

Overview of research on Sexual Violence in Africa

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Disposition of the presentation

- Definition of sexual violence
- Types of sexual violence
- Magnitude of sexual violence
 - Issues associated with estimating sexual violence (under-estimation in surveys due to the nature of sexual violence)
- Causes of sexual violence
- Impact of sexual violence

Definition of sexual violence

- **“An act, attempt to obtain a sexual act , unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a persons sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work**
- **It can involve physical force or intimidation, black mail or other threats like physical harm, being dismissed from a job or not obtaining a job one is seeking, or involve where the aggressed person is either drunk, drugged, asleep or is mentally incapable of understanding the situation**

Definition#2

- Includes
 - **rape** or coerced penetration even if slight of the vulva or anus using a penis or other bodily parts of any object. This can involve either one person or a gang (gang rape)
 - **attempted rape** is the attempt to penetrate, even if slight, the vulva or anus using a penis or other bodily parts of any object
 - **sexual assault** which involves other forms of assault involving a sexual organ , including a coerced contact between the mouth and penis, vulva or anus

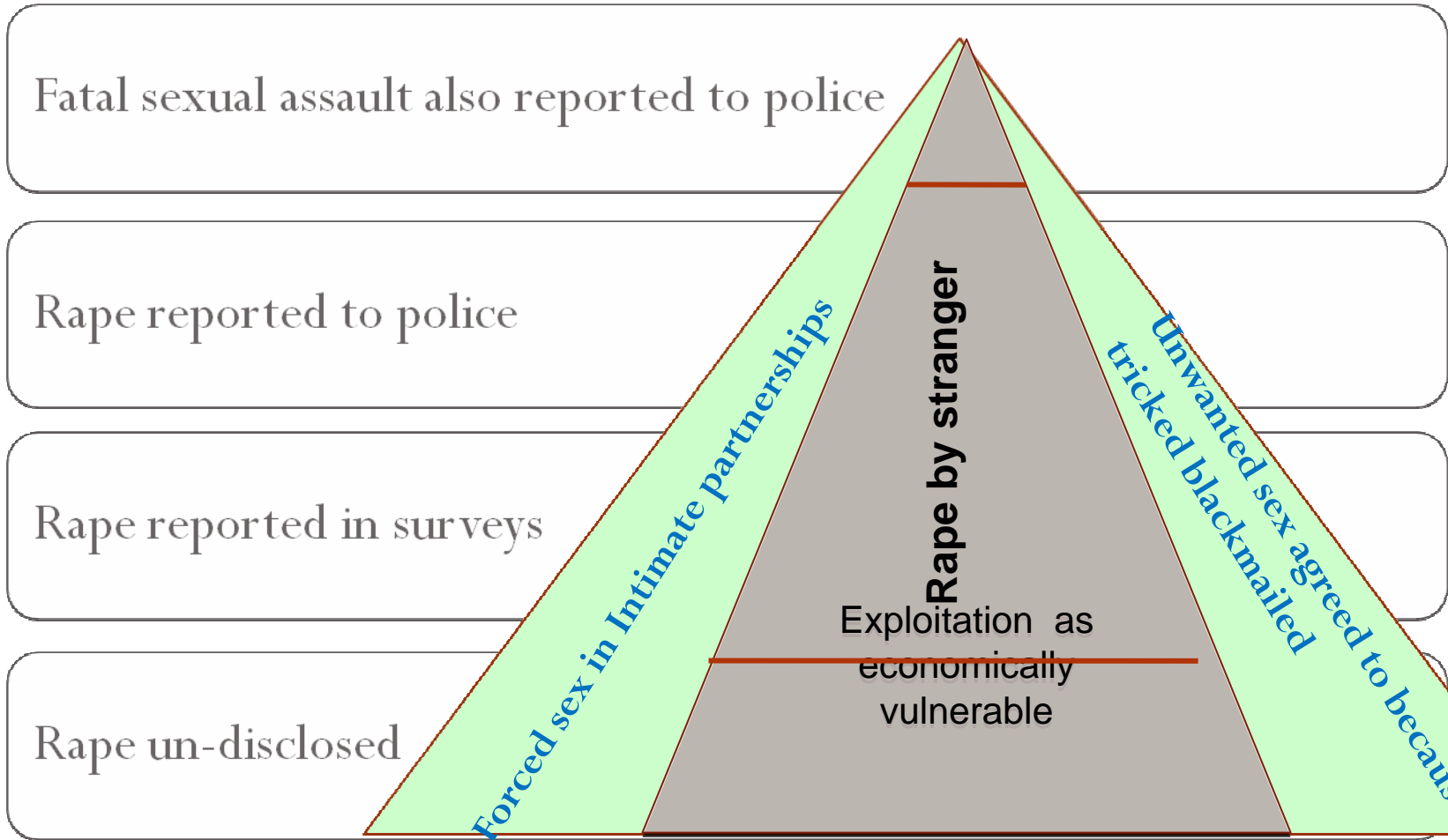
Forms and contexts among women and children

