Mixed-methods strategies to explore social norms

HOW WOULD I KNOW?

Dr Ben Cislaghi
Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning, Tostan International, Senegal
Adjunct Lecturer in Public Health and Community Medicine, Tufts University, USA
bencislaghi@tostan.org
Tostan

- Active since 1988 in Senegal;
- Today works in many countries, mainly West Africa;
- Three-year nonformal educational programme with male and female community members who have never been to school;
- Well-known for results in the field of behavioural change and child protection;
  - In particular declarations of abandonment for FGC and Child Marriage
- Holistic approach, not only child protection, but more generally community wellbeing;
- Human rights bridge the gap between insider/outsider understandings of wellbeing;
- Famous for social norms approach.
Today

1. **Exploring norms today (esp. qualitative)**
   1. Role of qualitative data in mixed methods
   2. (Meaningful quantitative data)
   3. Tracking norms change needs investigation of schema/aspirations?

2. **Trajectories**
   1. A flat vs four-dimensional approach to researching norms
Trustworthy data on norms

Natural observation is difficult:

1. Norms can be proscriptive;
2. Disapproval in case of noncompliance with prescriptive norms can never happen;
3. Sanctions can be covert.

(Mackie and Moneti, 2014)
Exploring norms

1. We need to understand the *reference group* of a particular norm X;

2. We need to explore members’ beliefs on the *typicality* of the practices associated with X in the reference group;

3. We need to explore members’ beliefs on the *appropriateness* of the practices associated with X in the reference group.
Mixed-methods strategies for exploring norms

Ideally:

1. Qualitative data – exploratory;
   1. How do people talk about X – if at all?
   2. What is the reference group associated to X?
   3. Who are the people that matter to those that practise X?
   4. What sanctions exist in case of compliance/non compliance with X?

2. Quantitative (+ qualitative) main data collection;
   1. People’s beliefs about typicality and appropriateness of X in the reference group;
   2. People’s anticipation of sanctions in case of compliance/non compliance;

3. Qualitative – explicative;
   1. Quant data might require interpretation.
Mixed-methods strategies for exploring norms

Ideally:

1. Explorative: qualitative;
   1. How do people talk about X – if at all?
   2. What is the reference group associated to X?
   3. Who are the people that matter to those that practise X?
   4. What sanctions exist in case of compliance/non compliance with X?

2. Main data collection: quantitative (+ qualitative);
   1. People’s beliefs about typicality and appropriateness of X in the reference group;
   2. People’s anticipation of sanctions in case of compliance/non compliance;

3. Explicative: qualitative;
   1. Quant data might require interpretation.
Explorative: what is the reference group?

- If you wanted to decide whether to do X, whose advice would you go and ask?
- After having done X, would someone come and congratulate? Who? How would that make you feel?
- If you didn’t do X, who would you be afraid came to know? Why?
- After you decided to do X, who were the first persons you told? Why? What did they say? How did that make you feel?
- After you did X, who were the first persons you told? Why? What did they say? How did that make you feel?
Can you tell me something that made you proud to be a man?

Something that makes me proud is... to bring honour to our village. It’s our role of men to defend our pride Pulaar. For instance, once we played against the Wolof, and we won. I felt very proud and came back home running.

Who did you share this news with?

With my older brother and my father that very day and then with my male friends in the village. They all congratulated me.
Mixed-methods strategies for exploring norms

Ideally:
1. Explorative: qualitative;
   1. How do people talk about X – if at all?
   2. What is the reference group associated to X?
   3. Who are the people that matter to those that practise X?
   4. What sanctions exist in case of compliance/non compliance with X?

2. Main data collection: quantitative (+ qualitative);
   1. People’s beliefs about typicality and appropriateness of X in the reference group;
   2. People’s anticipation of sanctions in case of compliance/non compliance;

3. Explicative: qualitative;
   1. Quant data might require interpretation.
## Main Data Set: Quantitative (FGC)

How would your family react if they knew you were going to...

