

I'm interested in normativity: what it is and where it comes from. If we want to know what we should do or what we should believe, where should we look for answers? I defend a particular, constitutivist, answer to this question: normative properties and facts in a given domain are determined by the constitutive features of relevant kinds within that domain. So if we want to know what to do, we need to look to the constitutive features of agency; if we want to know what to believe, we need to look to the constitutive features of mental states and practices of inquiry. One of the great benefits of my constitutivist account is its explanatory breadth: it also explains normativity in legal, artifactual, biological, and aesthetic domains.

Because constitutivism can provide a unified explanation of an ecumenical normative landscape, it is becoming increasingly popular, but I think also increasingly misunderstood. One of my primary research projects has been to remedy this by providing a framework for understanding both the promises and challenges of constitutivism. My interests here are partially critical but largely constructive: in identifying weaknesses in current constitutivist accounts, I'm able to mark a way forward for a successful account of normativity.

One problem I've identified, for constitutivists and critics of constitutivism alike, is a failure to take seriously that constitutivism is fundamentally a metaphysical project. A central problem I've identified with extant accounts is the view that you can't be a member of a kind that has authoritative normative standards without satisfying those standards to some degree, an idea that I call the Threshold Commitment. Roughly, this means that *really* bad coffee just isn't coffee. This commitment loads normative features into the constitutive requirements taken to ground normativity which, I argue, makes it impossible to use metaphysical features to explain normative authority. Thankfully, constitutivism can reject the Threshold Commitment and, by rejecting normative conditions in its metaphysics, avoid these troubles.

Understanding constitutivism as a fundamentally metaphysical project equips it to handle other criticisms as well. According to the popular "shmagency objection," constitutivist accounts of practical normativity in particular are doomed. This is because, the objection assumes, constitutive accounts of the distinctive normative force of the practical domain *require* agency to be reasons-supported, but constitutivists cannot explain reasons to be an agent from the internal resources of agency. Constitutivists have focused on showing that this demand is dialectically inappropriate, but this has not been successful at quieting fears that their accounts of practical normativity are anemic. Instead of rejecting the demand for reasons as inappropriate, I argue that constitutivists must show that the internal resources available to particular constitutivist accounts are sufficient to explain the distinctive normative force of practical normativity without appeal to reasons for agency. I do this by outlining an account of agency and of the explanatory desiderata on a constitutivist account, and then demonstrating how the constitutivist can provide these desiderata from the sketched account of agency.

The breadth of constitutivist ambitions and the diversity of normative features across domains raises additional challenges. One of the main ones is identifying a type of constitutive feature that occurs across all normative domains that can be used in a unified form of constitutive explanation to generate distinct normative features of differing sorts. This constitutive feature must, therefore, be general enough to be realized by kinds in many domains, but also variable enough to generate distinct normative features in different domains. I argue that constitutivists should understand this constitutive feature to be historically-determined functions. Compelling arguments from the philosophy of biology and neuroscience show that such functions can account for normativity in these domains. The remaining work is thus to show that such functions can be found in other normative domains, beginning with the practical and theoretical. I argue that this requires un-

derstanding constitutive functions as historically-determined etiological functions, generated by a multiply-realizable selection account. Such an account allows for many different historical accounts to yield proper functions and allows for functional resources to be located across different normative domains. I then argue that *agency* plausibly has a selection story and functional nature by developing a novel selection account and using it to sketch a plausible set of functions of agency.

One advantage of this account is that it allows for normative features to be shared between normative domains, which can help us see, for instance, what theoretical and practical reasons share in common. But it can also help us explain differences between domains, such as why practical normativity involves prescriptive force that requires practical normative standards to entail reasons to satisfy them, whereas theoretical normative standards do not. The account can also nicely explain the connections between normative domains that allow us to fruitfully explain otherwise-puzzling normative features. In epistemology, for instance, we can understand the sense in which knowledge is an interesting normative kind by understanding it as a kind whose constitutive features enable socially-situated believers to serve as sources of reasons. This account doesn't reduce epistemic normativity to practical normativity, but it does allow us to see the connections between epistemic normativity and our larger normatively governed lives as social agents.

One feature of this account that I'm particularly excited about is that it construes epistemic agents as constitutively engaged in public reason-giving. Once we see this, the connections with the practical domain become clear: our social nature is key to understanding both our practical and epistemic commitments. I make the case for the latter by arguing that our inferential capacities are the primary source of epistemic normativity. These capacities have functions, however, to serve both our social epistemic roles as knowers and our practical role as agents. These results about the function of our epistemic capacities directly ties to my developing work in ethics of giving a psychologically and socially robust account of agency.

Finally, my work in the philosophy of law and philosophy of language is a component of this larger constitutivist project. I have argued that the recent and popular Planning Theory of Law, developed by Scott Shapiro, cannot account for the normativity of law. This is, briefly, because the account makes a version of the Threshold Commitment by loading implausible normative conditions into the metaphysical criteria of legal systems.

In a recent paper in the philosophy of language, I argue that the "No True Scotsman" fallacy isn't really a unified fallacy. Those who argue that it is a fallacy falsely interpret "no true x" claims as denials of kind-membership, rather than as normative signalings of defective kind-status. The most obvious implications of this paper concern the metaphysics of kind-membership, but they also extend to the philosophy of language about generics and have significant moral and political consequences about the importance of permitting groups to constitute and enforce their normative standards.

Finally, I have plans for a book manuscript that presents and defends a naturalistically respectable functional account of agency. The account is, of course, a constitutivist account, and it emerges from some of the above arguments. The sketch of the social and psychologically informed features essential to our agency above is the beginning of the substantial account of agency. Some of that account can be filled in with insights from the arguments above about the nature of our epistemic capacities, which suggest that agency constitutively involves both practical and theoretical reasoning. Thus, while many of the above arguments are developed in free-standing papers, the connections between them point to a bigger, unified account that I expect to undertake soon.