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HOW TO DISTINGUISH NORMS FROM VALUES

abstract

It is difficult to find decisive criteria by which to distinguish norms from values. In this article I argue that if we assume that norms essentially possess a specific set of properties, and that values do not possess these properties, we can better appreciate the distinction between norms and values and explain the plausibility of other traditional criteria of distinction. The relevant properties are that norms are directed to some addressees, possess conditions of satisfaction and are supposed to guide and motivate their addressees to satisfy these conditions.

keywords

Norms; values; ontology of norms

HOW TO DISTINGUISH NORMS FROM VALUES

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One of the most general distinctions in the normative domain is that between norms and values.[1] Paradigmatic types of norms are duties, directives, moral norms, positive laws, rules regulating specific practices like games, reasoning and language, rules of etiquette and customs. Instances of values are goodness, intelligence, courage, injustice, inefficacy and awfulness.[2] Although the distinction between these two domains looks *prima facie* intuitive, it is difficult to find clear and decisive criteria by which to distinguish norms from values. Philosophers have tried to individuate properties distinctive of each domain. However, there is disagreement about whether the suggested criteria can provide sufficient conditions to individuate and distinguish each domain from the other. Furthermore, even the apparently most plausible criteria of distinction rely on features which seem to be derivative from some further more fundamental properties of norms or values.[3]

In this article, I argue that if we assume that norms essentially possess a specific set of properties, and that values do not possess these same properties, we can individuate more stable grounds for the distinction and provide an explanation of the plausibility of the criteria traditionally used by philosophers to track the distinction. The relevant properties constitutive of norms are that norms are directed to some addressees, possess conditions of satisfaction, and are supposed to guide and motivate their addresses to satisfy these conditions and to do it in the appropriate way.

1 According to a different terminology, norms are called "deontic norms" and values "evaluative norms" or "axiological norms". A less common terminology calls the formers "directives" and the latter "evaluations" or "evaluatives". For these uses see, for example, Wiggins (1998), p. 95 and Thomson (2008).

2 Values may be distinguished as positive or negative (disvalues). I will use here the term "value" in a technical sense, designating both values and disvalues. This use diverges from an ordinary use of the term according to which values are positive, as opposed to disvalues. See Mulligan (2010) for a clarification of the two uses.

3 In this paper I discuss how values and norms should be distinguished. I do not address other important issues such as how values and norms are related, what they have in common, and how they differ from non-normative entities and properties, such as physical and abstract objects. The distinction between the normative and the non-normative domain is often drawn on the basis of a distinction between what is and what should/ought to be, or in terms of natural vs. non-natural facts (where natural facts are the proper objects of natural sciences or mathematics, accountable for in mere descriptive terms). This distinction has been discussed in the analytical tradition since David Hume and G.E. Moore (e.g., Moore (1903/1993), p. 92). For an analogous discussion in the non-analytical tradition see Husserl (1973) §14. For a recent discussion see also Tappolet (2000), pp. 15-16 and Mulligan (2009), p. 405.

This is the plan of the article: in section 1 I introduce and critically discuss the traditional criteria of distinction between norms and values. In section 2 I put forward a description of the relevant properties that I consider characteristic of norms. In section 3 I show how such properties can provide an explanation of the criteria of distinction considered in section 1.

1. Traditional Criteria of Distinction

In this section I introduce a list of criteria traditionally used in the literature to track the distinction between norms and values and provide a brief critical discussion of each of them.

1. *Lexical differences*.[4] Values and norms are expressed by distinct families of terms. Terms expressing values are linked amongst themselves and organized around the general terms "good" and "bad". All evaluative terms are appreciative or depreciative, i.e., they qualify an entity in some positive or negative sense. The domain of evaluative terms is distinct and independent from that including normative terms such as "obligatory", "permitted" and "forbidden". Terms and expressions of this second lexical family are, in their turn, connected by different relations. According to a common view, "forbidden", "permitted" and "obligatory" are inter-definable: what is obligatory is not permitted not to do, what is forbidden is obligatory not to do, and what is permitted is not obligatory not to do.[5] Another difference concerns the respective judgments: judgments about norms can be expressed by imperative claims (compare "it is forbidden to trample on the grass" and "don't trample on the grass!"). This is not the case for judgments about values.

