

Revisiting the norm concept in relational governance

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In this work-in-progress paper we explore two of the fundamental issues concerning the norm concept, its definition and the classification of norms. First, in the field of marketing, norms have been defined as expectations developed by actors concerning other actors' behavior in a given context (Jap, 2000, Heide, 1992). An analysis to what extent this definition is in line with the definitions made in other disciplines will be carried out. Secondly, an identification of typologies of norms, which allows classifying different norms, will be set forth.

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In this work-in-progress paper we explore two of the fundamental issues concerning the norm concept, its definition and the classification of norms. First, in the field of marketing, norms have been defined as expectations developed by actors concerning other actors' behavior in a given context (Jap, 2000, Heide, 1992). An analysis to what extent this definition is in line with the definitions made in other disciplines will be carried out. Secondly, an identification of typologies of norms, which allows classifying different norms, will be set forth.

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Introduction

In the literature on inter-organizational relationships, governance concepts have received considerable attention (Heide, 1994, Williamson, 1975). It appears that for managers, the design of effective governance structures is a complex issue. The challenge lies in the large number of available control mechanisms (Bradach, 1989). Many recent contributions focus on three governance mechanisms: formal contracts (Cannon, 2000, Lusch, 1996, Stinchcombe, 1985), relational norms (Dant, 1992, Heide, 1992, Pilling, 1994) and specific investments (Gundlach, 1995, Jap, 2000).

This paper is concerned with relational norms. Although there has been a large stream of research in which the role of norms in relationships has been conceptually discussed and empirically studied (Kaufmann, 1987, 1988, Heide, 1992), more recently the way how the norm concept is being used in the field of marketing has been criticized (Ivens, 2004). The main critic is the interpretation and the use of the main source in the literature, the work of Ian Macneil (1978, 1980, 1982). It can be argued that many of the marketing studies which have drawn upon Macneil's relational contracting theory have simplified and at least partially misinterpreted his original work. For example, by examining the operationalizations made in various empirical studies of the different norms Macneil has defined, one finds striking conceptual divergences between the original construct and the one actually measured (Blois, 2006).

More generally, one can state that the norm concept has often served as a reference for empirical studies in marketing in which norms play a central role. Usually, it is assumed that in an ongoing relationship norms have been developed. The question studied then is, to what extent these norms influence performance parameters of the relationship. A second empirical question is which antecedents influence the presence or strength of certain norms. However, little attention has been paid to the fundamental issues of the concept of norm.

The goal of the paper is three-fold: (1) clarify a widely-used concept, (2) build a common framework of analysis for future research dealing with norms and (3) use this basis to encourage inter-disciplinary approaches and open new areas of study. The structure of this paper will be to first to compare the disparity of norm usages with a suggested norm definition and second identify a typology of norms which allows classification.



Figure 1: From Norm Definition to Norm Classification

The case of Nike and its past issues with corporate and social responsibility will be used to illustrate the norm definitions and classifications, which in literature are mostly used within the context of moral persons. Nevertheless the same principles apply to legal persons such as Nike.

The business model of Nike came from Phil Knight and Bill Bowerman who realized in the 1960s, that Japanese electronic manufacturers were gaining considerable market share in the USA by cheap and high-quality products, whereas most leading footwear companies were still manufacturing their shoes in high-cost countries such as the United States or Germany. Their goal was to undersell their competitors with high-quality shoes and thus break into the market.

As production prices started rising, Nike was forced to relocate its production to lower-cost countries. "The same factors that permitted Nike to grow at an impressive rate over the last

several decades – taking advantage of global sourcing opportunities to produce lower cost products and investing these savings into innovative designs and marketing campaigns – have also created serious problems for the company in recent years” (Locke, 2002, p. 9). Criticism for outsourcing to countries and factories with low-wages, poor working conditions and human right problems began in the 1980ies and peaked with an article in Life Magazine of June 1996 on child labor in Sialkot Pakistan with a picture of a 12 year old boy stitching a Nike soccer ball.

