pluralistic approach toward categorizing norms: Depending on our goals, it may be useful to focus on different features of norms, and as a result, it will be useful to categorize norms in multiple ways.

1 | INTRODUCTION

This article provides an overview of recent, empirically supported categorization schemes that have been proposed to distinguish different sorts of human norms. One of these schemes is the proposal that there is an important difference between moral and nonmoral norms; another is the proposal that human psychology features multiple distinct “moral foundations,” each with its own set of norms and values. I begin by identifying several dimensions along which norms have been and could usefully be categorized. I then discuss some of the most prominent norm categorization proposals and the aims of these existing categorization schemes. Finally, I propose that we take a pluralistic approach toward categorizing norms: Depending on our goals, it may be useful to focus on different features of norms, and as a result, it will be useful to categorize norms in multiple ways.

The norms that are the focus of this article are prescriptive and proscriptive norms that humans actually have possessed or made judgments about—This is an article about human normative psychology, rather than normative facts. The article's discussion of existing norm classification schemes focuses on norms categorized as moral and social-conventional, because these norms have attracted the most attention in psychology, but much more remains to be said about other human norms, such as legal, epistemic, aesthetic, personal, and other norms. The topic of this article is classification systems for “norms,” rather than virtues or values, but these are interrelated questions.¹

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2 | DIMENSIONS ONE COULD CONSIDER WHEN CLASSIFYING NORMS

Human norms govern practices ranging from charity to painful initiation rites to wearing white in winter. They are diverse in manifold ways, and it bears emphasizing that there are multiple ways one could categorize them. Some of the possible dimensions along which one could categorize norms include formal features, content, the domain or context the norm addresses, the grounding for the norm or the justifications people supply to defend it, how people respond to violation of or compliance with the norm, and the proximal, developmental, and distal causes of the norm.

Formal features can include whether the norm is a prescription or proscription, involves obligatory, permitted, or forbidden actions, or is hypothetical or categorical.² One can distinguish norms according to what sort of factors are thought to make the norm true—for example, a mind-independent moral fact or only because of the pronouncement of an authority, because one believes it, or because society agrees upon it. These have sometimes fallen under the label of “alterability” (as in Smetana, 1981) but could also be characterized as contingency. Within the category of “purely formal properties of the principles that figure in the [normative] judgements,”³ Southwood distinguishes application conditions, normative features, and scope. Speaking in terms of norms, application conditions have to do with whether a norm is unconditional or whether it is conditional on such things as one's desire or on general compliance; normative features include things such as being intrinsically motivating; and scope has to do with over what times and spaces and to whom the norm applies, for example, whether it applies to all rational agents or just within a particular community. Divisions of norms, in particular the moral–conventional distinction, have incorporated considerations of scope in the form of generality or universality, as well as consideration of application conditions, in the form of authority and response dependency.

Dividing norms by content may involve dividing them by the kind of actions that the norm regulates,³ how one should go about an action,⁴ differences in the type of agent to whom the norm applies (including differences between role-specific norms), the kinds of people or entities that are the object of the norm (such as whether the norm is self-regarding or other-regarding, or whether it guides treatment of in-group or out-group members), the kinds of consequences produced by the action regulated by the norm, or whether the norm relates to broad topics such as harm, justice, loyalty, purity, beauty, and so forth.

We can potentially think of the domain or the context in which the norm applies as a dimension of norm categorization distinct from the dimension of content.⁵ One can distinguish between norms that apply in linguistic, epistemic, aesthetic, etiquette, legal, religious, moral, role-based, or particular game contexts. Alternatively, one may distinguish between norms that apply in the context of different functions, such as those relating to eating, reproduction, rest, self-protection, cooperation, conflict, and so forth.⁶

The grounding of one's belief in a norm has to do with which sorts of things justify the norm in one's own mind, or on what basis one accepts the norm (Southwood, 2011)—for example, because it is mandated by law or an authority has commanded it. Southwood has proposed that a difference in grounding is what underlies the moral–conventional distinction with the distinguishing feature of judgments about conventional norms being that they are grounded in part in social practice. This dimension has played a key role in influential norm categorization schemes—for example, Piaget and Kohlberg's stages of moral development are partially characterized by the way individuals' justifications for their beliefs in norms change over time.

