How Valuable Is It? Extended Abstract

The popular Fitting Attitudes analysis of value provides an account of what it is for something to have value. It seems reasonable to expect that this account can be developed so that it also gives an analysis of what it is for something to have a certain amount of value. In this paper, we discuss strategies that could be used in order to incorporate this element into the analysis. We focus on two possible accounts: the Normative Component View, according to which it is strength of the normative component that accounts for how valuable something is, and the Attitudinal Component View, according to which it is the intensity of the attitudinal component that accounts for how valuable something is. By considering how various formulations of the Fitting Attitudes analysis may be developed in these two ways, we conclude that the Attitudinal Component View is the most promising extension.

An acceptable analysis of value should not only account for what it is for an object to be valuable, it should also be able to account for the amount of value that the objects has.[1] While work within value theory usually focuses on the first desideratum, the second is unfortunately often neglected. This is true for one of the main analyses of value in the current philosophical debate, the Fitting-Attitudes analysis of value (henceforth FA analysis).[2] The FA analysis provides an account of an object being valuable in terms of it being fitting to direct (con) pro-attitudes towards said object. Its generic formulation has the following form:

> *FA analysis generic form*: x is valuable if and only if it is fitting to favor x.[3]

---

[1] Our usage of 'object' is regrettably a bit idiosyncratic, by object we refer to anything that can be the bearer of value. What exactly can function as the bearer of value, such as states of affairs, concrete objects, and so forth is controversial and something we wish to remain neutral on, hence the usage of 'object'.

[2] The FA analysis has a long history, tracing its lineage back to Brentano (1889) and Ewing (1947), for a historical overview see Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2004). It is also often referred to as the Buck-Passing Analysis of value after Scanlon (1998). In the literature, there are different ways to distinguish between the FA analysis and the Buck-Passing analysis of value. While there are interesting distinctions to be made between the two, these differences are of no relevance for the purposes of our paper. For the sake of clarity, we will only be referring to this line of analysis as the FA analysis. For a discussion on this see Schroeder (2010), Suikkanen (2009), and Way & McHugh (2015).

[3] There is a vast amount of issues concerning how we are to understand the FA analysis, such as e.g., whether the analysis is reductive or not, or whether it should be understood as circular or not (Ross, 1939 and Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2004). We believe that nothing that we say hinges on one's stance on these other issues regarding the FA analysis. Not to mention the vast array of objections that has been put forward towards the FA analysis in general such as the Wrong-Kind of Reasons problem (for a recent overview see Gertken & Kieswetter,

The "fitting"-part of the analysis (henceforth the 'normative component') is often cashed out in terms of reasons (Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2004; Hieronymi, 2005; Schroeder, 2010; Heuer, 2011). The "favor"-part of the analysis is a placeholder for any type of pro-attitude (or in the case of negative value, a con-attitude) and is what we will call the 'attitudinal component' of the FA analysis.

Despite the FA analysis' popularity, not much has been written on how we are to account for *how* valuable an object is. That is, most accounts settle for an analysis of, for example, what it is for an object to be good rather than bad, but do not account for what it is for an object to be, for example, very good rather than so-so.

It seems natural to account for *how* valuable an object is either by focusing on the strength of the normative component or on the intensity of the attitudinal component. We can after all have weak or strong reasons to admire something, and we seem to be able to admire something with a higher or lower degree of intensity. It is, however, unclear what role these two different components play in accounting for how valuable something is. Consider for example that when our colleagues constantly arrives late to meeting we have a strong reason to be slightly annoyed and when we submit a paper we, at best, have a weak reason to rejoice. What does this tell us about *how* valuable the acts of showing up late or submitting a paper actually are?[4]

2017) or how it handles solitary goods (Bykvist, 2009) to name a few. Since the paper does not argue for or against the FA analysis, but rather focuses on its formulation, these objections will not be addressed here.

[4] Normally, the generic reasons for attitudes relation is defined as "y is a reason for A to favor x". What is being left out is that the favoring is not only a placeholder for a specific attitude, but also a specific attitude with a specific degree of intensity, such as y is a reason for A to admire x to degree z. We do not believe that it is a controversial explication of reasons to attitudes to assume that they are reasons to have an attitude to a certain degree, rather it is an overlooked explication. Most would agree that we can have reasons to be a bit scared of wasps and reasons to be very scared of an axe-murderer rushing towards you. For someone who is explicit about reasons for attitudes being reasons for having an attitude with a certain degree of intensity see Skorupski (2010: 51 and 86).