At first, Nike refused to accept the responsibility for the various labor and environmental/health issues among its suppliers, as they were not Nike employees: “They are our subcontractors. It’s not within our scope to investigate [allegations of labor violations]” argued the Nike’s general manager of Jakarta (Rosenzweig, 1994, p. 6). Nevertheless, in a speech in 1998 Phil Knight acknowledged that “Nike products has become synonymous with slave wages, forced overtime and arbitrary abuse. (...) I truly believe that the American consumer does not want to buy products made in abusive conditions” (Cushman, 1998).

Nike has since changed its stance and formulated a code of conduct for its suppliers requiring the observance of basic labor, health and environmental conditions. According to Phil Knight, “Nike’s goal is to reach a point where labor practices can be tested and verified in much the same manner that financial audit can determine a company’s compliance with general accepted accounting practices” (Cushman, 1998). In this paper, we analyze the norm concept and draw upon the Nike example in order to illustrate different definitions and taxonomies.

Towards a common definition of a norm

One of the key factors characterizing humans and their interactions are norms. They enable large-scale cooperation among genetically unrelated individuals. “In most animal societies, cooperation is either orders of magnitude less developed compared with humans, or it is based on substantial genetic relatedness.” (Fehr, 2004, p. 187). It is therefore understandable, that norms have been playing an increasing role in many different scientific areas. This diversity of disciplines and approaches in analyzing norms and norm-based behavior provides a very broad and rich literature. The issue associated with such a diversity of approaches is the lack of a common definition and classification of norm types.

The structure of this section is (1) to illustrate the diversity of norm definitions, (2) to suggest a definition applicable to all disciplines and (3) discuss some of the approaches taken and implications of this definition. Specifically, the focus of this last part will be on the comparison of the norm definition used in the field of marketing with the ones referred to in other disciplines in order to identify whether the norm concept used in the past needs adjustment (Macneil, 1980).

The vagueness of the notion of norm can be illustrates by this definition by Newcomb: "The term ‘norm’, unfortunately, has several meanings. We shall use it, however, only in the sense of ‘more or less fixed frame of reference,’ whether of quantitative or qualitative nature" (Newcomb, 1958, p. 266). Furthermore, as the following table illustrates, different disciplines have made a different use of the concept:

Discipline	Use of norm concept	Example of a definition
Sociology	Norms play an important role in understanding how societies work (Opp, 1979)	“A norm is an abstract pattern, held in the mind, that sets certain limits for behavior. An ‘operative’ norm is one that is not merely entertained in the mind but is considered worthy of following in actual behavior; thus one feels that one ought to conform to it”. (Johnson, 1960, p. 8),
Political science	Civil rights and civil liberties are as much protected by informal norms of what is acceptable as they are by the powers of the formal legal system (Axelrod, 1986)	“A norm exists in a given social setting to the extent that individuals usually act in a certain way and are often punished when seen not to be acting in this way” (Axelrod, 1986, p. 1097)
Anthropology	Norms offer a firm framework to describe practices and values of different people such as in the case of feuding (Black-Michaud, 1975)	"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. ... Norms always include sanctions". (Morris, 1956, p. 610)

Psychology	Norms can help explain how people influence one another, become socialized and establish behavioral norms in their group (Feldman, 1984)	“Norms regularize group member’s behavior” (Feldman, 1984, p. 47)
Economics	Economists have come to realize that markets involve a great deal of behavior based on standards that no one individual can determine alone (Schotter, 1981)	“Norms (...) are understood as prescriptive rules regarding behavior that are shared among a group of people and are partly sustained by the approval and disapproval of others” (Elster, 1989, p. 113)
Legal theory	Agreements between parties comprise explicit (written) as well as implicit (expectations) aspects (Macneil, 1980)	“A norm is a principle of right action bringing upon of a group and serving to guide control or regulate proper and acceptable behavior” (Macneil, 1980, p. 14).
Marketing	Norms have been considered in two different settings in the field of marketing: business relationships (Ivens, 2004) and consumer-brand relationships (Fournier, 1998, Muniz, 2001).	“Norm are expectations about behavior that are at least partially shared by a group of decision makers”(Heide, 1992, p. 34).