- Rape within marriage or dating relationship
- Rape by strangers
- Rape during armed conflict (Small lake region)
- Unwanted sexual advances or sexual harassment in return for favors
- Sexual abuse of the mentally or physically challenged
- Child sexual abuse (both male and female)
- Forced cohabitation including marriage (child marriages, widow inheritance, tribal marriages including kidnapping of young brides)

Forms and context #2

- **Denial of rights to use an anti conception method**
- **Denial of use of a protective method against sexually transmitted infections**
- **Forced abortion (not common in the region)**
- **Forced trafficking and violations (promised work but sold into servitude and sent to brothels, an emerging issues-both nationally and internationally)**
- **Culturally sanctioned violations of the integrity of woman hood (FGM or virginity checks)**

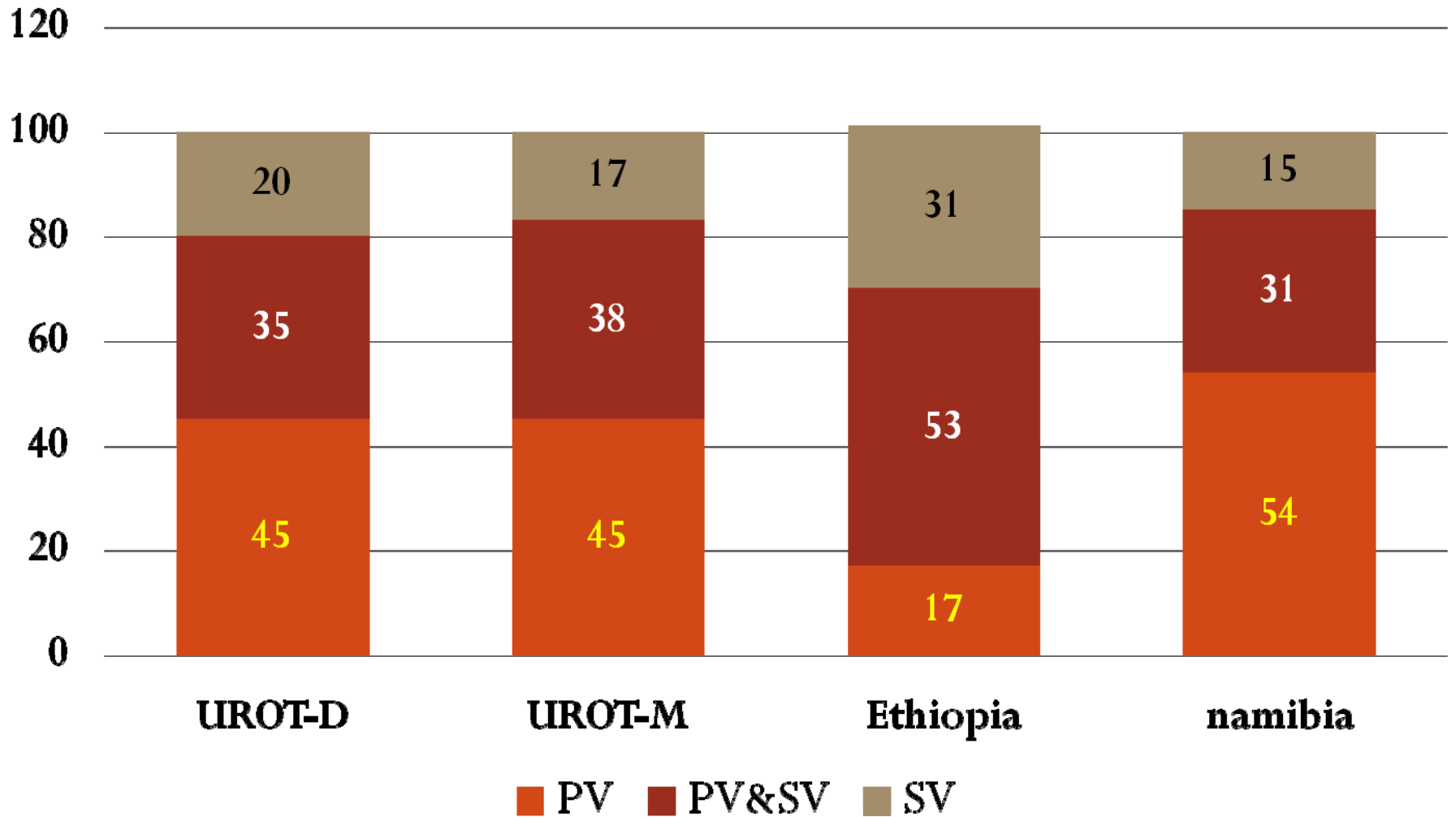
Extent of sexual Violence



Prevalence of PV and SV in the region

Country study done	% violence
ZAMBIA: DHS, 2004	27% ever married women reported physical violence (PV) in the past year
SOUTH AFRICA: DHS, 1998	7% of 15-19year olds PV in last one year 10% of 15-19year olds SV in last one year
KENYA: DHS, 2003	43% of 15-49year olds EPV 29% of 15-49 year olds in last year
ETHIOPIA: WHO, 2005	49% of EPW had ever experienced PV 59% of EPW had ever experienced SV
TANZANIA; WHO, 2005	47% of EPW had ever experience PV 31% of EPW had ever experience SV

The Rates in Percent of PV, PV&SV and SV in African Sites of WHO study, 2005



