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# Norms: The Problem of Definition and Classification

Jack P. Gibbs

## ABSTRACT

Following a critical appraisal of the conceptual treatment of norms in sociological literature, a typology of norms is presented. The typology treats collective evaluations of behavior, collective expectations of behavior, and reactions to behavior as the basic normative dimensions. These dimensions generate a total of nineteen types of norms, four of which are possible null classes.

Sociological literature reveals three shortcomings in the conceptual treatment of norms: (1) a lack of agreement in generic definitions, (2) no adequate classificatory scheme for distinguishing types of norms, and (3) no consistent distinction between attributes of norms that are true by definition and those that are contingent (i.e., attributes which vary from one norm to the next and therefore are not relevant for a generic definition of norms). This paper considers the three problems and offers a solution for each.

### LACK OF AGREEMENT IN DEFINITION

The following definitions of norms illustrate differences and certain points of agreement among sociologists.

Bierstedt: "A norm, then, is a rule or a standard that governs our conduct in the social situations in which we participate. It is a societal expectation. It is a standard to which we are expected to conform whether we actually do so or not."<sup>1</sup>

Broom and Selznick: "All societies have rules or norms specifying appropriate and inappropriate behavior, and individuals are rewarded or punished as they conform to or deviate from the rules. The norms are blueprints for behavior, setting limits within which individuals may seek alternate ways to achieve their goals. Norms are

based on cultural values, which are justified by moral standards, reasoning, or aesthetic judgment."<sup>2</sup>

Homans: "A norm is a statement made by a number of members of a group, not necessarily by all of them, that the members ought to behave in a certain way in certain circumstances."<sup>3</sup>

Johnson: "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. This feeling means that one 'accepts' the norm."<sup>4</sup>

Morris: "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 must be shared prescriptions. . . . Norms always include sanctions."<sup>5</sup>

Newcomb: "The term 'norm,' unfortunately, has several meanings. We shall use it, however, only in the sense of 'more or

<sup>1</sup> Robert Bierstedt, *The Social Order* (2d ed.; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), p. 222. (Italics mine.)

<sup>2</sup> Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick, *Sociology* (3d ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> George C. Homans, *Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1961), p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Harry M. Johnson, *Sociology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1960), p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Richard T. Morris, "A Typology of Norms," *American Sociological Review*, XXI (October, 1956), 610.

less fixed frame of reference,' whether of quantitative or qualitative nature."<sup>6</sup>

Williams: "Norms . . . are rules of conduct; they specify what should and should not be done by various kinds of social actors in various kinds of situations. . . . The term 'cultural norm' refers to a specific prescription of the course that action *should* (is supposed to) follow in a given situation. . . . For a whole group or society, probably the best index to an institutional norm is the occurrence of severe penalties for violation. Such penalties are truly institutional, however, only if supported by an effective consensus of the society."<sup>7</sup>

In a survey of the conceptual treatment of norms some ten years ago, Rommetveit observed that there are three distinct uses of the term: (1) to indicate uniformities in behavior, (2) to designate a particular shared "frame of reference," and (3) to express the existence of social obligation or pressure.<sup>8</sup> Inspection of the above definitions reveals only two points of agreement. First, none of them suggests that a norm is simply a uniformity in behavior. Second, with the exception of the definition offered by Newcomb, none of the definitions identifies a norm as a shared frame of reference in a strictly psychological sense. However, beyond these two points there is very little agreement among the definitions. Further, most of the definitions are ambiguous in that they leave various questions concerning the character of norms unanswered. For example, must a norm in fact govern conduct; or, stated otherwise, how much deviation is allowed before the standard is no longer a norm? Also, must norms be supported by, or otherwise consistent with, collective values, in the sense

<sup>6</sup> Theodore M. Newcomb, *Social Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1958), p. 266.

<sup>7</sup> Robin M. Williams, Jr., *American Society* (2d ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), pp. 24, 25, 30.

<sup>8</sup> Ragnar Rommetveit, *Social Norms and Roles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), pp. 18-26.

that most persons find them just and acceptable? If so, are the military laws which govern an occupied country to be excluded from the category of norms?