2. *Conceptual richness/poorness*.[6] Evaluative concepts can be distinguished as thick or thin.[7] Thick concepts, such as goodness and badness, are more specific than thin concepts such as generosity, honesty and boredom. All thick evaluative concepts designate properties that can be considered as varieties of ways in which a thing or a person may be good or bad. The relations

4 Ogien e Tappolet (2009), pp. 40-44. See also Smith (2005), pp. 11-12 for a similar distinction.
5 The interdefinability of these three notions has been the target of some criticisms. In particular it has been argued that permissions cannot be defined in terms of the other two concepts. See, for example, Von Wright 1963, pp. 83-87.
6 Mulligan (1998); Mulligan (2009),Ogien e Tappolet (2009)
7 See, for example, Mulligan (1998), p. 162, Mulligan (2009), pp. 401-402 and 409-410, Tappolet (2000), pp. 14 and 20-23. The distinction between thick and thin values is due to Bernard Williams; see, e.g., Williams (1985), p. 128.

amongst norms are less complex than those exhibited among values. In a way, norms also admit specifications. Norms can be distinguished in sub-species such as moral, cognitive, aesthetic, technical, prudential, economic, and so on. An action can be legally permitted or permitted according to some specific legal code, and so on. However there is an asymmetry between the specificity of thick evaluative concepts and that of norms. While thick evaluative concepts are different concepts from the thin evaluative ones that they specify (goodness is different from generosity; one can be evil but generous), more specified norms do not designate independent normative concepts, they are specifications of normative standards they are relative to (what is legally permitted is what the law permits, it is an instance of permission relative to a specific standard).

3. *Psychological distinctions*.[8] Values seem to be related to affective and emotional states.[9] For example, admirability and shamefulness are connected to the emotions of admiration and shame. There is a conceptual dependence between many evaluative predicates and predicates of emotional states (e.g., boring and being bored, amusing and being amused, annoying and being annoyed). Norms don't entertain so strict a relation with emotions. The notions of obligatoriness and permission do not have corresponding notions in the domain of emotional states. It has been argued that norms have more affinities with desires insofar as, contrary to emotions and similarly to desires, they tend to directly motivate agents. This doesn't seem completely correct. Norms clearly entertain a special relation with motivation that values do not. However there is an important difference between the motivational force of desires and that of norms. Even if norms are always supposed to motivate their addressees to act as they require, they may fail to be regarded by agents as sources of motivation.

4. *Syntactical differences*.[10] A standard view is that judgments expressing norms often possess a logical form involving operators which take propositions or predicates (e.g., "it is forbidden [to trample on the grass]", "it is obligatory that [drivers stop

8 Wiggins (1987), Mulligan (1998), Skorupski (1999), Tappolet (2000), Hansson (2001), Ogien e Tappolet (2009), pp. 49-52.

9 A precursor of the idea that a strict relation obtains between values and emotions was Scheler (1973).

10 Ogien e Tappolet (2009) pp. 52-60.

when the light is red]").[11] On the contrary, normally evaluative concepts figure in judgments in a predicative position. Consider, for example, "the conduct of John is admirable" or "the film was boring". However, such a criterion of distinction is not so straightforward. Sometimes also normative concepts figure in judgments as predicates of actions or agents, as is the case in "smoking is forbidden" or "trampling on the grass is illegal".[12] Conversely, sometimes evaluative judgments involve propositional operators, as in "it would be good that [there were no earthquakes]".

5. *Gradability*.[13] Gradability is a distinctive feature of values. Things can be more or less good, interesting or ugly. This is not the case for norms: there are no more or less permitted, forbidden or obligatory actions. Noteworthy exceptions to the rule are recommendations and advices, which seem normative but *prima facie* gradable. It could be argued that there actually are degrees of obligation and permission in so far as various normative standards seem to be ranked in a hierarchical order. For example, it is more important to satisfy laws than rules of etiquette, and an infraction of the latter is more excusable than one of the former. However, such a ranking should not be interpreted as a relation of degrees of obligatoriness amongst norms. Rather, it constitutes a relation of priority or importance. That the law not to kill is more important than that requiring one not to cross the street outside of the white stripes does not mean that the former action is 'more forbidden' than the latter.[14]

6. *Domain*.[15] Values range on every sort of entity (objects, actions, properties, states of affairs) while norms seem to bear