Figure 2: Overview of the use of the norm concept

This overview of norm usage provides an idea of differences and communalities among norm definitions. Opp (2001) introduced two factors that permit to differentiate between two types of definitions applicable, from his vantage point, to all disciplines:

- The ‘oughtness definition’: “how a person [moral or legal], or a group of people, is expected to behave in a given circumstance” (adapted from Homans, 1974, p. 96).
- The ‘behavioral definition’: “a norm exists only if there is some probability that non-conformity is sanctioned” (Opp, 2001, p. 103)

The concept of expectation in the first definition does not refer to the prediction of a behavior, but to a demand in the sense of “should” or “ought to” behave in a certain way. The second definition augments the first by introducing the concept of sanctions in case of nonobservance of expectations and implies a behavioral regularity that can serve as a predictor for the actions. The second definition is often used by economists “in the analysis of institutions and institutions are often defined as a set of norms or as a single norm”. (Opp, 2001, p. 102)

The ‘oughtness definition’ can be illustrated by Nike’s approach of outsourcing its production to countries independent of poor labor conditions and environmental concerns. The company is *expected* to sustain its high growth rate and to generate results for its shareholders. As the unfavorable media mentions peaked in 1997, Nike experienced a decrease in net income of about 50% the following year (Locke, 2002). These sanctions from the consumers forced it to improve its image in the market by requiring its suppliers to adapt to its code of conduct, ensure compliance with labor practices through internal and external auditing and accept penalties in case of nonobservance.

In the social sciences, including sociology, political science, anthropology, psychology and economics, researcher tend not to differentiate between these dimensions. The benefit of using Opp’s (2001) framework is to crystallize the orientation of the authors using this concept of norms and to open new venues of research based on them.

The focus of research in the area of legal theory has been chiefly on classical contracting where all aspects of a transaction are defined in a written formal document and nonconformity to these conditions get sanctioned. Through Macneil, legal theory has also encompassed ‘oughtness’ norms, where behavioral expectations play an important role in building a trusting relationship permitting to maximize returns under evolving conditions through flexibility.

Marketing is the discipline analyzing “all activities involving ‘exchange’ and the cause and effect phenomena associated with it” (Bagozzi, 1975, p. 32). Norms have been considered in two different ways in the field of marketing: business relationships and consumer-brand relationships. The use of Macneil’s norms in area of business relationships has only focused on ‘oughtness

norms'. The issue at hand is that the concept of sanctioning in this case would pertain to legal or social sanctions. The approach of brand-to-consumer relationships, introduces the concept of sanctioning and the 'behavioral' norm definitions.

Exchange in the form of business relationships between individuals or organizations can be described through Macneil's Relational Theory of Exchange. He assumes that the "economic man [homo economicus] is necessarily in society at all times" (Macneil, 1982, p. 961). His premises are, first, that exchanges go beyond economic transactions and encompass all forms of social interactions (Ivens, 2006b); second, these exchanges need to be considered from the perspective of the economic man within social boundaries. Macneil identifies a continuum of ranges of exchange acts or transactions: on one end discrete exchanges and on the other relational exchanges. The former is illustrated by a one-time transaction such as a spot sale and the latter can be seen as an intertwined relation such as long-term commercial relations between several parties (Macneil, 1978). The concept of sanctioning is not used in relationship marketing. Nonconformity to a norm will first result in a weakening of the relationship and potentially in its disintegration. The direct result of a breakup is the unavoidable loss of the committed resources. These losses do not correspond to the sanctions defined in a contract and represent opportunity costs¹, whereas penalties due to contractual obligations pertain to the domain of legal theory.

The second field in which norms have been studied in marketing is consumer behavior. Many customers become emotionally loyal to specific brands (Fournier, 1998, Aggarwal, 2004) and might participate in social grouping around them such as brand communities (Muniz, 2001, Schouten, 1995). Because consumers start attributing personal traits to certain brands, these brands play an increasing role in these exchanges as they are the vector to communicate values influencing customers during their decision-making process. Furthermore, as consumer start identifying with like-minded individuals through brands, social grouping emerge around specific brands. Thus, a sociological dimension is added to the instrumental marketing one. In the mind of the customers, brands become the equivalent of a member of society and build the basis of a social group. Brands and members of a brand community will be evaluated by the same social rules and can therefore be subject to social sanctions in case of nonconformity to the expected behavior.

