

Answer: Not Constitutivists.

But first: Why think constitutivists need reasons to be agents?

1. Varieties of Constitutivism and Normative Anemia

General Normative Constitutivism is the explanatory project of explaining the normative features of some domain, x , by the constitutive features of x .

Global Constitutivism: provides a *unified* account of *all* normative features in *all* normative domains.

Local Constitutivism: restricts explanatory ambitions to *particular* normative features of *particular* domains, but does not necessarily aspire to provide a generalizable account.

Constitutivist explanations are characterized by two central features:

Metaphysical: Constitutive features explain normative features, requiring a metaphysical explanans.

Internal: The metaphysical explanans is internal to the normative domain.

—>Benefits & Risks of Global Constitutivism:

Benefit: promises to accommodate ecumenical normativity with a unified explanatory account.

Risk: some domains with particularly robust normativity can't be accounted for like others.

Familiar arguments loom:

Very roughly the idea seems to be that one may reasonably ask why anyone should bother about what should_e (should from the point of view of etiquette) be done, and that such considerations deserve no notice unless reason is shown. So although people give as their reason for doing something the fact that it is required by etiquette, we do not take this consideration as *in itself giving us reason to act*. Considerations of etiquette do not have any automatic reason-giving force, and a man might be right if he denied that he had reason to do "what's done." (Foot: 1972, 309)

The general point here is that the status of being constitutive of agency does not suffice for a normatively non-arbitrary status. Of course, if there were some independent reason to be an agent (for instance, rather than a shmagent), or to perform actions, this objection would go away. But the price would be far too high, for such an independent reason—one not accounted for by the constitutivist story, but rather presupposed by it—would make it impossible for constitutivism to be the whole, or the most fundamental, account of normativity, or to deliver on its promised payoffs. (Enoch: 2011)

Normative Anemia Challenge: Anyone providing an account of practical normativity must account for a distinguishing feature of agency to explain the robustness of practical normativity.

Worry: The internal commitment of constitutivism threatens accounting for this feature.

Reasons Challenge: Anyone providing an account of practical normativity must account for *the reason agents have to be agents* to explain the robustness of practical normativity.

Why think constitutivists can't meet the Reasons Challenge?

Shmagency Objection: the internal resources of agency are insufficient to explain why agents, on some constitutivist account, have reasons to be agents rather than a shmagent.

2. Some Constitutivist Responses to the Reasons Challenge:

(a) Option 1: Reject the Reasons Challenge as dialectically or semantically inappropriate.

v1.1—There is no practical alternative to acting:

asking for reasons to act is mistaken because it involves a contrastive failure. (Katsafanas)

v1.2—Agency is closed under deliberation:

asking for reasons that govern non-agents misunderstands the authority of reasons. (Ferrero)

v1.3—Comparative evaluative questions are only well-formed with a common evaluative kind:

asking whether we have reasons to be agents or shmagents is semantically ill-formed. (Velleman)

Break-down:

1. The Reasons Challenge identifies reasons-supportedness as the property that constitutivists must account for in order to explain practical normativity by appeal to agency.

2. Constitutivists respond that even asking for reasons to be an agent is not possible.

This is not successful. If anything, it makes it seem *less likely* to critics that they can avoid anemia.

Problem: At most this shows that reasons-supportedness can't answer the challenge.

(b) Option 2: Provide alternative general feature to answer *Normative Anemia Challenge*: inescapability.

v2.1—Inescapability as *plight*. Agency is the precondition of all other practical roles.

So, we must recognize the norms being authoritative for us, on pain of nonexistence. (Korsgaard)

Problems: 1. Being condemned to something doesn't seem to give it authority over us.

2. Failing to satisfy or recognize norms does not (metaphysically) threaten existence.

v2.2—Inescapability as universality. The inescapable nature is supposed to provide the universal normative force of practical norms.

Constitutive aims differ from ordinary aims in that constitutive aims are inescapable whereas ordinary aims are not. It isn't the inescapability that is reason-providing. The aim itself—any aim—is reason-providing. The inescapability vouchsafes the reasons' universality, not their status as reasons. (Katsafanas 2014)

Problem: this explains the *scope* of the authority of practical normativity, not its robustness.

(c) Remaining Option 3: Argument by borne fruits of specific constitutivist account.

Strategy: Identify the aspects of robust normative force of practical normativity, and show how a specific constitutivist account of agency can account for the robust normative force of practical normativity.

3. Accounting for Robust Practical Normativity:

Step 1 —>Provide plausible account of the robust normative force.

Following Mackie we can call the distinctive force of objective, categorical practical norms *prescriptive force*.

Prescriptive Force: A standard, N, has prescriptive force, iff N being authoritative for M entails that N is relevantly action-guiding in M's practical deliberations.