It also seems that there may be a difference in experience that comes with different types of norms—for instance, something unique in the experience of feeling bound by moral norms, specifically, or a certain type of conviction. Stanford (2011) talks about a tendency for humans to experience moral norms as imposed from the external world; Tomasello (2016) connects moral judgments with a particular sense of objectivity (96, 123). Piaget (1932) seeks to explain the “consciousness of obligation” of rules (29). The experience of being subject to narrower categories of norms has been less explored, though one example comes from Rochat (2014), who argues that there is a certain phenomenology associated with ownership and being subject to norms related to property rights. In general, the possibility of distinctive experiences associated with different types of norms has not been adequately investigated experimentally nor have folk reports of the phenomenology of being subject to different sorts of norms been systematically studied.⁷

Variation in how people respond to norm violation and norm compliance has also been of some importance in divisions of norms (particularly in the form of the seriousness of norm violations).⁸ Less explored variations are in severity and type of punishment (e.g., consequence or retribution oriented) associated with distinct types of norms and in who (if anyone) is required to punish different types of norm violations. Another question has to do with what sorts of factors about the agent or situation affect responses—for instance, intent seems to matter for punishment of some types of norm violations and not others (Young & Saxe, 2011). The emotions elicited by violations of different sorts of norms have attracted much research recently—especially (for the norm violator) the association of shame with some norm violations and guilt with others and the association of particular emotions (felt by victims or observers) such as anger, contempt, disgust, pity, and so forth with different norms.⁹ Which norm violations warrant blame, and how much blame, has also attracted recent attention.¹⁰

There has recently been much research on the types of proximal causes that influence judgments about different norms. This includes the association of particular emotions, hormones, and brain regions with different kinds of morality, and whether judgments about some norms are more often the product of conscious reasoning or intuition.¹¹ It is also plausible that norms differ by developmental trajectory—for example, that some are more likely than others to be acquired by imitation, interaction with peers, interaction with adults, instruction from adults, and so forth.¹² Recent work has also posited different distal evolutionary or cultural origins for different sets of norms, such as, for instance, those related to prosocial behavior, resolution of property disputes, purity, and regulation of interactions with out-groups.¹³ Different selection pressures may have been involved in the production, maintenance, and spread of different types of norms, and their evolutionary histories may have involved different roles for evolutionary mechanisms such as kin selection, reciprocal altruism, sexual selection, group selection, mutualism, and other factors such as reputation, partner selection, and punishment.¹⁴

Many classification schemes involve differences across several of these dimensions, but there is potential for many more interesting connections between dimensions than have been uncovered so far. For instance, there may be correlations between formal features of norms and other features of norms, such as mode of norm transmission or the type of response elicited by norm compliance. Regarding the difference between proscriptive and prescriptive norms, Nichols (2004b) suggests that rules backed by negative affect that prohibit upsetting actions are more easily remembered and transmitted (128), and Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, and Hepp (2009) claim prescriptions and proscriptions are associated with distinct motivational systems of approach and avoidance.

3 | A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE MORAL AND NONMORAL

Perhaps the most influential proposed divisions of norms distinguishes “moral” from nonmoral norms—in particular, from “conventional” norms (Nucci, 2001; Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Turiel, 1977). The two categories have been distinguished by differences in content, the grounds on which norms are justified, people's reaction to norm violation as more or less serious, and scope of application.

Piaget (1932) and Kohlberg (1969, 1981) saw divisions in norms that fell along the lines of grounding and the processes that led to the moral judgments. Piaget proposed that children transition from acquiring norms with various content from authority figures to adopting norms related to equality and justice through reasoning and interactions, especially negotiation, with peers viewed as equals. Kohlberg posited a theory of six stages of moral development, in which individuals tend to progress from taking norms to be justified by (preconventional) considerations of obedience or punishment and self-interest; (conventional) considerations of shared beliefs or agreement, authority, and maintaining social order; and (postconventional) considerations related to a social contract or universal moral principles.¹⁵ Distinguishing norms by their source or their grounds for justification enabled the construction of a hierarchy of moral judgments. Postconventional stages, with moral content related to justice and rights and moral judgments defended in terms of justice and rights, were the most advanced.