In conclusion, the area of marketing needs to consider both types of norm definition depending on the research setting: a pure behavioral expectation in the case on business relationships as sanctioning can only occur through legal obligations and sanctioning in case of nonobservance for brand-to-consumer relationships.

The objective of this section was to identify a norm definition applicable to all scientific that will then used as basis for identification of a norm typology as illustrated in the diagram below:

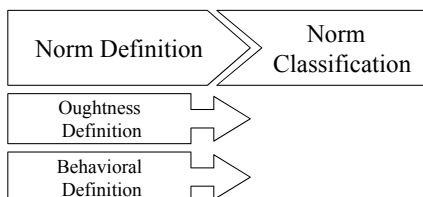


Figure 3: From Norm Definition to Norm Classification

Toward a common classification of norms

The selected classification scheme is derived from Elster's (1989) paper "Social norms and economic theory" where he tries to bridge the gap between Adam Smith's *homo economicus* and Emil Durkheim's, *homo sociologicus*.

¹ Opportunity costs are defined according to the Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary (2004) as "the added cost of using resources (as for production or speculative investment) that is the difference between the actual value resulting from such use and that of an alternative (as another use of the same resources or an investment of equal risk but greater return)" and do not include sanctioning.

He defines two norm-oriented behaviors in accordance with each perspective:

- Norm-oriented action of the *homo economicus*: “the behavior of the homo economicus is guided by instrumental rationality” (1989, p. 99).
- Norm-oriented action of the *homo sociologicus*: “the behavior of the homo sociologicus is dictated by social norms” (1989, p. 99).

Elster’s definition of the concept of norm for the *homo sociologicus* is solely based on its opposition to the rational actions of the *homo economicus*. Furthermore, Elster completes his explanation that norms “are sustained by the feeling of embarrassment, anxiety, guilt and shame that a person suffers at the prospect of violating them” (Elster, 1989, p. 100). The definition is not satisfactory, as it does not express clearly what a norm is in other than a rational action framework. To avoid confusion between his use of the term “norm” and the definition used in the previous section, the expression “social convention” will be used in Elster’s classification scheme; thus, the behavior of the *homo sociologicus* is dictated by social conventions.

The *homo economicus*, or economic man, is driven by maximizing his returns. Instrumental rationality prescribes him to attain a goal by “the best (most efficient, most cost-effective, etc) means to whatever end they value the most in a given situation” (Mann, 1999, p. 1). In other words, the economic man modifies his behavior dependent on the situation he encounters, constantly seeks for improvement to maximize returns.

The *homo sociologicus*, or social man, acts within the boundaries of social conventions. The social man behaves according to a socially accepted code of conduct even if better or more optimal options might be available to reach his goals.

As Gambetta (1987) puts it, the rationale behind the *homo economicus*’ actions is that he feels “pulled” by the prospects of future rewards, whereas the *homo sociologicus* is “pushed” from behind by quasi-inertial forces (cited in Elster, 1989, p.99). In other words, the economic man can be parodied as a “self-contained, asocial atom”, and the social man as “the mindless plaything of social forces” (Elster, 1989, p.99).

The following diagram illustrates the proposed connection between the norm definition and the norm classification scheme:

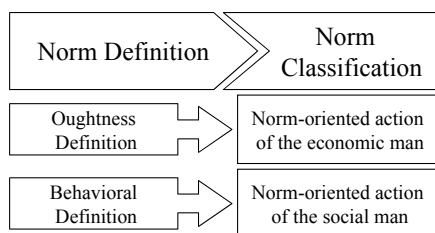


Figure 4: Norm Definition and Classification Frameworks

To understand a relationship between the definition and the classification, one needs to look into the reason why norms are accepted and how they form the basis of norm-oriented behavior.

The connection of the economic man’s behavior and the ‘oughtness’ definition by Opp (2001) raises two issues:

- Is instrumental rationality the basis of expected behavior?
- In the pursuit of goals, the economic man might behave in a non-permissible way and may face sanctions.

