



What implications of social norms theory for promoting health and wellbeing?

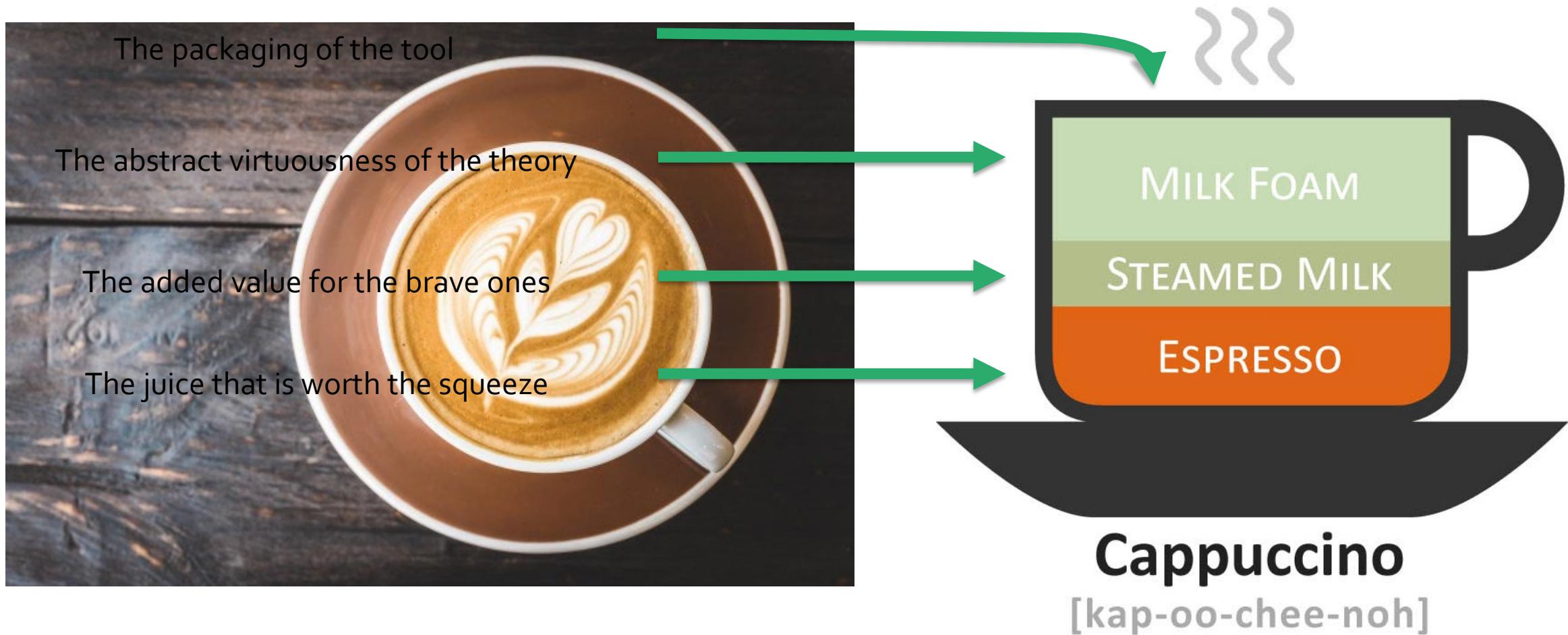
Ben Cislaghi

Assistant Professor in Social Norms
Centre for Gender, Health and Violence
ben.cislaghi@lshtm.ac.uk

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The pragmatist's cappuccino metaphor



A forgone assumption hidden in many projects

(Material resources aside)

New knowledge → New behaviour
(New attitudes)

But then failure comes (for the brave one who embrace it)



“Despite an extensive promotion campaign we found only moderate compliance with the intervention”

What are social norms?

What behaviours do social norms influence?

Who is influential?

Who is counter-influential?

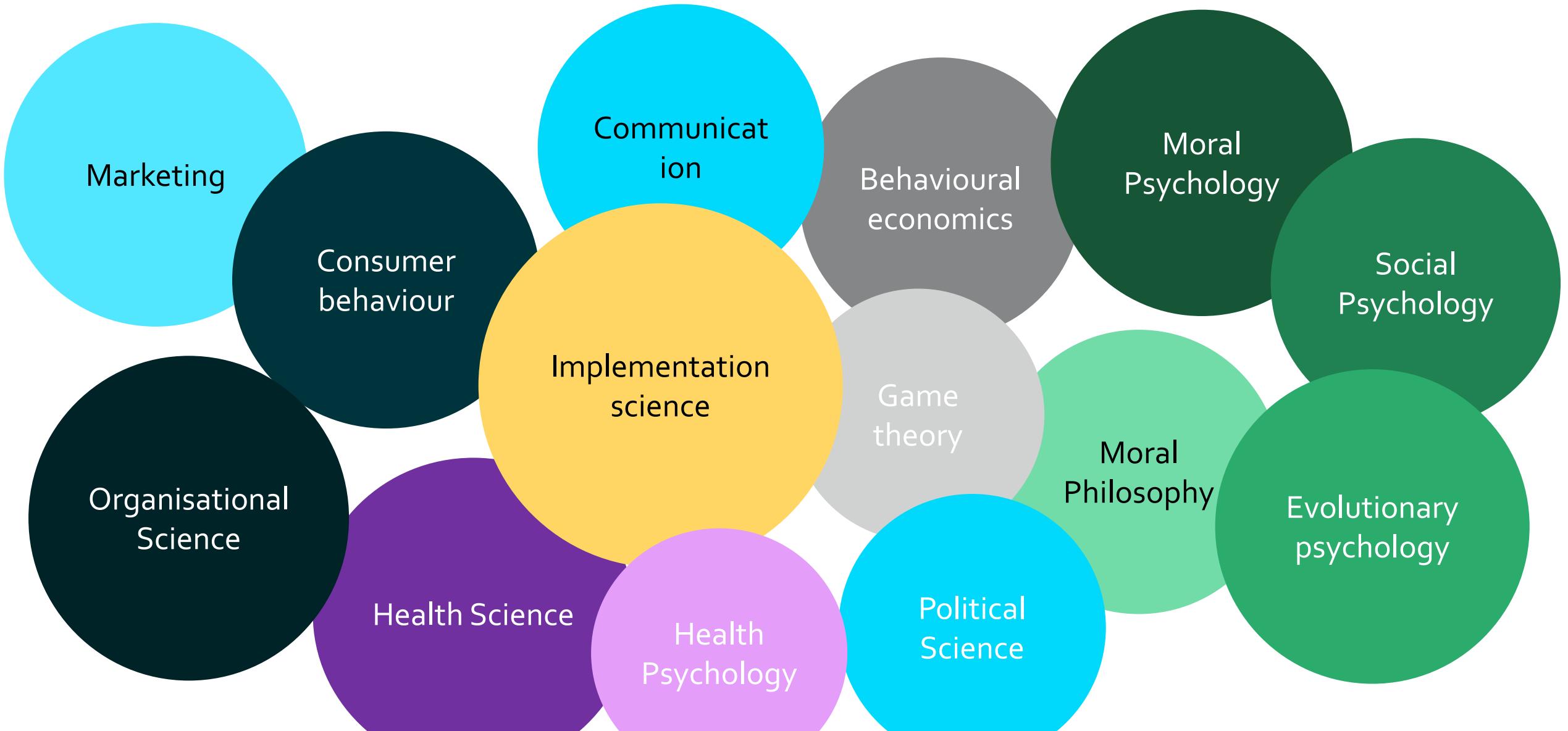
Why do people comply with social norms?