11 Wedgwood (2007) pp. 89-99, Ogien e Tappolet (2009) p. 52.

12 See Geach (1982) and Ogien e Tappolet (2009) pp. 53-54.

13 Mulligan (1998) p. 162, Ogien e Tappolet (2009) pp. 60-66.

14 For such considerations see Ogien e Tappolet (2009), pp. 61-62 and Hansson (2001), Ch. 10. There seem to be three ways in which norms can be ranked: 1) norms can be the object of evaluations. Different norms can be ranked as more or less evaluable than others. This, I think, is the case in the example described above where two exemplified actions are both forbidden and the ranking depends on an order of evaluation; one evaluates the norm not to kill as more important than the one not to cross the street outside of the white stripes. 2) Some norms can be hypothetical on some other infringement of a norm. For example, a norm can forbid crossing outside of the white stripes, and a second norm can prescribe that, if one breaks this norm, then one ought to pay attention that there are no cars coming. 3) The authorities promulgating different norms can have different force. Therefore, different normative systems will not be on the same level, in the sense that their normative force is different and can be ranked on a scale. Any of the ways of ranking norms considered here support norm-gradability.

15 VonWright (1963); VonWright (1963), Ogien e Tappolet (2009) pp. 64-72.

uniquely on actions. If this were true, it would explain the fact that values, but not norms, admit degrees. In fact action has a binary nature: we either perform or do not perform an action. Either we maintain a promise or not. However, here some important qualifications are needed. One should distinguish between the content of a norm and the way in which a norm is complied with. Contents of norms are what norms require, permit or forbid. Such contents are not only constituted by actions. They can also be states of affairs. The norm requiring that 'ways of access have to be open' is directed to agents, but it does not mention any action in its content. However, an agent can comply with a norm only by performing some action, by bringing about that the state of affairs described by the content of the norm is the case.[16]

7. Principles regulating norms. Norms are committed to constraints bearing on the abilities that agents addressed by norms are supposed to possess. The most known of these constraints is the so-called *ought-implies-can* principle, according to which, if an agent is under some normative commitment, then she must be in the position to comply with such a commitment. More precisely, she must be in the position of freely choosing whether to conform to the norm or to violate it.[17] Another constraint on norms is what Ogien and Tappolet (2009, p. 67) call the *principle of parsimony*, according to which norms bear on what is neither necessary nor impossible. Norms obliging people to breathe or to fly are absurd and incoherent (if norms at all), in so far as they require necessary or impossible things. Values are not committed to such principles. We can attribute values to things independently of any relation with human agency and human capacities, and we can attribute values to necessary and

16 The way in which an addressee can act to satisfy a norm is also called by some philosophers the regulation of the norm. On the distinction between norm and norm-regulation see in particular Engel (2007), p. 163 and Engel (2008). On the notion of norm-regulation see also Pollock e Cruz (1999), Ch. 5.

17 This principle has been widely discussed in the literature. See, for example, Moore (1903/1993), Feldman (1986), VonWright (1963), pp. 108-116, Railton (1999), Darwall (2003), Ogien e Tappolet (2009), Mulligan (2009), Glüer e Wikforss (2010). See Von Wright (1963, pp. 108-116) for different possible variants of the principle. It has been argued that some ought-claims seem to violate this constraint (e.g., Sinnott-Armstrong (1984), Kekes (1984); see Howard-Snyder (2006) for a reply). For instance we say that all people in the world ought to have enough food while we know very well that it is impossible given the state of the world as it is now. However, it has been widely recognized that ought-claims can express both evaluative and normative judgments. If this is right, it is plausible to classify the exemplified claims as evaluative assessments for which the principle is not in force.

impossible things. It makes perfect sense to assess as beautiful a necessary law of mathematics or wishful the happening of an impossible fact.

8. Responsibility and blame.[18] On the one side, agents may be held responsible and blamable for complying or not with a norm; on the other side, one cannot be held responsible for being the bearer of some value-property. One could object that some values allow the attribution of responsibility to agents. An agent can be held responsible and blamable for being careless or for not being neat. However, in such cases it seems that responsibility and blamability depend on further norms requiring things not to be in the disvaluable way – in the examples, norms requiring the agent to be careful and neat looking. Though someone may be a bearer of a value-property and responsible for that, she is not responsible *qua* value-bearer but *qua* agent committed to some norm.

9. Supervenience.[19] Values supervene on natural properties of their bearers. For example, an action is altruistic when it increases the well-being of others, and a man is careful when he pays particular attention to what he does. On the contrary, norms do not seem to supervene on natural properties. To this it could be objected that, to the extent that norms possess conditions of satisfaction that can be described in natural terms, norms also supervene on natural properties. For example, the permissibility of a move in a chess-game can be considered as supervening on a specific movement of a piece. Compare "killing is bad" and "smoking is forbidden". In both normative judgments the positive assessment or the satisfaction of the norm seems to supervene on actions that can be described in natural terms.