The moral-conventional task, developed by Turiel and colleagues, has structured much of the recent research on the question of a distinction between the moral and conventional. Nucci and Turiel proposed that the moral and conventional constitute “two distinct conceptual domains” and that “social conventional concepts form a developmental system distinct from that of moral concepts” (Nucci & Turiel, 1978, 401). Nucci and Turiel identified moral norms by content as those relating to “justice, welfare, or rights of individuals or groups” (Nucci & Turiel, 1978, 402). The moral-conventional task evaluated whether there were differences in the degree of authority-independence, seriousness, and universality that subjects associated with a list of sample norms independently classified as moral or conventional. The initial suggestion that moral norm violations are considered more serious was undermined by counterexamples of conventional norm violations treated seriously (Turiel, 1983). That aside, researchers in this tradition found evidence of a “signature response” to moral norms: In comparison to their treatment of other norms, people treat moral norms as universal or at least more general in scope—applicable to people at other times and places—and less alterable or contingent (violations are still wrong even when there is no rule against them, a legitimate authority permits them, or there is no general opposition to them), and people were more likely to justify moral norms by appeal to justice, welfare, or rights rather than coordination or tradition.¹⁶

However, critics have identified ways in which the components of the signature moral and conventional responses come apart. Some studies found that some norms that do not involve justice, welfare, or rights are treated by some groups of people as authority independent and/or having general scope.¹⁷ For instance, Nucci and Turiel (1993) found that some religious norms that do not involve justice, welfare, or rights were counted as authority independent, though not universal. In addition, some prototypical conventional norms, such as etiquette norms, are taken to be applicable generally.¹⁸ Others have found that some norms that do involve justice, welfare, or rights do not elicit the signature moral response in a significant proportion of subjects—some are judged to not apply at other times or places, or are judged as authority dependent.¹⁹ The use of the moral-conventional task has also received criticism for the ways that authority independence and generalizability are tested (Quintelier, Fessler, & De Smet, 2012).

Looking at a related property, “objectivity,” that might distinguish moral from conventional norms, Nichols (2004a) sought to investigate whether people treat moral claims as dissimilar from taste claims and similar to ordinary factual claims, in the sense that if two people disagree about whether a norm applies, one of them must be mistaken.²⁰ Goodwin and Darley (2008, 2010, 2012) pursued a similar question.²¹ To the extent that views on whether disagreement implies a mistake track whether subjects view the truth of moral claims as mind independent, this property might fall alongside authority independence under alterability or contingency and the question of what makes moral norms true.²²

The results of these studies were mixed, with evidence that college students were objectivists about canonical moral norms but with variation across different norms (Goodwin & Darley, 2008) and also that they were more objective about norms regarding negative (wrong or bad) actions than positive (right or good) actions and norms with greater perceived social agreement (Goodwin & Darley, 2012).²³ Sarkissian et al. (2011) found that subjects were less objectivist when considering cases where the disagreement was with someone distant culturally.²⁴ In addition, Beebe et al. (2015) and Beebe and Sackris (2016) found age differences in degree of objectivism, and there appears to be substantial individual variation in views of moral objectivity (Feltz & Cokely, 2008; Wright, Grandjean, & McWhite, 2013). These results do not line up nicely with the moral-conventional distinction—There is too much variation in how canonical moral norms are treated. Ascertaining why norms are treated differently along the dimension of objectivity, though, could still point us to interesting types of norms, whether moral or not.

The Turiel content-based way of distinguishing the moral domain has been interpreted multiple ways, but one is that the violation of any norm involving harm or justice or rights counts as a moral violation. Several researchers now defend variants on this content-based division between moral norms and others. Royzman, Goodwin, and Leeman (2011) and Royzman, Leeman, and Baron (2009) argue that moral norms are distinguished from other norms by content that regulates actions thought to be intrinsically harmful to others. Gray, Young, and Waytz (2012, 116) argue that “immoral acts are norm violations that match a dyadic template: Acts are wrong when they involve the intentional causation of suffering.” Piazza and Sousa (2016) argue that the mixed evidence on the moral-conventional distinction can be accommodated if moral transgressions are those that the folk judge to involve justice or rights transgressions.