The reference to military laws leads to a consideration of sanctions as a normative element. But observe that some of the above definitions mention sanctions, while others do not. Moreover, the definitions which do refer to sanctions leave three important questions unanswered: (1) Does the content of the sanction enter into the definition of norms? (2) Must the sanction be administered in a particular way? (3) Must the sanction actually be administered in a large proportion of cases or is it only necessary that an attempt be made to administer it?

Difference in the above definitions and the ambiguous quality of some of them stem primarily from the fact that there are several distinct types of norms.<sup>9</sup> One treatment of the concept may differ from another because the two are actually concerned with different types of norms; and, when the definition is truly generic, it is typically ambiguous because it is not set forth in the context of a typology which makes all of the attributes of norms explicit.

The latest survey of the conceptual treatment of norms, that conducted by Dohrenwend, implicitly recognizes various types in setting forth a generic definition: "A social norm is a rule which, over a period of time, proves binding on the overt behavior of each individual in an aggregate of two or more individuals. It is marked by the following characteristics: (1) Being a rule, it has content known to at least one mem-

<sup>9</sup> The heterogeneous character of norms evidently prompts some observers to focus on types of norms and to eschew a generic definition. Kingsley Davis, for example, offers a systematic analysis of several commonly recognized types of norms (folkways, mores, customary law, enacted law, custom, morality, etc.), but does not set forth a formal and explicit definition which applies to norms generally (*Human Society* [New York: Macmillan Co., 1949], chap. iii).

ber of the social aggregate. (2) Being a binding rule, it regulates the behavior of any given individual in the social aggregate by virtue of (a) his having internalized the rule; (b) external sanction in support of the rule applied to him by one or more of the other individuals in the social aggregate; (c) external sanctions in support of the rule applied to him by an authority outside the social aggregate; or any combination of these circumstances.”<sup>10</sup>

The above definition of norms is commendable, in that it is precise but at the same time so general that other definitions can be subsumed under it. However, the definition suggests that the members of a social aggregate must actually conform to a certain standard of conduct before that standard is a norm. Some other conceptual treatments (see, e.g., Bierstedt's definition) do not agree. Furthermore, if we identify norms in terms of behavior, it is tautological to speak of the former as influencing or controlling the latter. The position is taken here that the degree of conformity to norms is a contingent but not a definitional attribute. Finally, in ascribing multiple attributes to norms, Dohrenwend's treatment suggests but does not produce a typology of norms.

#### TYPES OF NORMS

Sociologists are fully aware that there are different types of norms, but an exhaustive and mutually exclusive set of types is still wanting. Distinctions commonly are drawn among folkways, mores, and laws; but such distinctions by no means exhaust all possibilities. Moreover, they are *ad hoc* and lack a generalized rationale in that they do not explicitly identify the dimensions to which their components might be referable. To identify such dimensions, it is necessary to have recourse to the procedure of substruction, which, by making the various attributes of norms explicit,

<sup>10</sup> Bruce P. Dohrenwend, “Egoism, Altruism, Anomie, and Fatalism: A Conceptual Analysis of Durkheim's Types,” *American Sociological Review*, XXIV (August, 1959), 470.

may lead to a typology that includes more than the commonly recognized types.<sup>11</sup>

Regardless of the way a typology is constructed, it must not confuse those attributes of norms which are true by definition with those that are contingent, that is, the ways in which norms may differ, even norms of the same type. Thus, using Richard T. Morris' analysis as an example, norms may differ with regard to such attributes as: (1) the extent to which they are known or recognized, (2) the extent to which they are accepted as being just, (3) the degree to which they are uniformly applied to all groups or categories, (4) whether they are severely or lightly sanctioned, (5) the mode and consistency of enforcement, (6) source of authority, (7) the degree to which they are internalized, (8) the mode of their transmission, and (9) the amount and kind of conformity to them.<sup>12</sup>

These attributes do serve to characterize norms, but norms of the same type may differ with regard to them. As a case in point, laws differ with regard to some of

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Allen H. Barton, “The Concept of Property-Space in Social Research,” in Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Morris Rosenberg (eds.), *The Language of Social Research* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1955), pp. 50–52. Despite its methodological sophistication, Barton's analysis of types of norms is not definitive, because it does not distinguish laws from rules. Further, Barton's typology treats the origin of norms (tradition versus enactment) as a definitional attribute. The origin of a norm is of historical interest only (i.e., it has no necessary relation to any other characteristics of the norm in the present); therefore, the origin of a norm should be treated as a contingent attribute.