Read the first type of attitude and check the column that corresponds with the interviewee’s response; next, continue to the second type of attitude and do the same; do the same for each subsequent column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>They would respond positively</th>
<th>They would respond negatively</th>
<th>They would be indifferent</th>
<th>They would intervene to convince me to change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baptize your child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave to go work in the city</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat your child to correct him/her</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give your 12-yr old daughter away in marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throw garbage on the ground in a public space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat meat every day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go abroad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have your daughter cut</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy a car</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marry three women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit your parents every 2 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build your house away from the village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main Data Set: Quantitative (FGC)

**Social Norms:**
Percentage of people who think their families approve of:

- **Female Genital Cutting (FGC):** 89%
- **Child Marriage (12 yrs old):** 48%
- **Beating children to correct them:** 78%

---

**Source:** Tostan, 2014 – Baseline data (Above: Gambia, Below: Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania)
Main Data Set: Qualitative (FGC)

Now we would like to give you a scenario. Imagine Penda is a woman who lives in this village. She is not a real person who lives here; this is just an example. Do not think of a Penda who lives here. Our Penda could be called Fatou, Mariema, etc. but for us today, she will be called Penda.

Imagine Penda, as we have said, a woman from the village, has a six year old daughter. Penda would like to have her cut. In your opinion, what would be the reaction of the other members of the community to this news?
Yes, we practise it. Everyone practises FGC around here since the time of our ancestors. Honestly, we have never thought about the fact that a girl could not be cut (F, A, ML13CAP003).

Source: Tostan, 2014 – Baseline data
Yes, we practice it. Everyone practices FGC around here since the time of our ancestors. Honestly, we have never thought about the fact that a girl could not be cut (F, A, ML13CAP003).

**Typical**

Source: Tostan, 2014 – Baseline data
Yes, we practise it. Everyone practises FGC around here since the time of our ancestors. Honestly, we have never thought about the fact that a girl could not be cut (F, A, ML13CAP003).

Her family will be happy, it’s a good think for all the family. Around here, if a girl is cut, it’s the entire family that is honored (FF, GB13CAP030).
Yes, we practise it. Everyone practises FGC around here since the time of our ancestors. Honestly, we have never thought about the fact that a girl could not be cut (F, A, ML13CAP003).

Her family will be happy, it’s a good think for all the family. Around here, if a girl is cut, it’s the entire family that is honored (FF, GB13CAP030).

Source: Tostan, 2014 – Baseline data
Main Data Set: Qualitative (Gender Roles)

“Another woman said her job is to cook and clean and she accepts that. Everyone agreed because that is what women do.”

“One woman said it is important for women to work hard and strive to do anything a man can do. The whole class agrees with this.”

(Cislaghi, Gillespie, Mackie, 2014)
Main Data Set: Qualitative (Gender Roles)

“Another woman said her job is to cook and clean and she accepts that [appropriate]. Everyone agreed [reference group] because that is what women do [typical].”

“One woman said it is important [positive sanction] for women to work hard and strive to do anything a man can do. The whole class agrees with this [reference group].”

(Cislaghi, Gillespie, Mackie, 2014)
Mixed-methods strategies for exploring norms

Ideally:

1. Explorative: qualitative;
   1. How do people talk about X – if at all?
   2. What is the reference group associated to X?
   3. Who are the people that matter to those that practise X?
   4. What sanctions exist in case of compliance/non compliance with X?

2. Main data collection: quantitative (+ qualitative);
   1. People’s beliefs about typicality and appropriateness of X in the reference group;
   2. People’s anticipation of sanctions in case of compliance/non compliance;

3. Explicative: qualitative;
   1. Quant data might require interpretation.
No, no. Her Family wouldn’t be happy: Penda has waited too long, six years is too late. She should have done it way before then, when her daughter was two or three.

Source: Tostan, 2014 – Baseline Data. Purple is Mauritania
Tracking Norms Shift

- Be open to track **shift** and **emergence**:
  - Norms Can shift (old norm -> new norm)
  - Where there was no previous norm norms can be created (tolerated practice -> new norm of non-toleration)
Tracking Norms Shift (GBV, Gender Roles, CM)

Is there violence towards women here?
It did happen before, if a woman did something that her husband did not like he would beat her ... but that doesn’t happen anymore.