Instrumental rationality is programmed into our value system as everyone needs to ‘look out for himself’ first or, in other words, the survival of the fittest prevails. Thus, rational actions can be regarded as an expected behavior in a given situation. The economic man sees the world as prospects to accomplish his goals and only includes opportunity costs, or more or less optimal ways. If the optimal way to attain his targets prescribes him to act in an illegal or socially unacceptable manner, the resulting sanctions are part of his critical path analysis.

Phil Knight and Bill Bowerman noticed that Japanese electronics manufacturers were very successful with the a differentiated price strategy as described by Porter (1980). This behavior corresponds to the economic man’s paradigm, namely maximizing returns, and, in the case of

Nike, keeping its production costs as low as possible. This strategy involved choosing suppliers with the lowest production prices; possibly using ‘socially unacceptable’ means such as child labor or dangerous working conditions. Certainly aware of issues that might arise if these practices were to be publicized, Nike estimated that this was the most efficient way to maximize profits. Facing the growing criticism Nike had two choices: denial of responsibility or accept the criticism and act to impose improved working conditions among its suppliers. Estimating the costs of either alternative, denial of responsibility was at first deemed more optimal for the company’s profit goals. Only after criticism had started affecting its sales, did Nike decide to face its responsibility for the employment conditions at its suppliers.

In the case of the social man, the reason for the ‘push’ from behind comes from the effect of formal (legal) or informal (social) sanctions in the event of nonconformity. The motivation to act within social convention, the ‘quasi-inertial forces’, is the fear of sanctions by the same forces, corresponding to a ‘behavioral’ definition wherein the existence of a norm is directly linked with sanctions in case of nonobservance. The social man’s approach, acting within the limits of social conventions, is illustrated by Nike’s behavior after it had “been hurt by falling stock prices and weak sales (...) as it has been pummeled in the public relations arena” (Cushman, 1998). As Nike was feeling the negative impact of its tarnished image, a form of social sanction, they decided to act by imposing and monitoring measures among its suppliers (Adapted from Locke, 2002) such as (1) create an incentive scheme to improve working conditions and reward good corporate citizenship, (2) penalizing contractors employing child labor by requiring them to remove the child from the factory, continue paying the child’s wages and pay for the child’s school fees until he/she reaches legal working age and (3) develop a grading system for all its suppliers used to determine future orders.

The example of Nike illustrates well Macneil’s view of the economic man necessarily interacting within society at all times. The economic man cannot be considered as a “self-contained, asocial atom” (Elster, 1989, p.99), but at all times is part a larger social fabric. Nike is still producing in low-wage countries to sustain its competitive advantage but is now ensuring that its products are being made in (socially) acceptable conditions.

The field of marketing further reinforces the connection between norm definition and norm classification. Macneil’s Relational Theory of Exchange views a relationship through the perspective of ten key norms. These norms have been used to explain the strength, weakness or disintegration of relational exchange relationships (Ivens, 2004). Norms in this setting are ‘oughtness’ norms, as only opportunity costs arise and not sanctions in case of dissolution of the relationship². This view corroborates the connection with the economic man’s perspective of the world as containing more or less optimal ways to attain his goals. Potential sanctions are therefore part of some of the economic man’s options. If his evaluation of the different options concludes that the most efficient way to attain his goal may include sanctions, he will follow this course of action as Nike did by outsourcing its production to factories with poor working conditions in low-cost countries.

As to the consumer-to-brand based perspective, one can identify the connection between behavioral definition of norms and the actions of the social man. As the brand is considered as a socialized member of a community in the mind of a consumer, it is subjected to the same community rules as moral persons part of the group. The same principle applies to the members of a brand community as the nonobservance of the social conventions can result in sanctions such as exclusion from the group. Social sanction would therefore compel consumers not to buy products from brands that society in general or the brand community in particular disapproves of, in fear of being associated with the values conveyed by this brand. In the case of Nike, there is a strong correlation between a drop in net income and the amount of unfavorable media coverage

² Note that sanctions can occur in case of rupture of the relationship but these sanctions are tied to contractual obligations and therefore pertain to the area of legal theory.

(Locke, 2002). Consumers started to sanction Nike as they became aware through the press of the conditions under which the products were made.

