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# PHILOSOPHY

## Examining Social Norms in Animal Cultures

Kristin Andrews, York University

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**FRIDAY | March 3rd, 2023 | Dodd 121 | 4:00PM-6:00PM**

Social norms—rules governing which behaviors are deemed appropriate or inappropriate within a given community—are typically taken to be uniquely human. Recently, this position has been challenged. The view that norms are human unique stems from commitments regarding the psychological capacities required for having them, and skepticism that animals possess these prerequisites. However, among norm cognition researchers there is little agreement about the cognitive architecture that underpins social norms in humans. To make progress on the question, there needs to be a point of agreement--an operationalized account of social norms. Drawing on Westra and Andrews' (2022) account of a normative regularity--*a socially maintained pattern of behavioral conformity within a community*--I present three potential cases in primates and discuss the sort of evidence that would be needed to conclude that they qualify as normative regularities. I consider two objections: that social norms involve following rules with deontic content (and animals don't do that), and that having social norms requires punishing non-compliant actors (and animals don't do that). I conclude with some practical and theoretical implications.



**Kristin Andrews** is York Research Chair in Animal Minds and Professor of Philosophy at York University, and she was elected to the College of the Royal Society of Canada in 2015. Her research is at the intersection of philosophy, social cognition, moral cognition, and animal cognition. She is the author of several books, including most recently *How to Study Animal Minds* (Cambridge 2020)—an argument for rethinking methods in comparative psychology; and *The Animal Mind* second edition (Routledge 2020) – a survey of how empirical work on animal minds can help to inform debates in the philosophy of mind. In recent years, she has contributed to policy discussions of the status of great apes in US law and digital research infrastructure for animal behavior in Canada. Andrews serves on the Board of Directors for The Borneo Orangutan Society Canada, which has the mission to promote conservation of orangutans and their habitat and to educate the public.