Harm, they argue, is insufficient for producing the hallmark features associated with moral norms: authority-independence and generality. Proposing a revision to the content of moral norms, they advance the hypothesis that only justice and rights transgressions will be counted as moral.²⁵

A different sort of account that can shed light on the difference between moral and conventional norms is Nichols' (2002, 2004b) position, which characterizes moral judgments partly based on the feature of being affect backed. On this sort of view, moral norms could be distinguished from other sorts of norms in part by the cause or the psychological mechanisms involved in judgments about them.²⁶

It is a further question whether folk classifications of norms as moral rather than nonmoral (which may vary significantly between individuals and by culture) map on to any of the existing accounts of what distinguishes moral norms; this has not been sufficiently explored.²⁷ Recently, Levine et al. (ms) have sought to investigate differences between moral and nonmoral norms in a way that avoids assumptions about the properties that characterize moral norms by identifying similarities in norms that subjects classify as moral and those that they classify as nonmoral. Thus far, this project has produced evidence that there are variations by religious background in how broadly people conceive the content of the moral domain.

Together, the research on the moral-conventional distinction does not support a clean distinction between moral and conventional norms across all the dimensions of content, justification, scope, alterability or contingency, and response to violations. There may be some sort of association between authority-independence and generality and a more complicated association between these and greater seriousness. It may also turn out that there is a connection between these and moral objectivity in the illegitimacy-of-disagreement sense.²⁸ It seems much less likely that there is a further association between these properties and content or justification by appeal to rights, justice, and harm, though the question is made more complicated by disputes over what is being measured in key experiments and over what counts as a harm. Nor is it yet clear to what extent these clusters of properties will be reflected in folk labeling of norms as moral or nonmoral or whether the folk treat norms with these properties as similar to each other. A promising direction for future research on kinds of norms may be to pursue a better understanding of the psychological, developmental, and evolutionary causes that lead us to treat some norms as more serious, general, alterable, or objective than other norms.

Now, I will turn to divisions of norms that split the moral domain into subcategories that differ by content, emotions and other responses elicited, grounds of justification, and developmental and evolutionary origins.

4 | DISTINCTIONS WITHIN MORAL NORMS

Within the broad category of moral norms, there have been several divisions proposed. Early divisions include Gilligan's (1982) ethics of care and ethics of justice, which rejected the Kohlberg view of justice alone as the core content and source of justification in morality.

Shweder et al.'s (1997) "big three" model posited an ethics of autonomy, community, and divinity—different domains of moral discourse, organized on the basis of clusters in the themes people appealed to when justifying moral judgments. Autonomy involved themes of harm, rights, and justice; community involved duty, hierarchy, interdependence, and souls; and divinity involved sacred order, natural order, sanctity, and tradition. Shweder et al. (1997) also suggested an association between sources of obligation and different discourses: In the domain of autonomy, "obligations come from being a person"; in the domain of community, "obligations come from being part of a community" (139). Part of this proposal was that different cultures put a different degree of stress on each domain.²⁹ Later research associated particular emotions with violations of norms in each domain: anger with autonomy, contempt with community, and disgust with divinity (Rozin et al. 1999).³⁰

Haidt and colleagues (Haidt & Joseph, 2004, 2007) extended Shweder's work with the moral foundation theory. They present this theory explicitly as an effort to carve the world up by its joints.³¹ In particular, the idea is that each foundation is composed of a set of functionally specified mental modules that work together to produce "families or categories" of intuitive moral judgments (Graham et al., 2012, 11). Haidt and colleagues seek to identify the minimum

number needed to explain “the breadth of the moral domain” (Graham et al., 2012, 4). Early on, they suggested five foundations: harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, in-group/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity (Haidt & Joseph, 2004, 2007).³² Since then, they have considered a sixth, liberty or oppression, and they note that there may be additional foundations related to efficiency or waste (as suggested by Elizabeth Shulman and Andrew Mastrorarde), ownership or theft (suggested by Polly Wiessner), and honesty or deception (Graham et al., 2012; Haidt, 2012, Haidt, 2007). The different foundations are responses to different adaptive challenges; each foundation has a different evolutionary origin. Furthermore, each involves different characteristic emotions, and each is triggered by a different set of conditions. They offer several criteria for inclusion as a foundation: (a) violations of norms in that category are “a common concern in third-party normative judgments,” (b) the set of intuitive moral judgments in that category is associated with automatic affective evaluations, (c) concern for intuitions in that category is culturally widespread, (d) there is evidence that the foundation is innate, and (e) there are evolutionary models showing how the foundation would have been adaptive (Graham et al., 2012). They write, “there are many aspects of human nature that contribute to and constrain moral judgment, and our task is to identify the most important ones—the sets of social sensitivities that are most helpful for understanding intercultural and intracultural moral disagreements, and for understanding moral thought and behavior in general” (Graham et al., 2012, 35). They suggest that some foundations will meet their proposed criteria more cleanly than other, less prototypical foundations. There are other divisions that cut across these categories: Haidt et al. have noted a higher level division between individual norms and group norms, with the domains of loyalty, authority, and sanctity as more group oriented.³³ And Chakroff, Dungan, and Young (2013) distinguish self-directed and other-directed actions, to divide moral domains by action target.