The goal of this section with to further clarify the concept of norms through the addition and the discussion of a norm classification scheme to Opp (2001) norm definition. The combination of the selected typology and the two norm dimensions builds solid basis for using norms across disciplines offering a common ground for further research around this concept. The following section will outline additional norm categorizations that have been identified in literature and their connection with Elster's scheme (1989) will be discussed.

Other classification schemes

Although the following list of classifications is incomplete³, it is representative and will permit testing of the validity of the selected scheme.

A norm classification scheme was developed by the social philosopher Raimo Tuomela (1995a, 1995b, 1992). His goal is to establish a conceptual framework to build "factual social theories" (Tuomela, 1995a, p. 9) and the concept of norms is the basis of his approach. He defined two types of norms: (1) social norms, tied to sanctions and defining the behavior on the group level and (2) personal norms, centered on the individual and his belief system. Both type of norms can be subdivided further as follows:

- Social norms: created by a formally or informally agreed-upon authority or group-members and connected with formal or informal sanctions in case of nonobservance.
 - r-norms: Rule norms are called into existence by an authority structure based on agreement-making. R-norms can be formal, thus tied to formal sanctions, or informal, backed by informal sanctions.
 - s-norms: Social norms are centered around mutual belief and may result in sanctions by others such as disapproval or the expulsion from the social group.
- Personal norms (also called potential social norms): widely obeyed, but not based on *social responsiveness* as they relate to the interpretation by the individual of his value system.
 - m-norms: moral-norms are obeyed because of one's conscience
 - p-norms: prudential-norms are obeyed because it is the rational thing to do (in the sense of the instrumental rationality proposition).

Tuomela ties his social norms to either r-sanctions, non-social sanctions such as legal or economical, or to s-sanctions, approval or disapproval by peers (Tuomela, 1992). Thus, social norms are the equivalent to norm-oriented action of the *homo sociologicus* as there are formal or informal sanctions connected with non-conformity to the prescribed behavior. In the case of Nike, social sanctions, s-sanctions, or disapproval by consumers was a deterrent to buy Nike products. Personal norms are equivalent to norm-oriented actions of the *homo economicus* providing moral or rational imperatives, rather than prescriptions, and are disconnected from third-party sanctions. These norms form an expectation of behavior for a person or a group of people in a given circumstance. In the case of Nike, the company was never sanctioned for outsourcing its production to low-cost countries, an expected behavior for the economic man, but rather for ignoring indecent treatment of the employees of its suppliers, a socially unacceptable behavior.

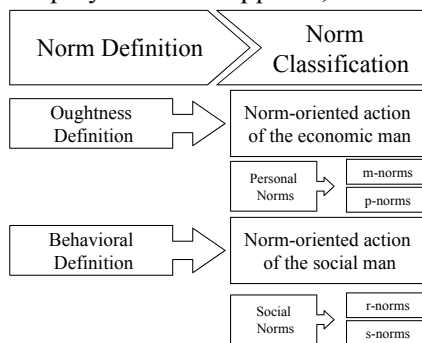


Figure 5: Connection with Tuomela's classification

³ Other categorizations have been established in social sciences such as Morris (1956) or Gibbs (1965), but Tuomela's (2000) and Ivens' (2006a) approach distinguish themselves due to their clarity and conciseness.

Based on Macneil's identification of ten key norms that play a role during exchange transactions (1980), Ivens (2006a) tested and validated two underlying dimensional structures of these norms. This is a classification scheme that can serve to categorize norms.

As illustrated in the previous section, Macneil's norms are exclusively 'oughtness' norms. There is no formal or informal sanctioning connected with nonobservance. A weakening of the relationship through unexpected actions represents opportunity costs. Their role can be seen as follows:

- Behavioral expectations in an *ex ante* situation
- Reference points for evaluating behavior in an *ex post* situation.

These norms are thus connected with the norm-oriented action of the *homo economicus*.

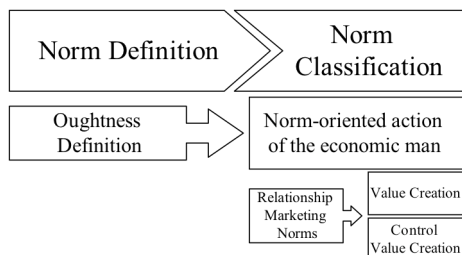


Figure 6: Connection with Ivens's classification of Macneil's norms

From the perspective of the role of brands in exchange relationships and based on Clark and Mills' (1993) classification of exchange relationships and communal relationships, a sociological dimension is added into marketing.