Anderson and Moore's analysis of norms is not relevant because their concern is with relations among particular norms (e.g., their logical consistency) and not a typology of norms. Further, they do not focus exclusively on definitional attributes. As a case in point, some norms prescribe or make certain acts “obligatory,” while others proscribe or designate certain acts as “forbidden”; but such distinctions are not central to a definition of norms generally. See Alan R. Anderson and Omar K. Moore, “The Formal Analysis of Normative Concepts,” *American Sociological Review*, XXII (February, 1957), 9–17.

<sup>12</sup> Morris, *op. cit.*

the attributes identified by Morris (e.g., some laws are severely sanctioned but others are not, some laws are widely "accepted" but others are not). Moreover, some of the attributes (e.g., the degree of internalization) do not enter into the conventional generic definition of norms. The point is that the typology proposed by Morris contains a mixture of definitional and contingent attributes and thereby confuses the purely conceptual treatment with the empirical study of norms.

The distinction between definitional and contingent attributes is not intended to suggest that the latter are secondary for research and theory. On the contrary, there are at least two major questions concerning contingent attributes. First, what is the relation between each of the various definitional attributes and each of the various contingent attributes? As an illustration, is there a relationship between the administration of sanctions by persons in particular statuses (treated here as one of the definitional attributes of norms) and the severity of the sanctions? Second, what is the relationship among the various contingent attributes of norms? As an example, is there a relation between the specificity of a sanction and the severity of the sanction? These are only illustrative of the numerous questions that can be asked about the contingent attributes of norms, yet such questions assume that the definitional attributes and related types of norms have been established.

#### DEFINITIONAL ATTRIBUTES

A norm in the generic sense (i.e., encompassing all the various types of norms) involves: (1) a collective evaluation of behavior in terms of what it *ought* to be; (2) a collective expectation as to what behavior *will be*; and/or (3) particular *reactions* to behavior, including attempts to apply sanctions or otherwise induce a particular kind of conduct. Virtually all conceptions of norms can be subsumed under this generic definition, and it further

has the virtue of encompassing all of the attributes which distinguish types of norms.

*Collective evaluations.*—Perhaps the most commonly recognized characteristic of a norm is a shared belief that persons *ought* or *ought not* to act in a certain way. An emphasis on such an evaluation as an attribute of norms is in some respects closely associated with a particular sociological perspective (Durkheim and Parsons in particular), because it implies the existence of shared values. However, while a collective evaluation of an act may be the attribute of some types of norms (e.g., mores), this is not so for all types. Rules imposed on a group by an external authority (e.g., some prison regulations as they apply to convicts) or simply "unpopular" laws do not have the support of shared values; but, nonetheless, it would be most questionable to label them as non-normative. Further, collective evaluations do not characterize what are often regarded as customs. Thus, as an example, the typical American probably expects his fellow countrymen to drink coffee; but in most cases it is a matter of extreme indifference to him whether or not they do so, certainly in the sense of *ought* or *should*.

*Collective expectations.*—Whereas collective evaluations relate to how one ought to behave, collective expectations refer to predictions as to what persons will do; and the two are distinct attributes of norms. One illustration of the difference has already been given in the above reference to the custom of drinking coffee. But the contrast may go the other way. Most Americans probably believe that drivers ought to obey traffic regulations, but at the same time they perhaps would refrain from predicting that all of them or even a majority of them do so. For that matter, we fully expect all drivers to violate traffic regulations at one time or another, and to do it consciously and deliberately; but we persist in the belief that they ought not do so.