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Alarming findings!

Makes us all take a step back and think

- What is the impact of the level of sexual violation on women?
- What needs to be done to contain it?

Fatal outcomes of SV

- **Femicide:** Not common in Africa but in places where male children are more valued and dowry price is paid
- **Suicide:** identified world wide as well as in the WHO study where symptoms described included crying easily, inability to enjoy life, fatigue, and thoughts of suicide (spectrum of depression among those with PV and SV)
- **AIDS Related mortality:** Studies out of RSA and one study in UROT linking the epidemics of violence (physical or sexual) and risk of HIV transmission to women
- **Maternal mortality:** a result of violence during pregnancy by mainly the father of unborn child includes miscarriages, induced abortion, and non use of antenatal and post natal services (Ethiopia and URoT)

Non fatal outcomes (not necessarily impacting less on women)

- **Direct injuries to the sexually violated woman**
- **Reproductive health outcomes**
 - **Gynecologic problems, PID, Unsafe abortions, STI, Miscarriages, sexual dysfunctions, pregnancy complications**
- **Psychological and behavioral outcomes**
 - **Depression and anxiety, eating disorders, substance use problems, phobias and panic disorders, self harm, recurrent physical problems of undetermined origin**
 - **Self hard, engagement in unsafe sexual behaviours**