WHAT ARE SOCIAL NORMS?

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Many schools of social norms as beliefs



Social norms regulate what behaviour is “normal”



- Unwritten rules about what is acceptable in a given society or group of people (“reference group”).
- Exchange Christmas gifts with family members, offer water to a visitor, leave a tip to the waiter.
- Often maintained by positive and negative social sanctions.

Social Norms have important positive roles

1. They help us work together



2. They positively affect people's health:



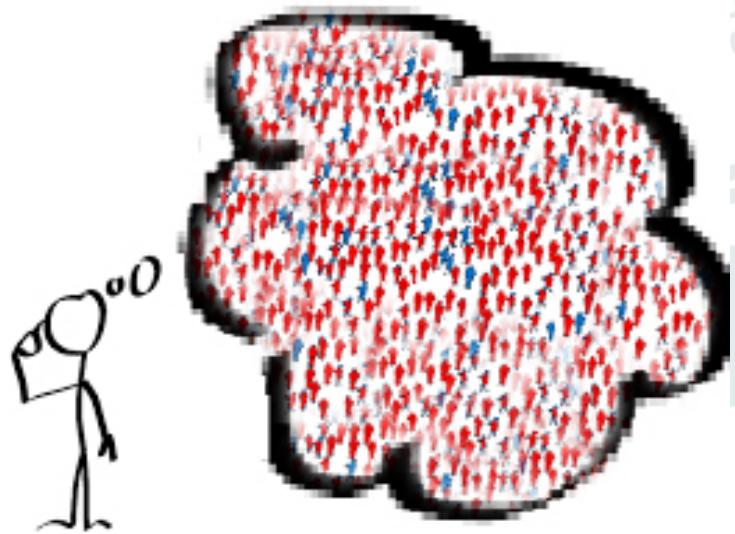
We are ultrasocial and culturally evolved
(Tomasello et al, 2005)
(Boehm, 1999)

Cultural Consensus is correlated with normal blood pressure
(Dressler and Bindon 2000)

Social Integration is correlated with physical and mental health
(Berkman et al 2000)

One theory: Social Norms as Beliefs

1. What people believe others do



(Descriptive norms or
empirical expectations)

2. What people believe others
approve and disapprove of



(Injunctive norms or
normative expectations)



A Social Norm is NOT a personal attitude



Examples of Harmful social norms

I wouldn't like to smoke (attitude), but I ought to do it (norm) to look cool

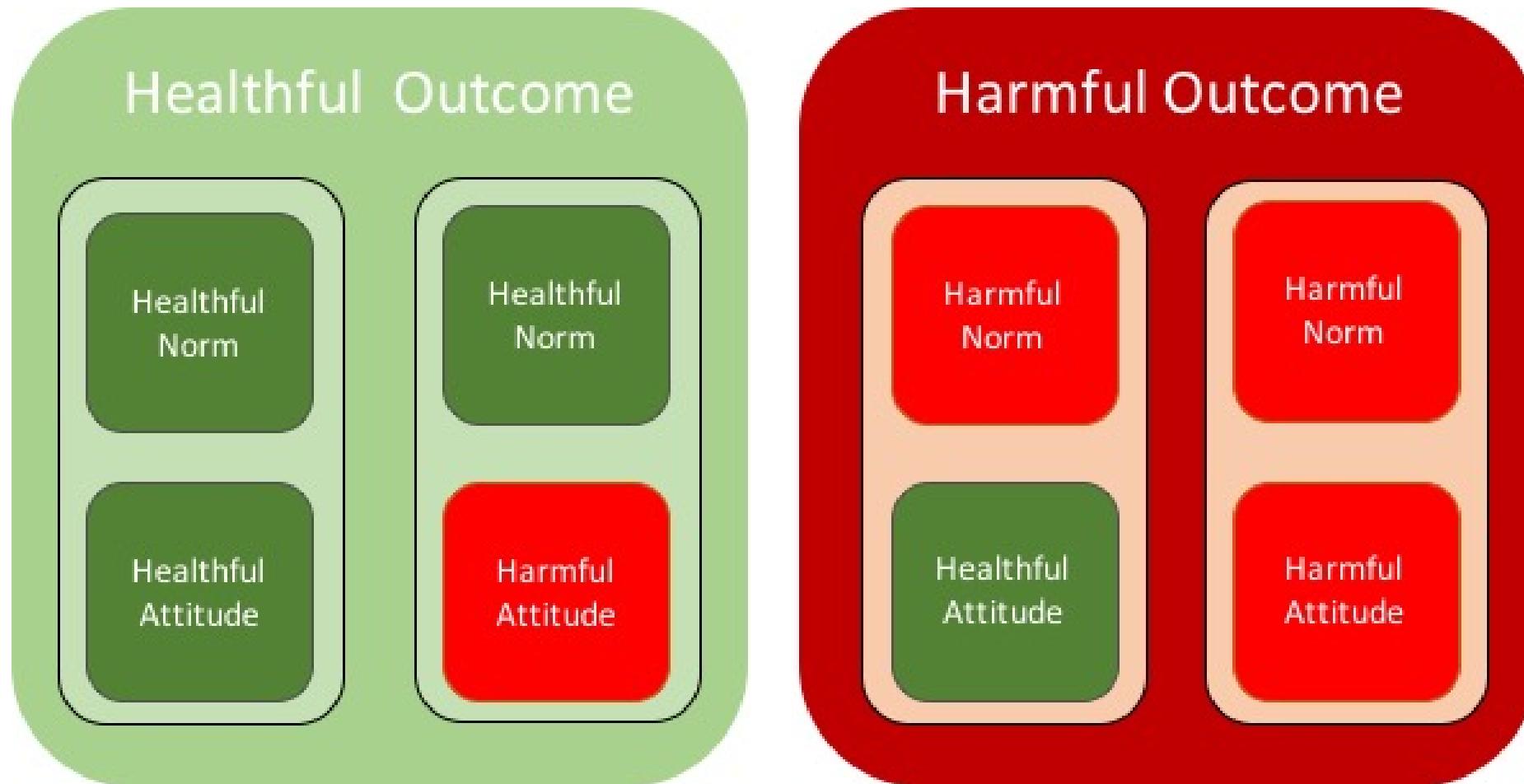
I wouldn't like to drink that much (attitude), but hey: you have got to fit in so I do (norm)!