Although at least some of the listed criteria look *prima facie* plausible, none of them seems to provide sufficient conditions for distinguishing norms from values. Furthermore, even the criteria that at first sight look more plausible lack any explanation of why they seem appropriate. It is a legitimate question whether the distinctive features of norms and values described by these criteria obtain in virtue of some more fundamental properties possessed by either or both of them. If this is the case, the individuation of these more fundamental properties would provide a

18 Smith (2005) pp. 10-13.
19 Mulligan (1998), p. 163.

more coherent picture of how the features discussed in this section relate to each other, and eventually would also provide an explanation of these features.
In the next section (§2) I will suggest that norms essentially possess a specific set of features that values do not possess. Assuming that norms possess such features will help to provide a new rationale for the distinction between values and norms and an explanation of the *prima facie* plausibility of the traditional criteria of distinction discussed in this section (§3).

2. Some Essential Properties of Norms

All norms are directed to some set of agents. Agents to which norms are addressed are the *addressees* of norms. They are supposed to be moved by norms to act as these demand. Norms have *conditions of satisfaction*. Such conditions are what should be the case for the norms being satisfied. Conditions of satisfaction are determined by two elements: the character and the content of the norm. There are three possible *characters* of a norm: obligation, prohibition and permission. Obligations are satisfied when what is required is the case. Prohibitions are satisfied when what is forbidden is not the case. In the case of permissions it is more difficult to individuate the conditions of satisfaction. According to one interpretation, these conditions consist in the compatibility of what is permitted with other requirements. According to another interpretation permissions are satisfied if other participants to the practice regulated by the norm leave the addressee of the permission free to perform the permitted act and refrain from criticizing her when she does what is permitted. The *Content* of norms is what norms require, prohibit or permit. It can be an action or a behavior or some state of affairs.[20] When the content of a norm is not an action, addressees can conform to what norms demand only by acting or refraining to act in some specific way, i.e., by bringing it about that what is expressed by the content of the norm is the case. It is therefore appropriate to distinguish between the conditions of satisfaction of a norm and the way in which addressees of the norm bring something about to satisfy these conditions.[21]
Norms have a constitutive aim, role or *telos*. They are supposed to possess an authoritative force and a motivational influence over addressees, moving and guiding them to satisfy their conditions of satisfaction, i.e., to act in conformity to what norms require, permit or forbid.[22] The ways

20 For a discussion of the notions introduced here see, for example, VonWright (1963).
21 On this point see footnote 16.
22 See VonWright (1963) p. 159, VonWright (1963) pp. 2-3 and 118-119. For similar considerations about the guiding nature of rules see Baker e Hacker (1985), pp. 259-260.

in which norms are able to persuade their addressees to comply with them are different. Agents can be motivated to follow norms by the fear of punishment, the desire to respect a common established convention, a self-commitment to the rules, the aversion to negative feelings such as shame, embarrassment and guilt, the criticism of other participants to a practice, the risk of exclusion from a practice, and so on.
Not only are norms supposed to have a guiding influence on agents' intentional actions and behaviors, but they are supposed to have it *in the appropriate way*, as an effect of the agents' recognition of the content and role of norms and the motivation caused by the influence of their normative force.[23] This condition does not entail that addressees of norms are always motivated by norms, or even acknowledge norms and recognize them as involving normative force. Norms can fail to motivate agents to act as they require. Or agents motivated by a norm and acting with the intention of doing what the norm requires can fail to fulfill the norm because of factors out of their control. Norms are in place independently of their actual recognition, motivation and fulfillment on the part of their addressees. The mentioned motivational condition has to do with what norms in themselves are supposed to do, what their role is, and not with their success in moving the addressees to comply with them.
In order to better understand the structure of norms described above, let me consider a specific example: the positive law that obliges citizens to pay taxes. The norm has an obligatory character and its content is the action of paying taxes. The addressees of this law are citizens, a specific set of agents. The law is satisfied if and only if citizens pay taxes. The law is supposed to motivate citizens to pay taxes. Law provides reasons for moving its addressees to comply with it. It does that by means of the praise of those who respect it, the justification of the reasons why they must respect it, and the threat of punishment for infractions. Citizens are supposed to be moved by this law in the appropriate way, because they recognize the norm as such, feel its normative force and are moved by the reasons it gives them. This does not mean that addressees are always in the position to acknowledge and recognize this law as involving normative force, be motivated by it, and fulfil it. Sometimes this law fails to motivate citizens, who don't pay taxes. Or agents can also be motivated by the law and act with the intention of paying taxes, but for some cause out of their control fail to do so. The very same features individuated in this example