When has this changed?
The class brought this change, they learned that it is not good to discriminate and violence is not good .... I think everyone here tries to be a good person and after learning about this stuff in class they realize how bad violence is. [S2I10AIB]

The women have gained much more confidence; they are not as shy or afraid to speak in front of people anymore. Everyone knows they have a right to speak and that they do it now. [S3I6SD]

If someone comes and asks to marry my daughter I will tell them to go look for someone else because I don’t want to ruin my daughter’s future [...]. People here no longer think this is right [S3I11FD]

(Cislaghi, 2013)
Studying norms shift requires exploring aspirations...
... and schemas (at least!)
Exploring Aspirations and Schemas

Besides cooking for men, I don’t see any other job for women, except sharing bed with men but that, it seems obvious to me (laughs) (H, A, ML13CAP007).

Source: Tostan, 2014 - Baseline
Exploring Aspirations and Schemas

Besides cooking for men, I don’t see any other job for women, except sharing bed with Men but that, it seems obvious to me (laughs) (H, A, ML13CAP007).

Around here, women are not involved in the process of marrying children off. So you will agree that I can’t know anything on this. Women mustn’t open their mouth to talk about marriage. Is is it so?
Oh yes, “ça ne se fait pas” – one doesn’t do that.
Exploring Aspirations and Schemas

Besides cooking form men, I don’t see any other job for women, except sharing bed with Men but that, it seems obvious to me (laughs) (H, A, ML13CAP007).

Around here, women are not involved in the process of marrying children off. So you will agree that I can’t know anything on this. Women mustn’t open their mouth to talk about marriage.

Is is it so?
Oh yes, “ça ne se fait pas” – one doesn’t do that.
Exploring Aspirations and Schemas

Besides cooking form men, I don’t see any other job for women, except sharing bed with Men but that, it seems obvious to me (laughs) (H, A, ML13CAP007).

Around here, women are not involved in the process of marrying children off. So you will agree that I can’t know anything on this. Women mustn’t open their mouth to talk about marriage.

Is is it so?
Oh yes, “ça ne se fait pas” – one doesn’t do that.

You said women talk less than men in village meetings. Why is that?
Oh well you know – it’s their way of being. There are many women, if the sit among men and you ask them to speak, they will be ashamed of speaking.

Source: Tostan, 2014 - Baseline
Exploring Aspirations and Schemas

Besides cooking form men, I don’t see any other job for women, except sharing bed with Men but that, it seems obvious to me (laughs) (H, A, ML13CAP007).

Around here, women are not involved in the process of marrying children off. So you will agree that I can’t know anything on this. Women mustn’t open their mouth to talk about marriage.

Is is it so?
Oh yes, “ça ne se fait pas” – one doesn’t do that.

You said women talk less than men in village meetings. Why is that?
Oh well you know – it’s their way of being. There are many women, if they sit among men and you ask them to speak, they will be ashamed of speaking.
Exploring Aspirations and Schemas (Schema change / growth in aspirations)

When there is a meeting, men talk more than women. Why so?

Ah ! Maybe is the reality of the village that demands that. Meetings are mostly led by men in our village. Now women have began to become part of those meetings, but that’s new – otherwise our meetings are led by men.

Source: Tostan, 2014 - Baseline
When there is a meeting, men talk more than women. *Why so?*

Ah! Maybe is the reality of the village that demands that. Meetings are mostly led by men in our village. *Now women have began to become part of those meetings, but that’s new* – otherwise our meetings are led by men.

*Source: Tostan, 2014 - Baseline*
Trajectories
Two dimensional weighs in norms theory?

1. Typicality (behaviours vs attitudes?)

2. Appropriateness (sanctions can vary in strength, effect on tightness of norm?)

3. Norms coherence (especially individual/shared values?)

4. Interplay of shifting/imagined reference groups (make sense of imagined boundaries – role of identity?)
HOW WOULD I KNOW?

Mixed-methods strategies to explore social norms

Dr Ben Cislaghi

Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning, Tostan International, Senegal

Adjunct Lecturer in Public Health and Community Medicine, Tufts University, USA

bencislaghi@tostan.org
References


Cislaghi, Gillespie, Mackie (2014), Values deliberation and collective action in rural Senegal, UNICEF. [Link]

Mackie G, Moneti F (2014), What are Social Norms and how are they measured? UNICEF. [Link]

Tostan (2014), Multi-country baseline study on norms, beliefs, and attitudes, Tostan.