I can't wear a helmet when cycling (norm) – that's just for the geeks!

I would like to defend that person that is bullied at school (attitude), but I don't want to be seen with him (norm) because everyone thinks s/he is a nerd (and would disapprove of me);

I would like to report the teacher that hits the child (attitude) but nobody does it (norm) and I think others would stop talking to me and call me a "policeman"

Effect of Interaction of Social Norms and Personal Attitudes on health outcomes



Social Norms influence...



Harmful Alcohol Use
(Prestwich et al. 2016)



Substance abuse
(Mahalik et al. 2015)



Contraception / Condom use
(Protopgerou et al. 2015)



Bullying
(Berger and Caravita, 2016)



Access to education
(Martens, 2013)



Readiness to ask for help
(Vogel et al. 2015)



Domestic Violence
(Jewkes et al. 2015)



Corporal Punishment of children
(Vaughan-Eden, 2018)

Current attention on social norms in LMIC



Child Marriage
(Lee-Rife et al. 2010)



FGC
(Mackie and LeJeune, 2009)



Open defecation
(Zimba et al. 2016)



Family planning and birth spacing
(Bongardt et al. 2016)



Intimate partner violence
(Bass et al. 2016)

Social Norms and the Market



Social norms could facilitate cooperation and strategies for exchange of goods among low-frequency partners and strangers (evolutionary)

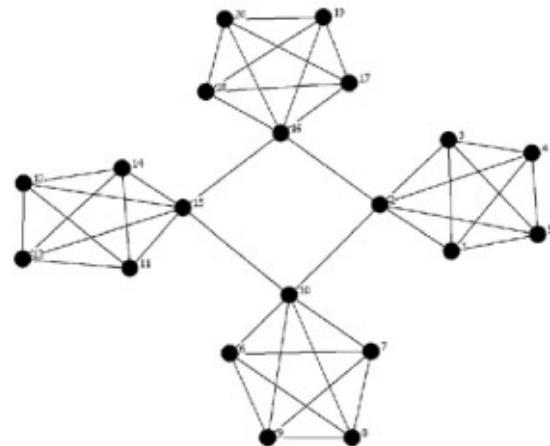
Social Norms and the Market

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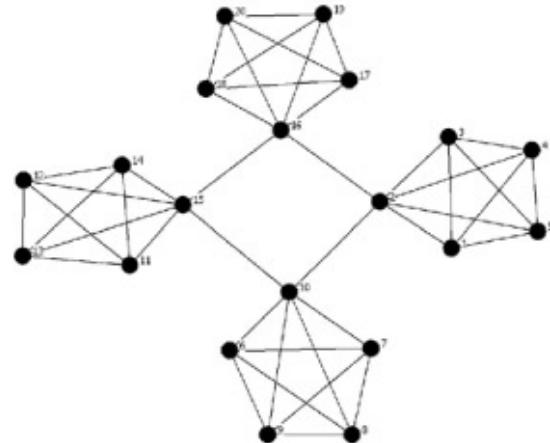
Small bounded societies (e.g. rural villages): stronger low or high-trust equilibrium that is more difficult to change



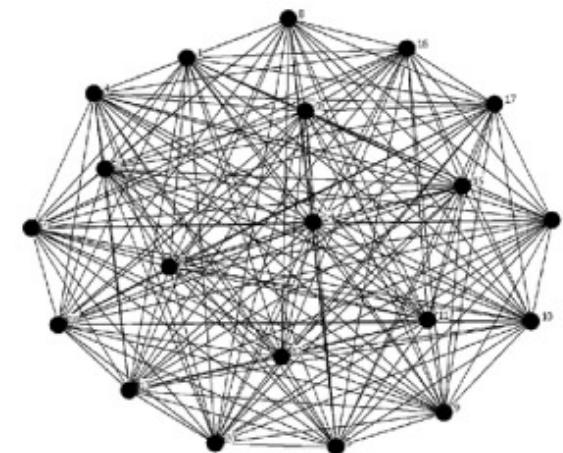
Social Norms and the Market

Social norms could facilitate cooperation and strategies for exchange of goods among low-frequency partners and strangers

Small bounded societies (e.g. rural villages): stronger low or high-trust equilibrium that is more difficult to change



Open high density societies (e.g. urban cities): lots of exit strategies, many reference groups, equilibrium can change rapidly



