

# Normtypologies

Harko Verhagen<sup>1</sup>

Department of Computer and Systems Sciences, Stockholm University / KTH  
SE-16440, Kista, Forum 100, Sweden  
[verhagen@dsv.su.se](mailto:verhagen@dsv.su.se)

**Abstract.** In this extended abstract I describe some norm typologies developed within sociology and social philosophy. Using these typologies we can determine the boundaries of the different approaches to normative agent systems.

**Keywords.** Norms, Multiagent systems, Normative multiagent systems, Typologies

## 1 Extended abstract

The concept of a norm is problematic. Not only due to the different views on norms in different research areas, but also since the concept is used in everyday life in ambiguous ways. As in folkpsychology, the use of "folksociological" concepts in scientific research creates problems. To deal with both problems I propose to analyse available norm typologies to create a framework with which to evaluate the possibilities and impossibilities to address different types of norms using various approaches to normative agentsystems.

Morris [1] proposes a definitional difference between norms and the closely related concept of values after which he proceeds to present a classification scheme for different types of norms. Following [2] he proposes that values can be held individually and never include sanctions whereas norms are "generally accepted, sanctioned prescriptions for, or prohibitions against, others' behavior, belief, or feeling, i.e. what others *ought* to do believe, feel - *or else* (original emphasis). Also, values only apply to the person having the values, while norms have subjects (who set the norms) and objects (to whom the norms are applied). Morris concludes by summing up a selection of 17 characteristics in four categories that can be used to typify norms. These are:

1. Distribution of the Norm
  - (a) Extent of Knowledge of the Norm
    - By subjects (those who set the norm) - very few - almost everyone
    - By objects (those to whom the norm applies) - very few - almost everyone
  - (b) Extent of Acceptance of or Agreement with the Norm
    - By subjects (those who set the norm) - very few - almost everyone

- By objects (those to whom the norm applies) - very few – almost everyone
- (c) Extent of Application if the Norm to Objects
  - To groups or categories - very few – almost everyone
  - To conditions - in specified few – in almost all
- 2. Mode of Enforcement of the Norm
  - Reward - Punishment - more reward than punishment – more punishment than reward
  - Severity of sanction - light, unimportant – heavy, important
  - Enforcing agency - specialized, designated responsibility – general, universal responsibility
  - Extent of enforcement - lax, intermittent – rigorous, uniform
  - Source of authority - rational, expedient, instrumental – divine, inherent, absolute, autonomous
  - Degree of internalization by objects - little, external enforcement required – great, self-enforcement sufficient
- 3. Transmission of the Norm
  - (a) Socialization process - late learning, from secondary relations – early learning, from primary relations
  - (b) Degree of reinforcement by subject - very little – high, persistent
- 4. Conformity to the Norm
  - (a) Amount of conformity attempted by objects - attempted by very few – attempted by almost everyone
  - (b) Amount of deviance by objects - very great – very little
  - (c) Kind of deviance - formation of subnorms – patterned evasion – idiosyncratic deviation

Two general types of norms that can be inferred from this classification scheme are what [1] calls an absolute norm and a conditional norm. In the first case all right hand side characteristics apply while for conditional norms all left hand extremes apply.

In the 1960's Gibbs [3] followed up on Morris's work by distinguishing definitional and contingent attributes in Morris's list of characteristics. The end product is a typology of norms encompassing conventions, morals, mores, rules and laws as depicted in figure 1.

Tuomela [4] on his turn distinguishes two kinds of social norms (meaning community norms), namely, rules (r-norms) and proper social norms (s-norms). Rules are norms created by an authority structure and are always based on agreement making. Proper social norms are based on mutual belief. Rules can be formal, in which case they are connected to formal sanctions, or informal, where the sanctions are also informal. Proper social norms consist of conventions, which apply to a large group such as a whole society or socioeconomic class, and group-specific norms. The sanctions connected to both types of proper social norms are social sanctions and may include punishment by others and expelling from the group. Aside from these norms, Tuomela also described personal norms and potential social norms (these are norms that are normally widely obeyed

		Low probability that an attempt will be made to apply a sanction when the act occurs	High probability that an attempt will be made to apply a sanction when the act occurs			
			By anyone (i.e., without regard to status)		Only by a person or persons in a particular status or statuses	
			By means that exclude the use of force	By means that may include the use of force	By means that exclude the use of force	By means that may include the use of force
Collective evaluation of the act	Collective expectation concerning the act	Type A: Collective conventions	Type D: Collective morals	Type H: Collective mores	Type L: Collective rules	Type P: Collective laws
	No collective expectation concerning the act	Type B: Problematic conventions	Type E: Problematic morals	Type I: Problematic mores	Type M: Problematic rules	Type Q: Problematic laws
No collective evaluation of the act	Collective expectation concerning the act	Type C: Customs	Type F: Possible empirical null class	Type J: Possible empirical null class	Type N: Exogenous rules	Type R: Exogenous laws
	No collective expectation concerning the act	Logical null class, i.e., non-normative	Type G: Possible empirical null class	Type K: Possible empirical null class	Type O: Coercive rules	Type S: Coercive laws

**Fig. 1.** Norm typology developed by Gibbs [3]

but that are not in their essence based on social responsiveness and that, in principle, could be personal only). These potential social norms contain, among others, moral and prudential norms (m-norms and p-norms, respectively). The reasons for accepting norms differ as to the kind of norms:

- Rules are obeyed because they are agreed upon.
- Proper social norms are obeyed because others expect one to obey.
- Moral norms are obeyed because of one's conscience.
- Prudential norms are obeyed because it is the rational thing to do.

The motivational power of all types of norms depends on the norm being a subject's reason for action. In other words, norms need to be internalized and accepted.

Therborn [5] distinguishes among three kinds of norms. *Constitutive norms* define a system of action and an agent's membership in it, *regulative norms* describe the expected contributions to the social system, and *distributive norms* defining how rewards, costs, and risks are allocated within a social system. Furthermore, he distinguishes between non-institutionalized normative order, made up by personal and moral norms in day-to-day social traffic, and institutions, an example of a social system defined as a closed system of norms. Institutional normative action is equated with role plays, i.e., roles find their expressions in expectations, obligations, and rights vis-a-vis the role holder's behaviour.

## References

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