Fiske (1991) distinguished four mental models for guiding social interaction (communal sharing, authority ranking, equality matching, and market pricing). Rai and Fiske (2011) draw on this relational models theory (Fiske, 1991, 1992, 2004) to argue for four types of universal, fundamental moral “motives”: unity, hierarchy, equality, and proportionality. These arise from different social-relational contexts and four basic types of social relationships, each of which involves different obligations and transgressions. Their account organizes moral norms based not on action types or consequences but on context and motive. On such a view, the possible content of morality is expanded, in the sense that any sort of action could be a moral action, if it is produced by one of the moral motives (2011, 68).

Sunar (2009) outlines a way of integrating the Fiske view with the Shweder divisions. She identifies three “moral clusters,” characterized by evolutionary origin, relational model, moral domain, and moral emotions (for norm violator and observer) (466). She also notes that each of these may have corresponding developmental processes, forms of punishment, and neural processes but that we do not yet have the evidence to assess this. She presents the Haidt division as a competing, alternative model.

However, there are also other, competing proposals for classifying moral norms organized partly by motivation types. Janoff-Bulman et al. (2009, 2010) promote an alternative division of norms on the basis of differences in motivations, proximal mechanisms, and developmental origins. Their account focuses on the division between prescriptive and proscriptive norms. They argue that we are led to comply with these norms by two systems, each with a different type of motivation, and involving different developmental pathways: “Proscriptive regulation is sensitive to negative outcomes, inhibition based, and focused on what we should not do. Prescriptive regulation is sensitive to positive outcomes, activation based, and focused on what we should do” (Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010, 213). With Triune Ethics Theory, Narvaez (2008, 2016) has also developed an account of types of ethics—ethics of security, engagement, and imagination—that is rooted in different types of motivations, distinct brain structures, and different evolutionary pressures.

Tomasello (2016) has presented morality as having two “pillars”: first, a concern for the welfare of others and, second, a concern for justice and fairness. The concern for welfare arose first in human evolution, a product of kin selection favoring parental care, which was then extended to others in one’s group. Originally driven by sympathy, this part of morality may now involve other psychological motivations as well. The concern for justice and fairness, built on top of the concern for welfare, emerged later, a product of the need to collaborate with others to achieve joint goals. Out of this process came a sense of impartial standards for collaborators’ roles and a sense of group identity tied to notions of how one ought to act if one is to be part of the group. Later, around 150,000 years ago, humans

transitioned from small groups with known members to large cultural groups whose members needed to collaborate and cooperate with others whom they did not know personally; at this point, group identity expanded to the level of culture and a “more impersonal collective morality” appeared (7). Fairness morality in this context required consideration of factors such as (some form of) equality, deservingness, and in-group or out-group status. Ultimately, both norms of welfare and of fairness came to have a particular phenomenology and a “three-way generality” that applies to agents, targets, and standards (Tomasello, 2016, 102–103). This division of norms seems largely driven by the identification of distinct evolutionary origins for different norms, which can help explain differences in the norms' proximal causes, how people respond to their violation, and so forth.

In contrast to the accounts of moral norms discussed thus far, with their multiplicity of distinct moral content, mechanisms, or motivations, there are several monistic takes on moral norms that present them as having shared content, justification, or origins.