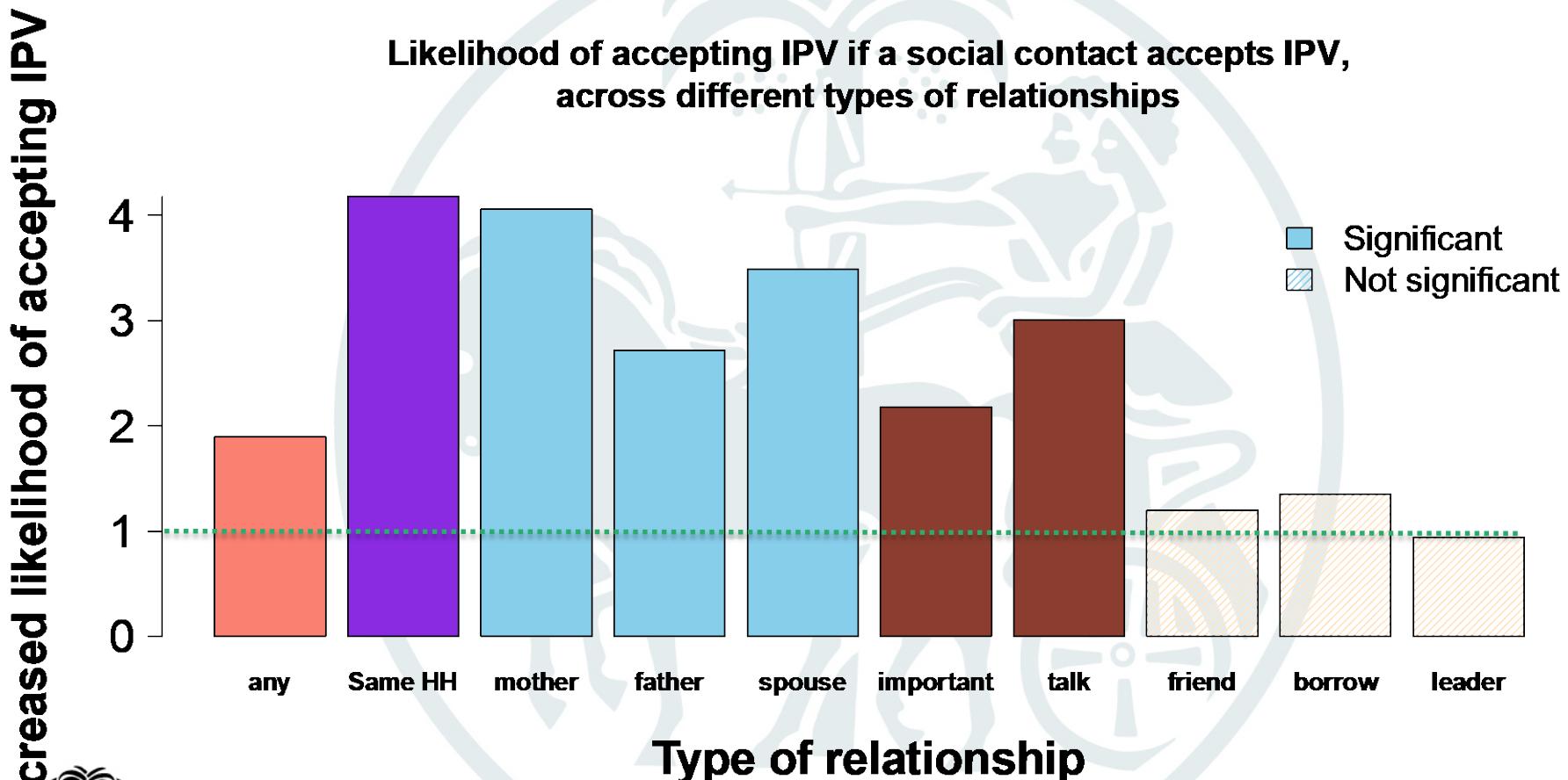


INFLUENTIAL AND COUNTER-INFLUENTIAL GROUPS

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Who is influential?



Percentage smoking outside area?

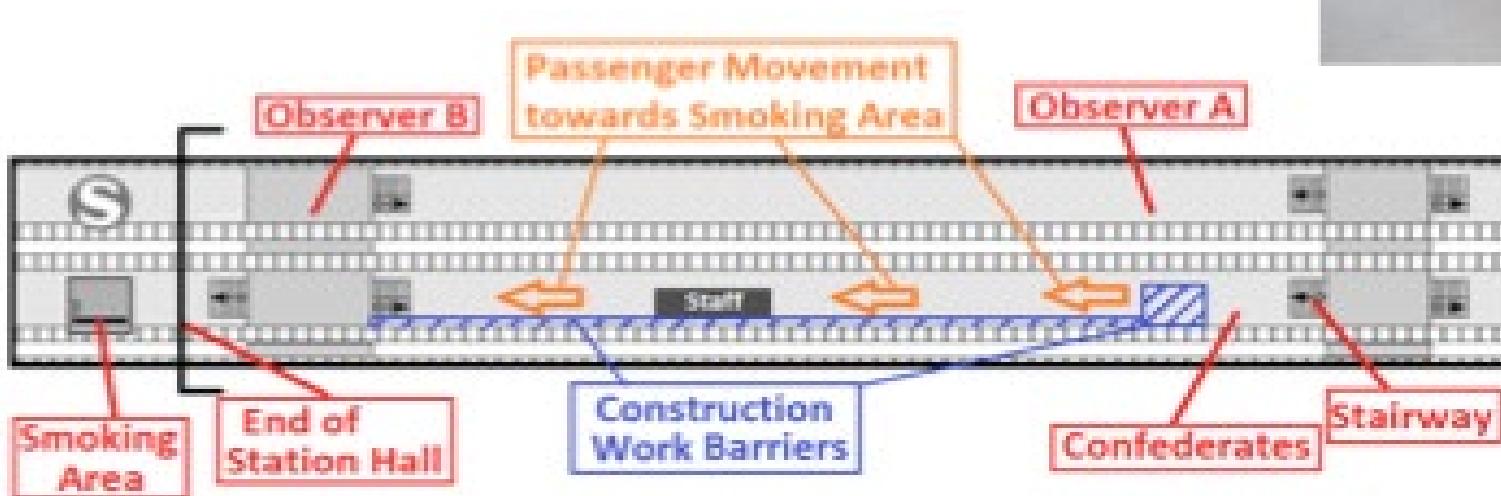
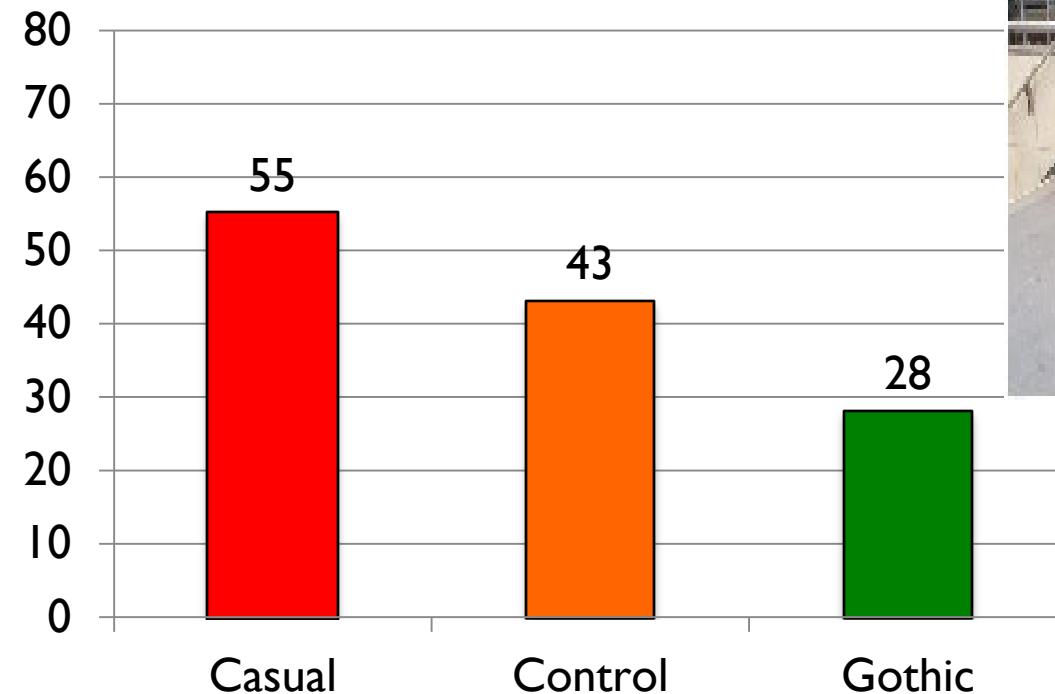


Figure 2.1: Station Layout with description

Keizer, K., Lindenberg, S., & Steg, L. (2013). The importance of demonstratively restoring order. *PLoS One*, 8(6), e65137.
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0065137



Percentage violating?