*Reactions to behavior.*—The above reference to traffic regulations leads to a con-

sideration of laws as a type of norm, and the realization that authorities on jurisprudence do not agree on the definition of a law, even positive law.<sup>13</sup> While a definition which suits one field may not suit all others, for the sociology of law Weber's definition is a classic: "An order will be called *law* if it is externally guaranteed by the probability that coercion (physical or psychological), to bring about conformity or avenge violation, will be applied by a *staff* of people holding themselves specially ready for that purpose."<sup>14</sup>

Several elements in Weber's definition are central to the present analysis. First and foremost, whether or not a norm is a law depends on *reactions* to behavior and not on collective evaluations or expectations. Although the content of the reaction to its violation does not characterize a law, the reaction nonetheless must be of a particular kind. It must be made by a *staff* of people who hold themselves in readiness to respond or, put in terms of contemporary sociology, by a person or persons in a particular status or statuses.

Other observations by Weber make it abundantly clear that the reaction does not necessarily involve the application of penalties—any kind of an attempt (even the friendly admonition) to secure conformity is sufficient as long as it is made by persons in particular statuses.<sup>15</sup> Thus, while we may speak of laws as "sanctioned," it must be understood that the term encompasses any attempt in the way of enforce-

<sup>13</sup> See H. L. A. Hart, *The Concept of Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961); Edgar Bodenheimer, *Jurisprudence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962); and E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Law of Primitive Man* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), esp. chap. ii.

<sup>14</sup> Max Rheinstein (ed.), *Max Weber on Law in Economy and Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 5. It is significant that Hoebel, after grappling with the problem of formulating a definition which is applicable cross-culturally, set forth a definition of law much like Weber's (see Hoebel, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-28).

<sup>15</sup> Rheinstein, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

ment and not just the administration of penalties.<sup>16</sup> However, while the content of the sanction itself may vary, the persons who administer it may make use of physical force with a low probability of retaliation by a third party. The use of force should not be identified exclusively with the administration of physical punishment (e.g., whipping, branding) as a prescribed penalty. On the contrary, the penalty may be nothing more than a fine, but the state may use force to impose the penalty (laying hands on the person and bringing him into court, incarceration until the fine is paid, etc.). For that matter, laws may be enforced even though there is no statutory provision for a specific penalty, or even any penalty. However, the power of the state does not lie entirely in its use of force, because anyone may attempt to resist and use force in doing so. It is, rather, that the recalcitrant individual typically cannot expect other persons to rally to his cause or retaliate on his behalf when the state takes action. Indeed, to the extent that an individual can use force to resist the state and depend on the support of his fellow citizens, the society is not politically organized.

The attribute of unlimited force is crucial in distinguishing laws from another type of norm. Associations often have norms that are enforced in one way or another by persons in particular statuses. Such norms are identified commonly as *rules*. They differ from laws in that the persons responsible for their enforcement may *not* make use of force without a high probability of retaliation by a third party (the state in particular).

Since laws and rules are distinguished from other norms in terms of reaction to behavior, there is a conceptual problem in determining what the persons are react-

<sup>16</sup> Most of the conceptual treatments of norms focus on sanctions in the negative sense of the word (i.e., penalties for lack of conformity). This practice is continued in the present analysis, but it must be recognized that positive sanctions (i.e., rewards for overconformity or simply conformity) may be attached to some norms.

ing to when they react. Weber circumvented the problem by using the term "order" (i.e., the reaction is to the violation of an order), but he did not further define the term. A far better approach is to recognize that, like all norms, laws and rules are beliefs or expectations that persons should or will act in a certain way; but in the case of laws and rules the beliefs or expectations need not be collective (i.e., shared). It is necessary only that one person hold the expectation or belief, as long as he reacts to behavior in a certain way

or controls those who do so react, with a low probability of retaliation by a third party.

#### A TYPOLOGY OF NORMS

When the above definitional attributes are organized in the way of a property-space arrangement, as shown in Table 1, the result is a typology of norms.

One may question the terminology employed in Table 1 to identify the types of norms, but it should be observed that there is no consensus on the matter. In any event, the configurations of attributes are

TABLE 1  
A TYPOLOGY OF NORMS

			High probability that an attempt will be made to apply a sanction* when the act occurs†			
		Low 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‡	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

\* Including any kind of an attempt to secure conformity.