Gray et al. (2012) propose that all moral concerns can be reduced in terms of content and justification to concerns about harm. Canonical moral wrongs involve an agent who harms a patient. When we judge something to be wrong, we look for both moral agent and moral patient, even though one or the other may be hard to identify—supposedly victimless crimes are thought to harm the self, or society, and so forth; natural disasters and other harms caused by no human are attributed to other agents, such as god (Gray, Schein, & Ward, 2014). Humans have a “dyadic harm-based template of wrongdoer + victim” that “serves as a cognitive working model” (Gray et al., 2014, 1601). Despite this, Gray et al. note that their account is consistent with a type of pluralism: Morality may involve different kinds of moral judgments, in the sense that one could distinguish judgments relating to different kinds of victims (e.g., self, another person, or society) or different kinds of wrongdoer. However, they stress that all such kinds of judgments could be the product of the just one psychological mechanism (Gray et al., 2014, 1609). On this theory, then, it seems that it may still be useful to divide moral norms or judgments by content in some sense—in fact, one could even distinguish norms that relate to patriotism, sanctity, and so forth—but the suggestion is that each category will involve some shared content (having to do with perceived intent and suffering), and norms from all such moral categories could be justified by appeal to concerns about suffering. Such a division will not be associated with different psychological mechanisms: Each will rely on the moral dyadic template. Presumably, any subtypes of moral norms that are consistent with this view will also not involve distinct evolutionary origins.

Baumard, André, and Sperber (2013a) suggest that there is a fairness-based moral psychology involving a “disposition to be intrinsically motivated to be fair,” which has a distinct evolutionary history (65).³⁴ They allow for the possibility that there are other aspects of morality—they mention purity and piety (65)—but if these evolved it was via different selection pressures, and they are aspects distinct from the “specific and noninstrumental preference for fairness” (77). They propose that humans share a sense of fairness: If fairness judgments on particular cases differ, it is likely due to disagreement about nonmoral facts, or different perceptions of the game being played, in the case of economics experiments. They discuss several norms that they expect to arise under typical circumstances: In a cooperative effort to produce a good, the good will be distributed as a function of effort and talent; mutual aid will be particularly likely to arise in conditions of risk and unpredictability, and degree of aid is a function of the cost of aiding, the benefit to the recipient, and the possibility of aid from elsewhere (67–68). Among the factors that may shape punishment are compensation proportional to degree of harm done and benefit gained by perpetrator, a proportional level of harm to the wrongdoer, and deterrence.

The idea that moral norms reduce to norms about harm or about fairness harks back to ideas such as the ethics of care and the ethics of justice. However, other monistic reductions have also been suggested. RoCHAT (2014) has proposed that morality may have at its foundation a concern for property. By this, he means that developmentally, individuals' grasp of moral concepts derives from an initial concern with property and that evolutionarily, morality has come about as a way of resolving property disputes. Boehm (1999, 2000) has argued that conflicts produced by dominance hierarchies within groups are the basis for morality, with equality and reciprocity as its core content.

It is worth highlighting that one needs not assume that the divisions discussed in this section exist “within” a domain of morality—in principle, the divisions could crosscut moral, conventional, religious, etiquette, and other

similar categories. However, in as much as the classifications of this section do claim to be characterizing moral subdomains, some of them will certainly conflict with some of the accounts distinguishing the moral from the nonmoral. Moral foundations theory, for instance, explicitly departed from traditions that viewed morality as largely limited to harm, justice, and rights content. An interesting question in its own right is how the features of norms that have been associated with morality, such as generality, alterability or contingency, and seriousness, differ across the domains of norms that have been discussed in this section. There has been a perhaps surprisingly low level of engagement across the research on the moral-conventional distinction and categories of moral norms. The relationship between these two classification schemes warrants further investigation.

5 | PLURALISM ABOUT CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES FOR NORMS

These classification systems for norms have been proposed for various purposes and could be used to advance multiple ends: to identify natural kinds in human moral psychology (e.g., Kumar, 2015), to explain the origins of human morality, to show that some norms and some ways of producing moral judgments are better than others and that some norms are produced in a suspect way (e.g., Kelly, 2011 on norms influenced by disgust), and to understand human moral psychology for the purpose of modifying or cultivating morality (e.g., Nucci, Krettenauer, & Narváez, 2008 on moral education; Rottman, Kelemen, & Young, 2015 on encouraging environmentalism). For these various purposes, I propose that it may be in our interest to develop multiple classification schemes for norms. We may find it useful, depending on our goals, to categorize norms by shared proximal causes, such as the influence of a certain emotion, developmental origins, evolutionary histories, this or that division of content, context, type of reaction that norm violations inspire in us, grounds for justification, or other feature. A single classification scheme that involves all of the dimensions I have highlighted, associating contents with causes, reaction, and so forth, will likely be either unfeasible to construct or insufficient for our various ends. In addition, we may find some classification systems more insightful for understanding morality in some cultures and other systems more insightful for others.