Sometimes the norm exists in a specific reference group...



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...and sometimes they are in the “society”

Heise, L. and B. Cislaghi (Under Review). "Transforming gender norms to achieve gender equity: What is the role of social norms theory?".



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1. NOT ALL NORMS ARE EQUAL

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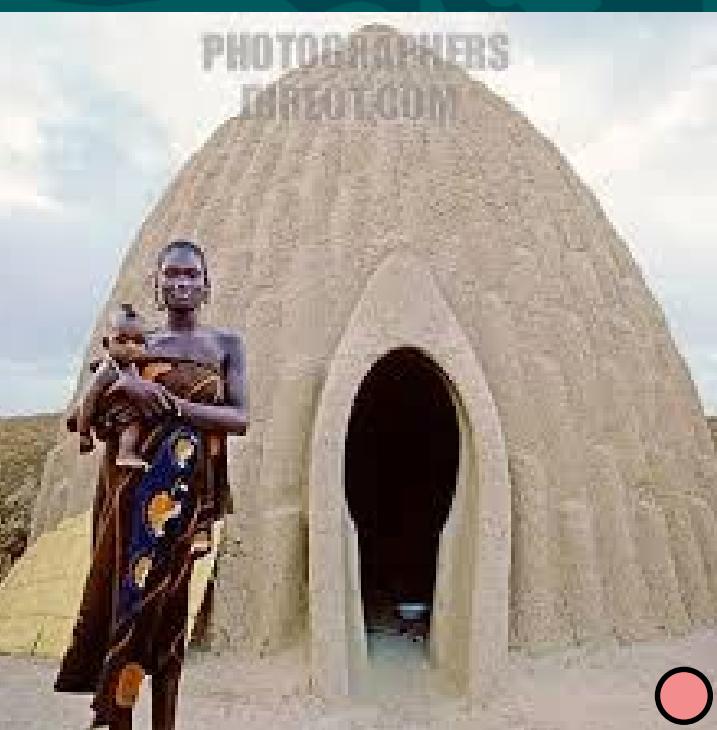
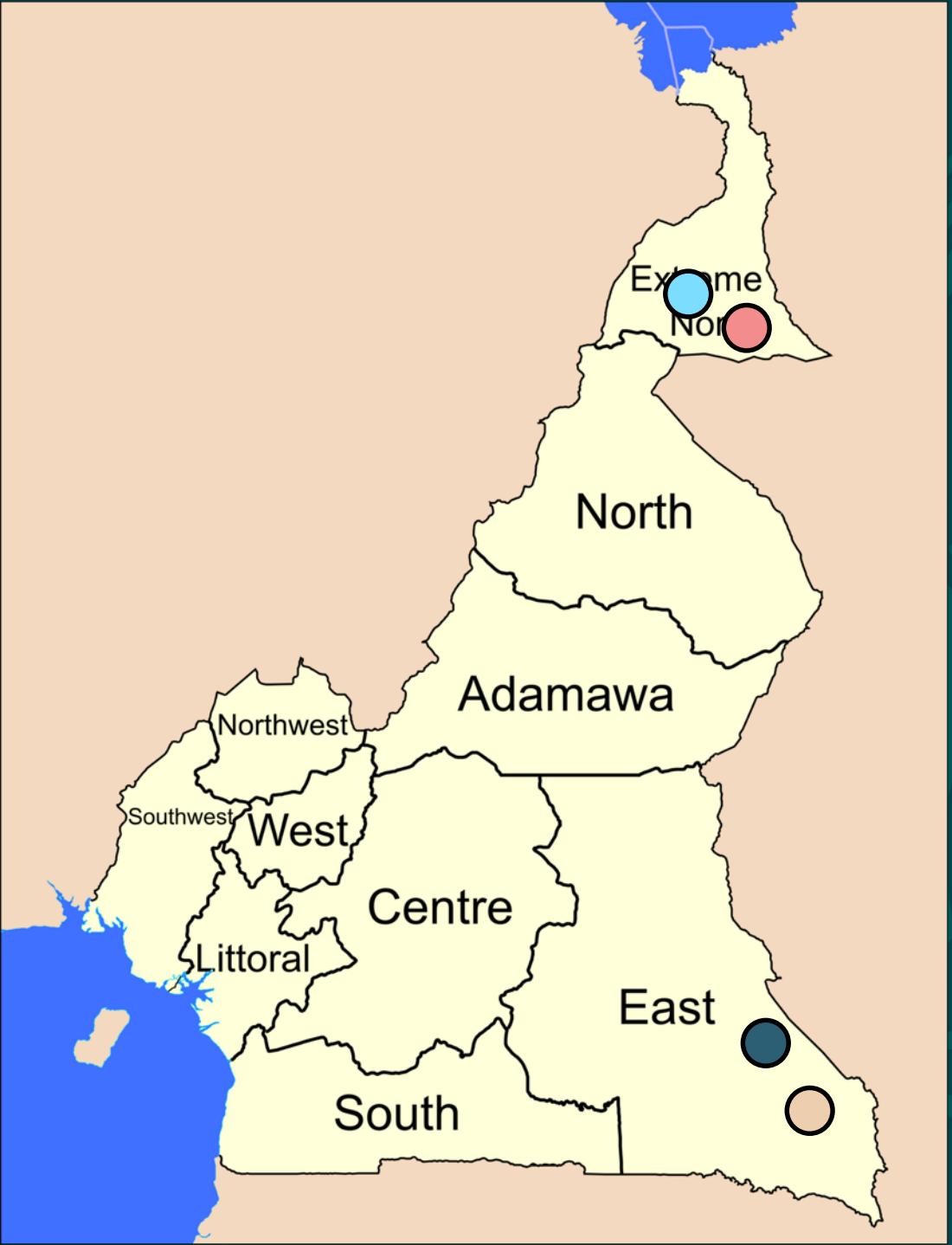