† Or when the act does not occur, as in the case of prescriptive norms.

‡ Convictions that persons should act in a certain way.

§ Predictions as to how persons will act.

the crucial identifying factors and not the class terms.

Several general features of the typology call for comment. First of all, combinations of the definitional attributes yield a total of nineteen types of norms, far more than even the most inclusive list of commonly recognized types. Four types of norms in Table 1 (F, G, J, and K) are left unnamed. Some appropriate designations may be realized eventually, but far more important is the possibility that these four types are, empirically speaking, null classes. The rationale for this anticipation can be put best in the way of a question: Why would persons in a social aggregate frequently attempt to apply sanctions in response to a certain act when they have no collectively shared evaluations and/or expectations concerning the act? This could occur in a case where one or more of the divisions of a social aggregate has a distinctive subculture,<sup>17</sup> but the typology is not concerned with the obvious fact that norms are relative.

Not all of the types of norms in the sociological literature are identified in Table 1, but this does not mean that the typology excludes all types which are not explicitly identified in the table. Various combinations of the nineteen types (i.e., reduction of attributes) may be related to more inclusive concepts. For example, it may be that Sorokin's "law-norms"<sup>18</sup> encompass two or more of the types in Table 1. Space limitations preclude the linking of the norms in the table with other and perhaps more inclusive types.

*Comments on particular types of norms.*  
—The terms "convention" and "custom" are frequently employed in discussions of norms, but there does not appear to be any consensus in definitions of them beyond the

<sup>17</sup> See J. Milton Yinger, "Contraculture and Subculture," *American Sociological Review*, XXV (October, 1960), 625-35.

<sup>18</sup> Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Society, Culture, and Personality* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1947), pp. 71-85.

point that they may not be sanctioned. In keeping with Weber's distinction,<sup>19</sup> a convention is a collective evaluation of behavior (i.e., one *ought not* or, in the case of prescribed norms, one *should* behave in a particular way). While all conventions are collective evaluations, some of them may not be collective expectations. When the collective evaluation corresponds to collective expectations, we may speak of a *collective* convention; otherwise, it is a *problematic* convention, a label chosen to indicate that persons have doubts about others actually conforming to the norm.<sup>20</sup> Finally, customs<sup>21</sup> are collective expectations as to what persons actually do and not beliefs as to what they should do.

Laws and rules are peculiar in that there are four types of norms that are laws and four types that are rules. Thus, in the context of the typology, the term law encompasses all types P, Q, R, and S norms, while types L, M, N, and O all qualify as rules.

Rather than leave the four types of laws and rules unlabeled, tentative class terms are suggested in Table 1. A law or rule that corresponds to shared evaluations and expectations is designated as *collective* to signify that it has popular support. In contrast, when persons support a law or a rule (e.g., traffic regulations) but profess doubts as to others actually conforming to it, the term *problematic* appears to be an appropriate designation. On the other hand, persons may not have a high regard for a law or a rule but at the same time expect

<sup>19</sup> Rheinstein, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Note, however, that collective expectations may be in error, i.e., they may overestimate or underestimate the actual degree of conformity; but, again, the actual amount of conformity is treated as a contingent and not a definitional attribute. Furthermore, what persons think the degree of conformity is may be far more important as a determinant of their behavior than is the actual degree of conformity.

<sup>21</sup> The term "custom" is preferred over "folkways" because the latter suggests norms which are peculiar to non-literate or "simple" societies.

conformity (e.g., payment of a poll tax to qualify as a voter in some states). Such a law or rule suggests the designation *exogenous*. Finally, some laws or norms do not command either popular support or a shared expectation of conformity; and they can best be designated as *coercive*, in the sense that coercion is the only discernible basis for them.

Mores resemble conventions in that they are collective beliefs as to how persons ought to behave. However, in keeping with Sumner, they relate to certain kinds of conduct which are deemed so important to social welfare that they are defended overtly (i.e., there is a high probability that *someone* will attempt to apply sanctions to those persons who violate them).