As for very broad divisions among norms, such as the distinction between moral and conventional, or Haidt's moral foundations, which may cut across many different dimensions, I propose that it may be fruitful to focus our attention on more fine-grained relationships between norms—for instance, correlations between formal features and developmental origins, content and reactions, or context and justification. There may also be shared features across the categories of linguistic, epistemic, aesthetic, etiquette, religious, and legal norms, in terms of proximal mechanisms, development, and evolutionary origins that will not be identified if each type of norm is studied only in isolation. If the broad divisions between norms do exist, evidence supporting them will emerge from study of the relationships between the properties of norms along the relevant dimensions. Regardless, looking at these relationships and entertaining alternative schemes for classifying norms has the potential to reveal relationships that we would not have anticipated.

6 | CONCLUSION

This article has provided an overview of influential norm classification schemes, especially characterizations of moral norms as distinct from others and characterizations of types of moral norms. It identified a set of dimensions that have been and can usefully be considered when classifying norms and proposed a pluralist approach to classification systems for norms.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ There is a distinct literature on classifying human values, such as the Schwartz Value Scale, meant to identify values recognized in all cultures (Schwartz, 1992, 2012; See also Morris, 1956; Rokeach, 1973). Within this literature, values have been categorized on the basis of their degree of compatibility and conflict with other values (Schwartz 2012), and whether they are “ends values” or “means values” (Rokeach, 1973).
- ² In addition, among discretionary actions, one can distinguish actions that are suberogatory (bad but not forbidden), neutral, and supererogatory (good but not required) (Urmson, 1958; Driver, 1992; See Salomon & Sousa, 2010 for an empirical study on folk use of nine moral categories of actions and omissions).
- ³ For instance, according to whether they involve actions of killing, battery, stealing, and so forth. (Mikhail, 2007, 2011). Division by action type could also distinguish action or inaction (or omission), greater or lesser spatial proximity (Greene, 2014), or “personal or impersonal” interaction (Greene et al., 2001, 2009). Also, see Southwood (2011) for discussion.
- ⁴ This can include requirements such as performing the action in a spirit of humility, with love or respect, or with a certain intent or motive. For instance, it appears that people are more concerned with a norm violator's intent when evaluating some norm violations, such as those involving harm, and less concerned with intent when evaluating other norm violations, such as those involving purity (Chakroff et al. 2016; Young and Saxe 2011; Cushman, 2015a).
- ⁵ Whether there is a difference between categorizing norms by content and by domain may depend in part on whether we can identify such contexts independently of the content of their norms; if not, division of norms by context may reduce to divisions by content. Likewise, implications about context may be built into the content of the norm.
- ⁶ See Dungan and Young (2015) for an argument for dividing domains of norms by function rather than content.
- ⁷ Cushman (2015b) proposes several hypotheses to explain the feeling that moral rules are inviolable.
- ⁸ The related idea that certain reactive attitudes (such as guilt and anger) are appropriate responses to moral norms violations (Gibbard 1992) has been understudied empirically.
- ⁹ See Rozin (1999), Haidt (2003), Szekely and Miu (2015), O'Mara et al. (2011), Ugazio, Lamm, and Singer (2012), Russell and Piazza (2014), Fessler and Haley (2003); Russell and Giner-Sorolla (2011). However, see Cameron, Lindquist, and Gray (2015) for an argument against the association between emotions and particular types of morality.
- ¹⁰ See, for example, Tetlock, Self, and Singh (2010); Inbar, Pizarro, and Cushman (2012); Pizarro, Uhlmann, and Bloom (2003); Gray and Wegner (2011); Fast and Tiedens (2010); Turri and Blouw (2015).
- ¹¹ See Tangney, Stuewig, and Mashek (2007) for an overview on shame and guilt; see Parkinson et al. (2011) on different neural regions associated with judgments on the topics of physical harm, dishonesty, and sexual disgust; see Churchland (2011) for an overview of the neuroscience of morality; see also Chakroff et al. (2016), Usoof-Thowfeek, Janoff-Bulman, and Tavernini (2011), Cushman, Young, and Hauser (2006), Koleva et al. (2014), Navarrete et al. (2004).
- ¹² See, for example, Kochanska (1997), Narvaez et al. (2013), Narvaez (2014), Bloom (2013).
- ¹³ See, for example, Mengistu (2016) on hierarchy, Rochat (2014) on property, Wiegman (2014) on anger and retribution, McCullough, Kurzban, and Tabak (2013) on revenge and forgiveness, Kelly (2011) on purity, Tomasello (2016) on prosocial and fairness norms and the creation of in-groups, and Dungan and Young (2015) on whether domains of morality had different evolutionary functions.
- ¹⁴ See, for example, Henrich and Henrich (2007), Chudek and Henrich (2011); Boyd and Richerson (2005), Sperber and Baumard (2012), Baumard et al. (2013a), Tomasello (2016).
- ¹⁵ Later, this was reformulated with additional substages and hard and soft stages, and it was presented as a theory of justice reasoning, without claiming that the matter of justice was all that morality consisted of (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983).
- ¹⁶ Some of the evidence in favour of the distinction comes from Nucci and Turiel (1978), Nucci and Nucci (1982), Nucci, Turiel, and Encarnacion-Gawrych (1983), Smetana (1981), Smetana (1995), Yau and Smetana (2003), Tisak (1995), Tisak and Turiel (1984), Nichols and Folds-Bennett (2003).
- ¹⁷ See, for example, Haidt, Koller, and Dias (1993), Nisan (1987), Schweder and Haidt (1993), Nichols, 2002.
- ¹⁸ See examples in Southwood (2011).
- ¹⁹ See Kelly et al. (2007), Stich, Fessler, and Kelly (2009). In addition, Fessler et al. (2015) argue that the severity of judgments about the wrongness of harm, rights, and justice transgressions are reduced when the case in question occurs at a distant time or place or the transgression is permitted by an authority. They say this is predicted by evolution, and support their thesis with evidence from seven cultures. However, Piazza and Sousa (2016) dispute their interpretation of that evidence (See also Fessler et al., 2016).
- ²⁰ See also Wainryb et al. (2001, Wainryb et al., 2004). See Smith 1994
- ²¹ However, see Beebe and Sackris (2016) for important criticisms of the Nichols and Goodwin and Darley methods for assessing whether subjects think disagreement implies a mistake. See Sarkissian (2016) for an overview of research on folk moral objectivity.