The prevalence of a norm doesn't affect its influence



20 gallons of pee in a swimming pool on average

Blackstock et al. (2017) Sweetened Swimming Pools and Hot Tubs, *Environ. Sci. Technol. Lett.*, 2017, 4 (4), pp 149–153
<https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.estlett.7b00043>



Methods:

- Focus Group Discussions
- Key Informant Interviews
- Social Network Analysis
- Cultural Domain Analysis
- Ethnographic case studies

Norm: Respectable women marry early

Subject: Adolescent girls who reached puberty

Sanctions: Less desirable marriage prospects at age 18

Reference Group: Community members (future in-laws and husbands)

Variations by ethnic group:



Maka. Uncommon, (Mildly) Acceptable

"Is marriage a race? Marriage comes at its time, we don't force it. She will get married one day"

Mafa. Common, Acceptable and Appropriate

"It is easy for her to find a husband [now that she's 22], but she will not likely find the type of husband she ever dreamed of when she was 17 or 18 years old"

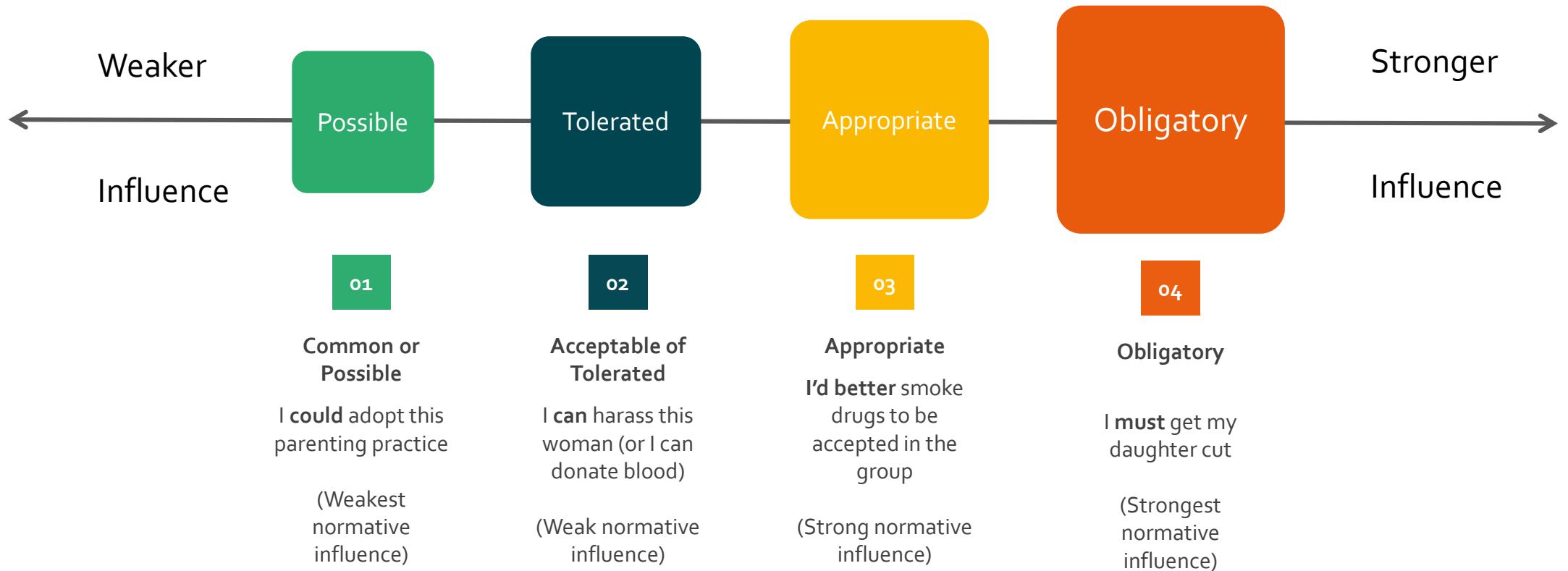
Mbororo. Common, Acceptable, Appropriate, and Obligatory

"To me, it will be very difficult for a girl to get married [when she's 20]. At that age, all her sisters would be in their marital homes"

Musgum. Common, Acceptable, Appropriate, and Obligatory

"It will be difficult for her to find a husband, because she is stigmatised by the people in the village"

Spectrum of normative influence



Norms don't only determine preference based on what I am expected to do

Norms' don't *only* constrict people actions (my individual attitude would be to do X, but I do Y because others expect it from me)

They *also* stretch the field of what is possible.

Not only what is compulsory or forbidden (and even acceptable), but also what is possible

2. NORMS BUNDLE IN UNIVERSES

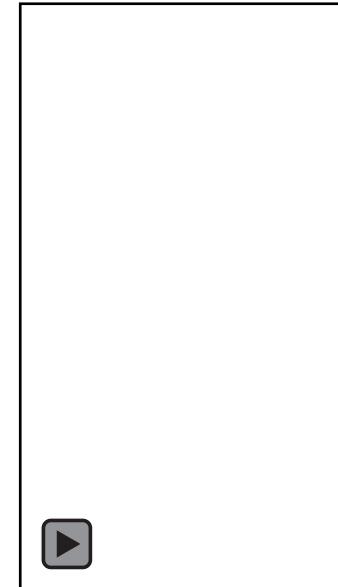
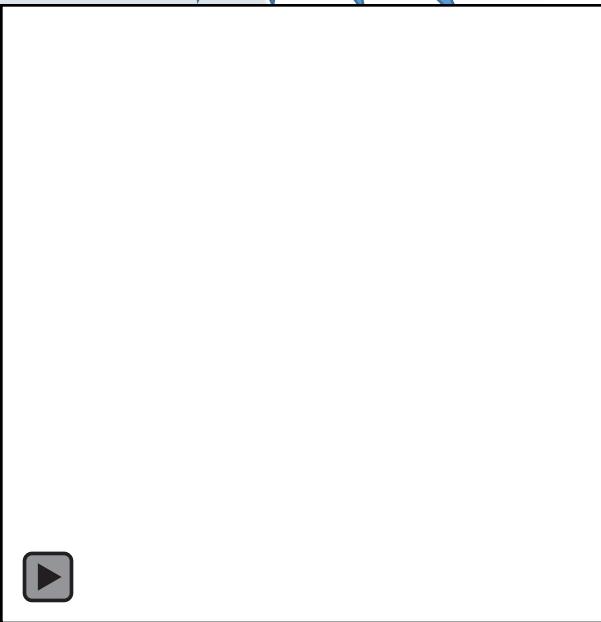
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Normalizing IPV

It's your fault if you can't manage your relationship well enough and he hits you

