

# Norms, biases and preferences

Sociology



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Norms, Biases and Preferences NORMS, BIASES AND PREFERENCES Social norms can be defined as the implicit or explicit rules that specify the behaviors considered acceptable in a society. These are ways of thinking, acting, feeling and deciding that are shared in a society thus can be observed regularly as repeated behaviors that reputedly solve problems. They define that behavior, which is acceptable under particular circumstances. Bias is the tendency by which man undertakes decisions systematically under specific circumstances rooted, not on evidence but rather on cognitive factors. Biases arise from motivational factors, short cuts for processing information and social influence. These biases also result from social attributions, memory and judgmental errors. Preferences, on the other hand, can be referred to as anthropological, sociological and aesthetic concepts that affect cultural patterns concerned with choice and taste. They involve drawing of distinctions between manners and styles. Preferences are about the ability of man to judge, that which is good, beautiful and proper. The premise of this paper is to interconnect these three aspects and outline how they affect society and the study of society.

Social psychologists have for years, differed on the conceptual processes, which they assume generate observable social behavior. While some sociologists have expressed the theory that it is generated by norms, also referred to as standards, others have taken the assumption that this behavior was generated by preferences, also referred to as attitudes. Others have rooted for descriptive components also known as bias (Ariely, 2010). Hypothetically, norms, biases and preferences will imbue independent effects on society and the choices they make. This independence of each other refers to the expectation that each of these principles cannot be

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explained away by other variables and the effects these variables may have on social behavior. These variables include social influence, social experience, success, ability and background. Even if, these other variables were to be controlled, norms, bias, and preferences would have significant effects on society. Since most of society sees their existence in instrumental terms, norms will have stronger effects on their decision taking than will preference or bias. The hunger to succeed will cause society to follow what they see and observe over what they feel (Ariely, 2010).

Hypothetically, it is also possible that norms, preferences and biases will affect society and its intentions, and these intentions will affect behavior. This means that the effects norms, preferences, and biases will have on behavior are mediated via behavioral intentions, which results in norms, preferences and biases having no effects directly on societal behavior apart from effecting intention. The co-relation among norms, preferences and biases, are not very strong. Preferences and norms are correlated more strongly than either of them was with bias. Individually, norms have a stronger effect on decision taking than do the other two (Ariely, 2010).

Most sociologists studying society have tended to blank the effects that personal norms have on behavior of society. They instead rely on norms that can be attributed to other factors that are significant, that is preferences and biases. However, this does not mean that personal bias has no independent or significant effect on social behavior. It is possible that study of own norms by sociologists will give insights into how cultures affects cognition and efficacy of the various cognitive elements (Ariely, 2010).

In conclusion, it is important to note that norms, preferences and biases are not the only aspects to be considered in societal models, neither are the <https://assignbuster.com/norms-biases-and-preferences/>

above the only mode of thought the society may have about behavior.

However, their interrelationship is very important in how the society acts and reacts. This interrelationship is also very important in the study of social behavior and intention.

#### Reference

Ariely D. (2010). Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions. New York: Harper Perennial.