- ²² It is possible, though, that this research is sometimes tracking other things, for example, that subjects think there can be disagreement without error because they think there is so much uncertainty about whether a claim is true that one view is epistemically no better than another. When subjects think that disagreement between two parties from very different backgrounds need not imply an error, this may reflect their views on the restricted generality (scope) of the norm.
- ²³ Wright et al. (2013) also found evidence that people treat some prototypical moral norms as objective and others not.
- ²⁴ Kumar (2015) suggests the possibility that this is because subjects "conceive of morality as objective for similar groups of people."
- ²⁵ Notice that this account begins with alterability and scope criteria for moral norms—authority independence and generality—and investigates the content associated with those features.
- ²⁶ Prinz (2006) similarly argues that moral rules are more grounded in emotion than conventional rules. Royzman et al. (2009, 2011) have criticized Nichols' proposal.
- ²⁷ See Wright, Cullum, and Schwab (2008), Miller, Bersoff, and Harwood (1990), and Brandt and Wetherell (2012) for research that solicits subjects' views on whether issues are moral or not.
- ²⁸ See Kumar (2015) for a defense of this view.
- ²⁹ See Guerra and Giner-Sorolla (2010) on variations in emphasis across cultures and the relation between Shweder's model and moral foundations theory.
- ³⁰ Also see Haidt (2003) for a division of four types of moral emotions: other-condemning (contempt, anger, disgust), self-conscious (shame, embarrassment, guilt), other-suffering (sympathy or compassion), and other-praising (gratitude, elevation, including awe).
- ³¹ In their moral foundations prize challenge, they wrote, "We believe the five foundations are the best way to carve nature and culture at the joints when studying moral psychology." (Haidt, J. 2007). <http://www.moralfoundations.org/challenges>
- ³² They now present these slightly differently as care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation (Graham et al. 2012).
- ³³ Dungan, Waytz, and Young (2014) have proposed that many moral conflicts may be due to conflicts between two types of norms: norms that are group-based, such as those related to loyalty, and norms that apply regardless of group membership, such as norms related to fairness.
- ³⁴ See Machery and Stich (2013) and Baumard, André, and Sperber (2013b) for further discussion on how Baumard et al. view the relationship between morality and fairness.

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