They all pretend their relationships are perfect

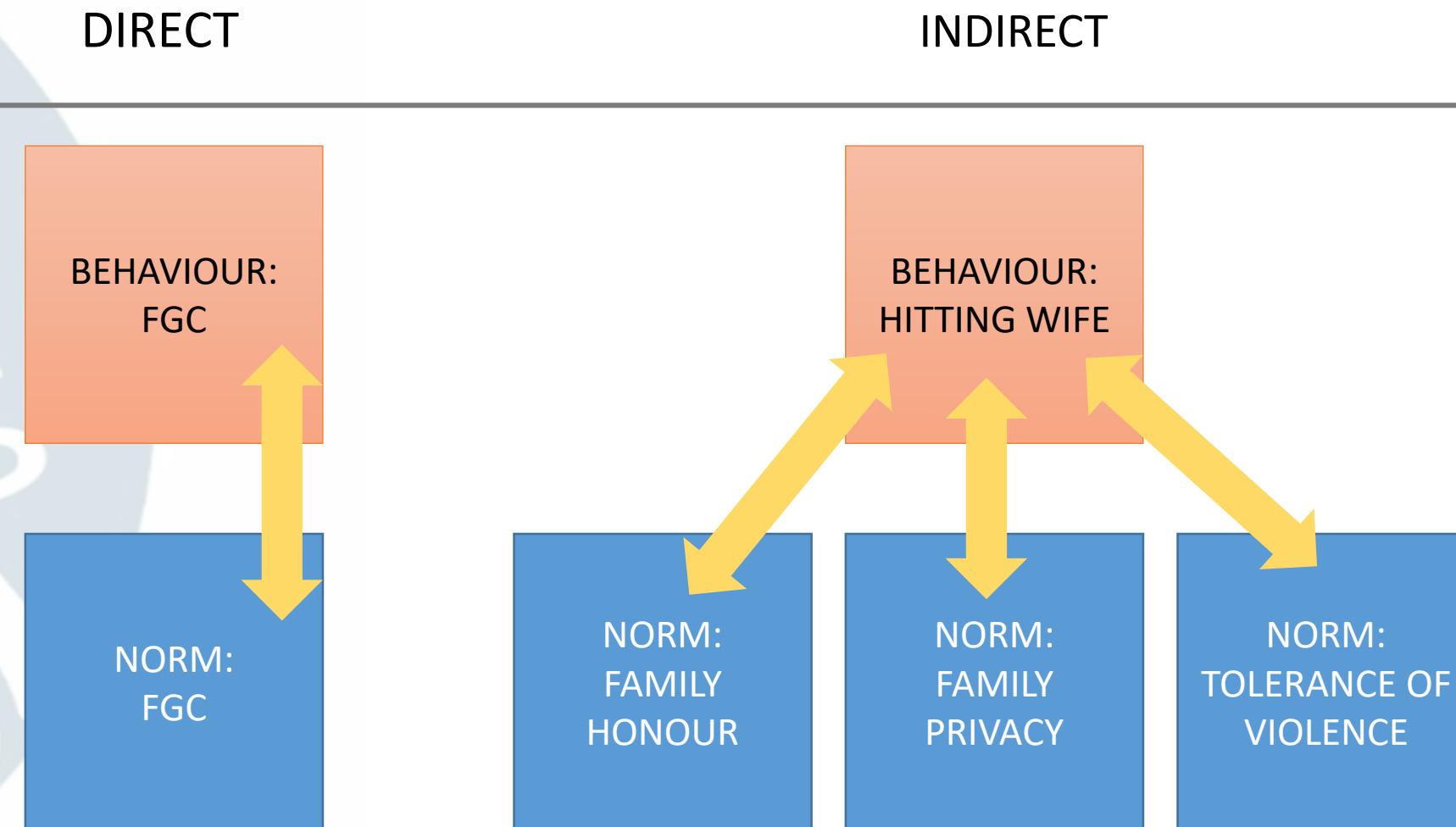


Cislaghi, Battarjee (2017); *Honour and Prestige: the influence of social norms on violence against women and girls in Karnataka, Southern India*; Strive working papers.

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RELATION NORM / BEHAVIOUR: BUNDLES OF NORMS



Cislaghi and Heise (2018); *Eight Pitfalls of social norms theory*. Globalization and Health.