There are two components of this action-guidingness:

1. *Rational Force*: A standard N, has rational force, iff N being authoritative for M entails that there is a reason for M to satisfy N.

2. *Motivational Force*: A fact, p, has motivational force for some individual, M, iff p being a reason for M to Φ entails that if M recognizes the practical relevance of p, M ought to some extent be motivated to Φ because p.

Step 2 —> Import a minimal constitutive account of agency.

Practical Agency: An individual M is a practical agent iff and because among M 's functions is the function of regulating behavior through practical capacities.

Practical Capacity: A capacity r is a practical capacity of M 's iff and because r 's function is to contribute towards M 's see to the satisfaction of her own norms in part by the exercise of r .

Reasons: The fact that p is a reason for M to Φ , iff and because, the disposition to be moved to Φ by the belief that p and some subset of M 's non-false-belief psychological states is good disposition of M 's practical capacities. (cf. Setiya: 2007, 12)

Having Reasons: The fact that p is a reason M has to Φ iff and because the fact that p is a reason for M to Φ and M believes p .

Treating as Reasons: M treats p as a reason to Φ iff and because M is moved to Φ as an instance of M 's practical thought in part by the belief that p .

Step three —> Argument that the nature of practical agency can explain robust normative force.

Part one: establish that all authoritative practical norms have rational force.

Strategy: show that agents have reasons to satisfy all their authoritative practical norms.

Claim: for any authoritative norm of M 's, there there's always one fact that constitutes a reason for M to satisfy it: the fact that the norm is authoritative for M .

Argument: 1. M is a practical agent, and so has the function of satisfying her authoritative norms.
2. Dispositions of M 's practical capacities that enable her to satisfy her authoritative norms are good dispositions.
3. The disposition to satisfy a norm because of the belief that it is authoritative for M is central to enabling M to satisfy the normative standards of practical agents (like us/ M ?).
4. So, the disposition to be moved to satisfy a norm by the belief that it is authoritative for M is a good disposition of M 's practical capacities.
So, the fact that a norm is authoritative for M is a reason for M to satisfy the norm.

Any account on which part of being a good agent involves being motivated to satisfy your authoritative norms should be able to produce a similar argument.

Part two: establish that all reasons generated by authoritative practical norms ought to be motivating.

Strategy: show that all reasons ought to be motivating for practical agents.

Claim: Any practical agent ought to be motivated by her recognized reasons.

Argument: 1. M is a practical agent, and so has the function of satisfying her authoritative norms.
2. Reasons to Φ are facts for which there are good dispositions of practical capacities to be moved to Φ in part by the belief in those facts.
3. If there is a good disposition of some capacity, then failure to manifest it in its manifestation conditions is a defect.
4. So, failing to be moved to Φ by the reasons M has is a defect in her practical capacities, which is a defect in her function.
So, M ought to be motivated by her recognized reasons.

So: Authoritative practical norms entail reasons that practical agents ought to be motivated by.

Conclusion —> This account plausibly accounts for the prescriptive force of practical norms.

4. Success and Things We Didn't Try:

—Things left undone:

(i) We didn't show that the inability to answer the Reasons Challenge isn't a problem on other grounds.

(a) Objection v1: There *are* reasons for being an agent, but Internal blocks an explanation of them.

Response: There are? (What are they?)

(b) Objection v2: Constitutivism entails the existence of reasons on the question of whether to be an agent, because it allows for practical alternatives to agency.

Response 1: This is not an objection to the form of constitutivist explanation. (Rosati)

Response 2: Practical alternatives don't entail reasons to be an agent.

(c) Objection v3: There *must* be reasons to be an agent, if agency is as important as constitutivists say.

Response: Agency needn't be policed against defectors or equipped for evangelicalism.

(ii) We didn't show that our account of prescriptive force exhausted the robust features of practical normative force.

(a) Objection v4: What about non-arbitrariness, practical agency is still arbitrary!

Response: non-arbitrariness isn't an aspect of normative force. Enoch wanted it to account for the force of practical reasons.

(b) Worry: What about *other* kinds of force?

Response: the account here can be extended if other features of normative force are identified.

(iii) We didn't give an account of the content of practical norms *or* a full account of the nature of practical agency (e.g. what specific practical capacities there are.)

—Things done:

We set out to show that Constitutivists didn't need to account for a reason to be an agent to successfully account for the robust normativity of practical rationality.

1. In section two we saw that existing constitutivist rejections of the Reasons Challenge made it seem *less* rather than *more* likely that they could avoid normative anemia.

-and-

2. In section three we saw how a specific Constitutivist account relying on the resources of Reasons and Practical Agency could account for the robust normative features associated with practical reasons.

So, Constitutivists do not need to either explain reasons to be agents or deny the sensibility of the Reasons Challenge to satisfy their explanatory ambitious. The internal metaphysical resources of agency can plausibly account for the normativity of practical rationality—if you look in the right place.

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