Attempts to administer sanctions in support of a *mos* may include the use of force. This characteristic virtually excludes mores from urban societies, where the state supposedly has a virtual monopoly on the legitimate use of force. The present treatment of mores may be contrary to current usage, but it does offer a solution to a baffling problem in comparative law. One perennial debate in jurisprudence pertains to the nature of social control in non-literate societies, particularly as to whether or not such societies have laws.<sup>22</sup> In some non-literate societies the violation of norms may result in the administration of sanctions through means that include the use of force.<sup>23</sup> While this in itself may not be indicative of a legal system (because the administration of sanctions is not organized), some concept should be employed to classify the norms even if they are not laws. The appropriate designation, in the context of the present typology, is mores.

While mores are virtually excluded from

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Hoebel, *op. cit.*, esp. chap. i.

<sup>23</sup> The Nuer, Eskimo, and certain tribes in New Guinea (prior to subjugation by Europeans) are cases in point. See E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940); Hoebel, *op. cit.*, chap. v; and Ronald M. Berndt, *Excess and Restraint* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

urban societies, such is not the case for morals. In the present typology, morals are sanctioned norms; but the sanctions may be administered by anyone rather than persons in a particular status, and the means of administering the sanction or the sanction itself exclude the use of force. However, as in the case of mores, while morals represent collective beliefs as to what conduct should be, they may or may not correspond to what people actually expect conduct to be.

When mores or morals are supported by collective beliefs and are consistent with expectations concerning behavior, the term *collective* is an appropriate designation. On the other hand, if they are supported by collective beliefs but are not consistent with expectations as to actual conduct, the appropriate term is *problematic*.

#### CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL PROBLEMS

Given the lack of consensus in the conceptual treatment of norms and the absence of a large body of reliable cross-cultural data on the subject, no typology can lay claim to being definitive. The present typology is no exception and, accordingly, some possible deficiencies should be noted.

The most obvious problem on the empirical side is that the typology cannot be applied without extensive research. Thus, to illustrate, the typology does not enable us to classify the alleged proscription of premarital sexual relations in the United States. It is simply a matter of not knowing what the collective evaluations, collective expectations, and reactions concerning premarital sexual relations really are. However, this is a problem for any typology and, for that matter, it is indicative of the fact that observations on norms in a particular society rarely are based on "hard" data.

There are several major problems on the conceptual side. Above all, no specific and meaningful criterion can be stated at present for a collective evaluation, a col-

lective expectation, or the probability of reaction. Supposedly, survey methods can reveal what 50 per cent or more of the members of a population think persons ought to do and what they expect them actually to do, but the cutting point is obviously arbitrary and therefore questionable. The situation is much the same for reactions to behavior. Again supposedly, field studies can reveal what the reaction has been in cases where the deviant was detected, but the criterion of a "low" or a "high" probability of a certain kind of reaction is no more certain now than it was when Weber employed the concept in his analysis of normative phenomena.

Still another conceptual problem is the treatment of reactions in terms of "attempts" to apply sanctions or otherwise enforce the norm. One could argue that only successful attempts should be considered, or that the success of the attempts should be treated as another definitional attribute of norms. One could argue further that the correspondence between attempted or actual reactions and collective evaluations or expectations concerning reactions is a definitional attribute of norms.<sup>24</sup> There are merits in both arguments, but the inclusion of these attributes would make a very com-

plicated typology. For this reason and because most definitions of norms do not include these additional variables, it is perhaps best, at least for the present, to regard them as contingent, but not definitional, attributes.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Although the concept is central to the social sciences, norms have not been treated in a truly systematic manner, and particularly so with regard to the construction of typologies. The present analysis suggests three definitional attributes of norms: collective evaluations, collective expectations, and reactions to behavior.

An analysis of the three normative attributes in terms of subtraction and their property-space arrangement reveals nineteen distinct types of norms. The typology enables us to identify most of the commonly recognized kinds of norms and, at the same time, to designate certain kinds which have not been treated conceptually or empirically.

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<sup>24</sup> E.g., if what actually happens to deviants does not correspond to what persons think will *or* should happen to them, the related standard of conduct is not a norm, or at least it is a special type of norm.