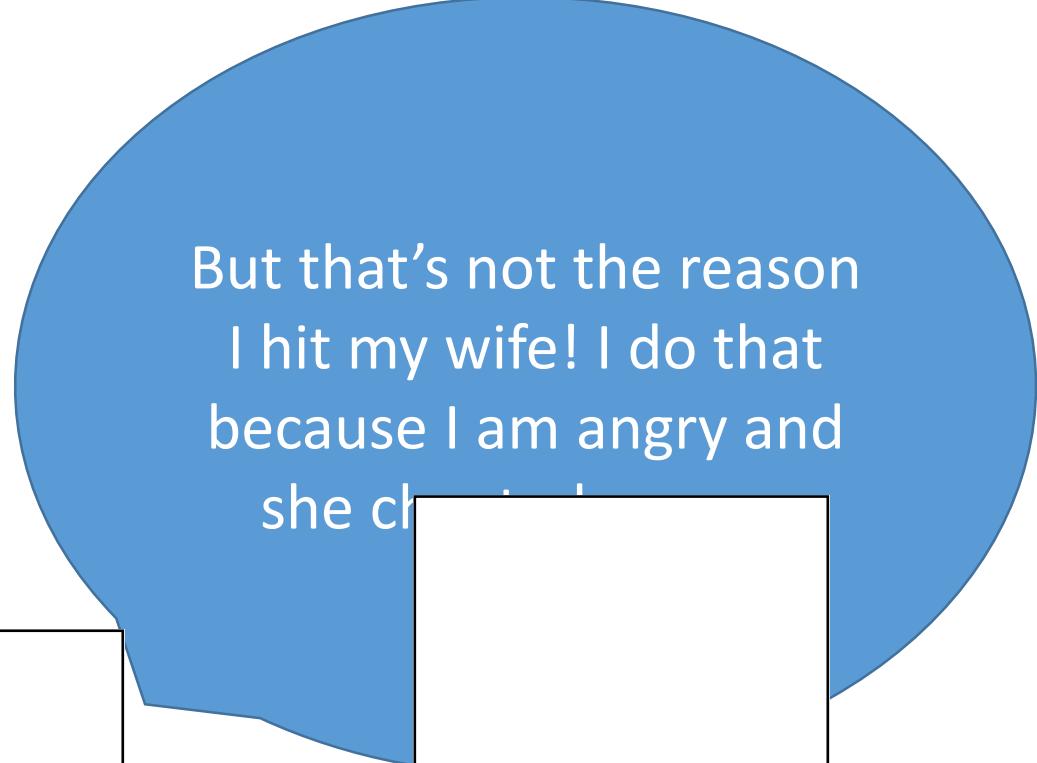


3. SOCIAL SYSTEMS ARE COMPLEX

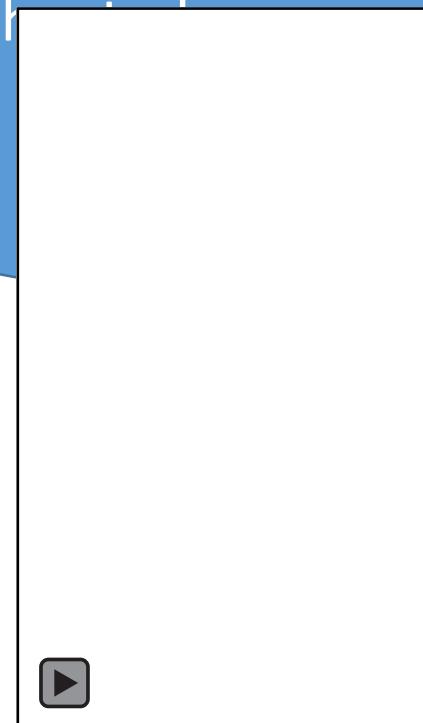
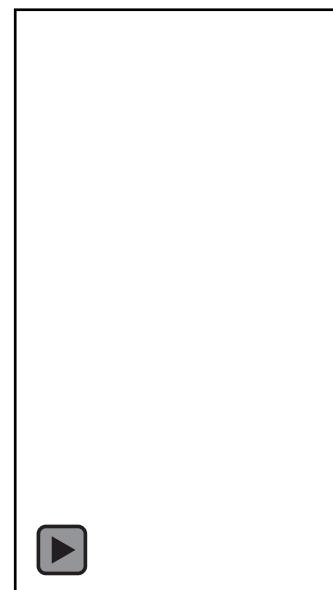
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Norms and IPV



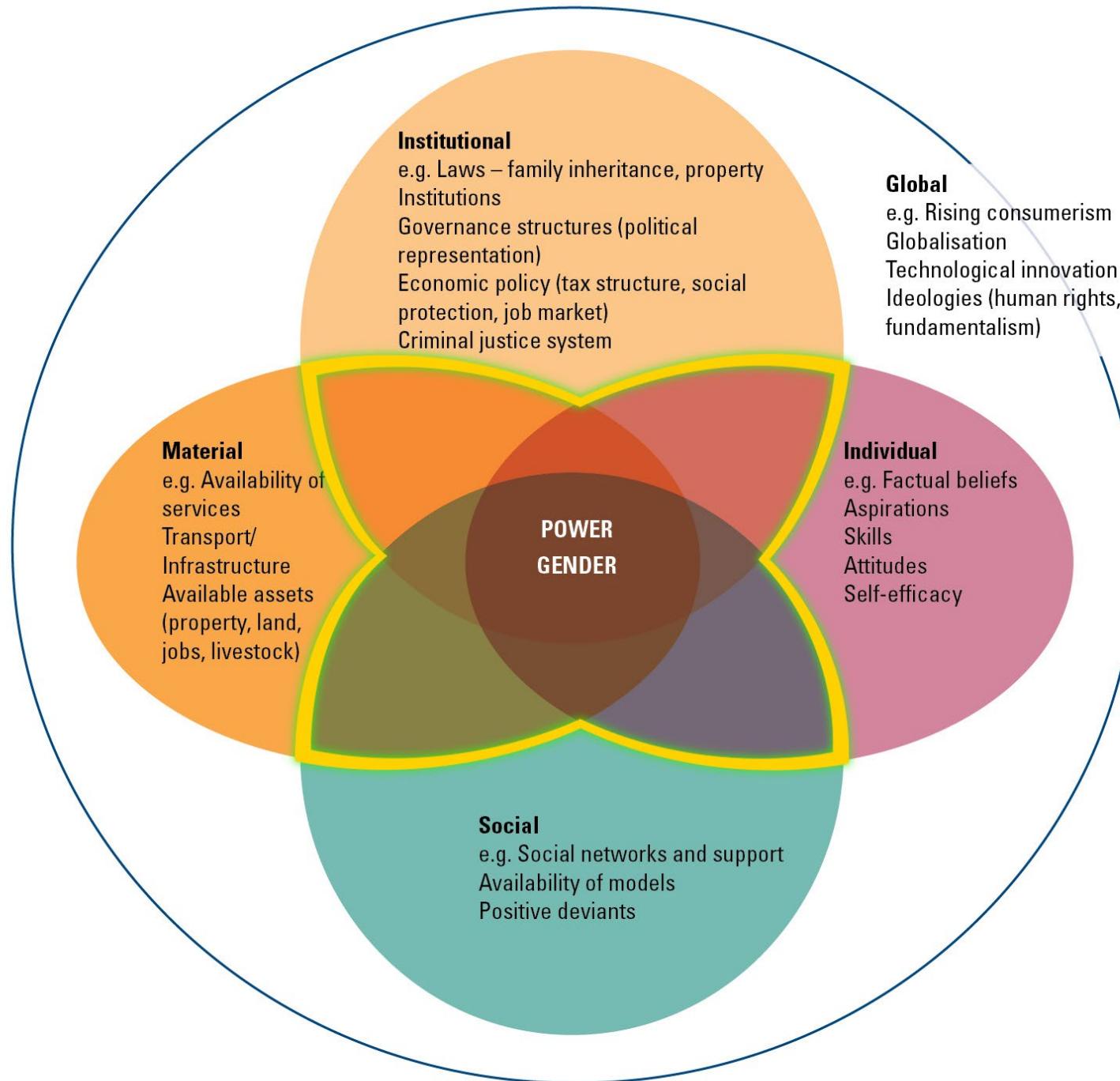
But that's not the reason
I hit my wife! I do that
because I am angry and
she changes me.



Partner violence is sustained by:

- ▶ **Factual beliefs:** women will not obey unless beaten; women need discipline to be good wives
- ▶ **Positive attitudes** toward the practice -- hitting is an acceptable form of discipline
- ▶ **Direct norms:** other men will look down upon a man who cannot keep his wife in line (masculinity norms)
- ▶ **Indirect norms:** family privacy -- disclosing violence will bring shame upon the family
- ▶ **Gender roles/scripts:** ideals of what a “good wife” is/does





Six Key messages

1. Social norms are beliefs about what others do and approve of
2. They are different from personal attitudes...
3. ...but these two can be aligned or misaligned.
4. Not all norms are equal, some are more powerful, others less
5. Norms can have direct or indirect influence
6. Norms affect factors on several domains in the ecological framework