Clark and Mills (1993) define an exchange relationship as a reciprocation relationship where the giver expects a direct benefit from the receiver. Communal relationships go beyond self-interest and are based on a genuine concern by the giver as in friendship or family relationships. For example, partners in an exchange relationship expect prompt monetary repayment for providing help, whereas in communal relationships partners don't expect swift repayment and prefer non-comparable benefits in return. In both cases, sanctions can arise if the compensation for the service offered is not returned. Thus, corresponding to the norm-oriented behavior of the *homo sociologicus*.

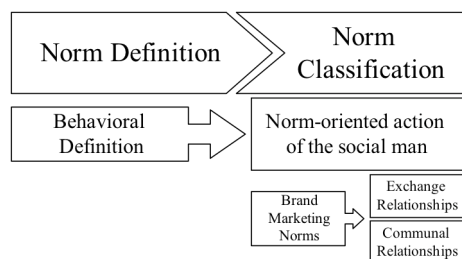


Figure 7: Connection with Clark and Mills' classification

Summary

Two definition types (Opp, 2001) provide a solid basis to understand how norms have been used across various scientific disciplines: an 'oughtness definition', encompassing the concept of behavioral expectation and a 'behavioral definition', an augmentation of the first definition introducing the concept of sanctions in case of nonobservance of expectations. Two appropriate norm classification schemes were then identified: the norm-oriented action of the economic man, dictated by instrumental rationality or the desire to maximize ones returns, and the social man, actions guided by social conventions. The connection between these perspectives is that 'oughtness' norms explain the actions of the economic man and instrumental rationality, whereas 'behavioral' norms explain the actions of the social man and behavioral regularities.

The following diagram summarizes the connection between the norm definition, the selected typology by Eslter (1989) and the two other norm classifications considered:

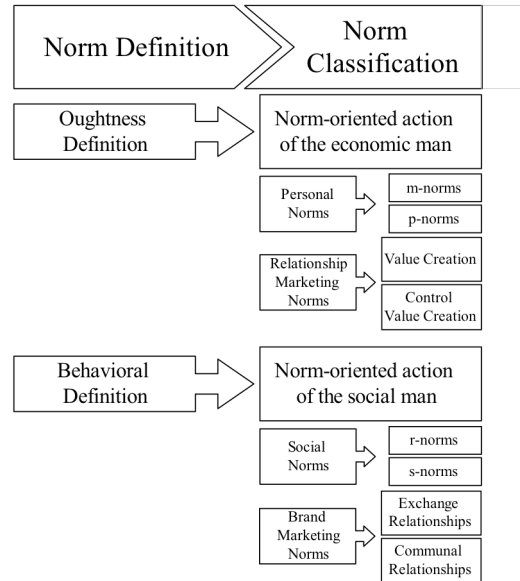


Figure 8: Overview of Norm Classifications

Conclusion and Outlook

The goal of this paper is to clarify a widely used concept of norms by giving this notion a systematic foundation of first clearly defining it and second identifying a classification of norm types. The vagueness of this notion has led to a silo approach to research on the subject, where not only individual disciplines, but also individual researchers have a different understanding of norms and norm types. The challenge with this objective lies in finding a common denominator within the diversity of disciplines, definitions and typologies used. Analogous to the broadness of the usage of the norm concept, broadness in the approach of clarification needs to be accepted to reach this objective. Therefore, the results of this paper are purposely general and build a solid foundation of the construct of norms.

The aim of this paper is to give researchers a common base from which they can then elaborate new and more particular research agendas around this construct such as:

- Considering the role of conforming to the expected behavior (legitimacy) in different settings
- Adding possible new typologies to the existing norm definition and norm classification framework
- Analyzing the shift from behavioral expectation to sanction within different type of relationships
- Extending this framework to understanding the origin of norms and then their evolution

The dangers of the approach taken lies in losing oneself among the many usages of norms across a multitude discipline and not focusing of the main target of clarification, but it is the aspiration of the authors that this trap was avoided.

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