23 The normative force is supposed to determine agent's motivation for the right kind of reasons. On the appropriate ways in which norms are supposed to motivate their addressees see Glüer e Pagin (1999), p. 208. On the inappropriateness of deviant causal chains in the explanation of normative guidance see Railton (2006) and Schroeder (2008).

can be found in every other type of norm.[24]

Values do not possess the ontological structure of norms described above. In values it is possible at most to identify a distinction between evaluative properties and descriptive conditions on which such properties supervene. The only analogy could be between descriptive conditions on which values supervene and conditions of satisfaction of norms. However, the analogies between the ontological structure of norms and values seem to end here, for there is nothing in values that can be compared to an addressee. While value properties can be conceived as properties standing in a binary relation with descriptive conditions on which they supervene, norms have more complex structures involving a set of addressees and conditions of satisfactions and are relative to different standards. Furthermore, values are not supposed to motivate agents to act, at least not in the way norms do; and when values motivate action, they do so in a different way than norms. Values do not motivate by means of the exercise of an authoritative force over agents. Rather, normally agents acknowledge values by perceiving or feeling the goodness of a thing, the ugliness of a face or the courage in an action. When values have an impact on agents' motivation this commonly happens because of their effect on desires and emotions rather than from the recognized force of some authority.[25]

24 One may object that in this paper I do not consider a specific type of norms that seems not to possess the features described in this section, namely, constitutive norms. As Glüer e Pagin (1999) well clarify, there seems to be at least two notions of constitutive norm in the literature. One notion was discussed by philosophers such as Midgley (1958), Searle (1969), Lewis (1983), and more recently Zelaniec (2010) and (2013). An example of constitutive rules in this sense is "A touchdown is scored when a player has possession of the ball in the opponents' end zone while a play is in progress" (Searle1969, p. 34). According to this notion, constitutive rules are not deontic or evaluative standards but specifications akin to definitions of some aspect of a practice or activity; constitutive rules, contrary to regulative ones, do not mandate their performance or evaluate a certain condition, they merely state what certain actions count as. They have neither addressees nor conditions of satisfaction. They cannot be violated. They are not guiding insofar there is nothing that these norms require or assess (cfr. Glüer e Pagin (1999), pp. 217-219). They just determine a practice without playing any direct role in its normative regulation. Another notion of constitutive norm has been discussed in more recent times (e.g., Williamson (2000), pp. 239-240, Wedgwood (2002)). According to this notion, constitutivity designates a relation of metaphysical or conceptual dependence of a thing from a certain property. A constitutive norm is such that some activity (or other type of entity) metaphysically or conceptually depends on that norm. Constitutive norms in this latter sense, conceived as prescriptions or permissions that enter in the essential or conceptual definition of a thing, have the same ontological structure attributed to other norms in sections 1 and 2. In contrast, constitutive norms in the first sense have normative force on agents only derivatively, insofar they are associated to further regulative rules (Zelaniec (2010), p. 422). For this reason, I am reluctant to attribute to constitutive norms in the first sense a genuine normative nature. This is also why I do not discuss this type of norms in this paper. However I am aware that this latter consideration is debatable. Different approaches to these issues are possible depending on how one conceives normativity.

25 In normal circumstances we have access to values by means of emotions and feelings. Another way of access to values is testimony: I could know that a thing is evaluable for I've been told so. Sometimes testimony provides us knowledge or belief that something is evaluable, and these cognitive attitudes in turn can motivate us to desire these values and to act in certain ways. In such cases, values motivate without having a direct impact on desires and emotions. Thanks to a reviewer for pointing this type of cases to my attention.

3. An Explanation of the Traditional Criteria of Distinction

Although this may be challenged, it looks *prima facie* very plausible, almost platitudinous, that norms possess the properties attributed to them in the above section. In this section I argue that by assuming that norms, and only norms, essentially possess these properties, one can at least partially explain the plausibility of the traditional criteria of distinction between norms and values introduced in section 1.

The considered properties of norms can explain at least some of the lexical differences between the two domains (*1st criterion*). The domain of normative terms is organized around the general notions of obligation, prohibition and permission because these are the three possible characters that every norm possesses. Normative judgments can be reformulated in claims in the imperative mood because norms are essentially supposed to motivate agents to fulfill them. The imperative mood is particularly appropriate to convey the normative force required to move addressees to comply with norms. This is not the case for evaluative judgments that can eventually motivate agents to act, but are not essentially aimed at moving agents to realize the evaluated conditions.

On the one hand, values are strictly related to emotions. Emotions are many, stand in a variety of different reciprocal relations and are either positive or negative. This explains why there is a great variety of values, all related to the determinable thick values of goodness and badness. On the other hand, norms have less complex relations than values for they are not supposed to motivate agents to act by inducing different types of emotions, but by exercising on agents an authoritative force that has similar characteristics in all norms (*2nd criterion*).

In normal circumstances, agents are receptive to values in a passive way. When directly recognized (i.e., when our acknowledgment of them is not mediated by testimony), values have an impact on agents' motivation by the mediation of emotions. On the contrary, agents are supposed to be "forced" to act by norms, influenced by a recognized and accepted authoritative force. Norms are more directly related to reasons and motivation insofar as they are essentially supposed to motivate their addressees to act as they require. This explains the *3rd criterion* of distinction between values and norms.

The properties of norms considered above can provide an explanation of why normally normative judgments possess a logical form involving operators taking propositions or predicates while evaluative concepts figure in judgments in a predicative position (*4th criterion*). The reason is that norms possess a more complex structure that cannot be expressed by simple one-place predicates without resorting to contextual

implicatures. The assertion "answering emails is mandatory" is underspecified. It implies that answering is required of some addressee by some authority and according to some normative standard. Nothing similar is the case for value ascriptions. Asserting that a certain act is courageous may be vague, but such an assertion does not leave implied in the context any important feature of the evaluation.

Norms are supposed to motivate their addressees to realize certain conditions. Addressees can bring about the realization of such conditions only by performing some specific set of actions. This explains why agents can comply with norms only by performing some action (*6th criterion*). This also explains the non-gradability of norms as opposed to the gradability of values (*5th criterion*). Performing an action may be, but normally is not, a matter of degrees. The non-gradability of norms is contrasted with the gradability of evaluative properties, which do not have the same relation with actions. Rather, values have a closer relation with emotions. Emotions come in degrees. This explains why values are gradable.

That addressees can comply with norms only by performing actions explains why norms are committed to specific principles, such as the *ought-implies-can* principle and the *principle of parsimony*, while values are not (*7th criterion*). Norms are supposed to motivate their addressees to act in such a way as to comply with some normative demands. If an agent were not in the position of performing such actions – either because she cannot freely choose whether to conform with the norm or infringe it, or because what the norm requires is something necessary, impossible, or not dependent on her voluntary control – then the norm would be absurd, insofar as its authority would irrationally issue an unsatisfiable demand asking for actions that are not under the ken of the addressee's agency. Values are not supposed to motivate agents to perform certain actions. This explains why they are not bound by these constraints.

Agents can be held responsible and blamed for violations of norms (*8th criterion*). This is because addressees who recognize and accept a norm are supposed to try to comply with it, and are held responsible for this. While involuntary infractions are excusable, intentional infractions are considered wrongdoings deserving of punishment and blame. The categories of responsibility and blamability do not apply to subjects that are responsive to values, since values are not such that agents are supposed to be guided by them to act in a certain way.

Values supervene on descriptive properties. Whether a similar relation of supervenience obtains between norms and their conditions of satisfaction is a debated matter (*9th criterion*). Whatever be the truth

about this matter, I think that the complex ontological structure of norms described in the previous section can explain at least the intuition of non-supervenience of norms on descriptive conditions. Since norms involve complex relations amongst several properties (addressees, conditions of satisfactions, normative standards,...), it would not do justice to the complexity of norms to describe norms as simple binary supervenience relations between normative properties and conditions of satisfaction. Such a description would be necessarily incomplete, leaving implicit a number of important features of norms.

Conclusion

In this article I argued that by assuming that norms but not values essentially possess a specific set of properties, we can better appreciate the distinction between the two domains and we can provide an explanation of the plausibility of the criteria traditionally used by philosophers to track the distinction. My considerations could have consequences for other issues concerning the relation between the two normative domains, such as whether norms are reducible to, or dependent on values or vice versa, and whether norms, values, or both can be reducible to descriptive features or are irreducibly normative. However, these further developments are beyond the scope of the present work.

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