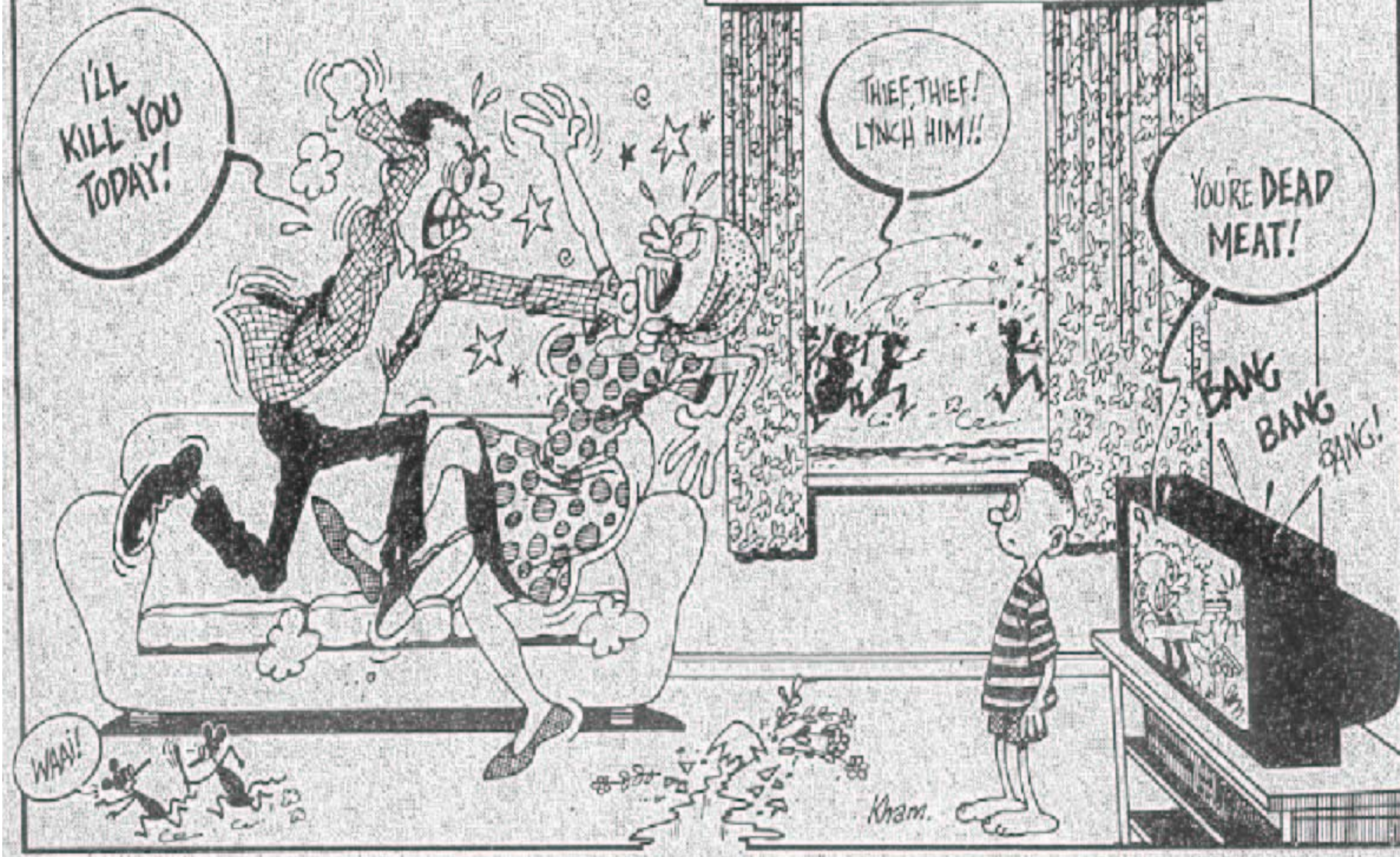
Looking for solutions

- What is it about men that makes them subject women to sexual violations?
- What regulatory mechanisms exist for the perpetrator of violence and the women subject to sexual violation?

Who are the perpetrators of violence and why do the sexually violent women

- Women rather than men are subject to sexual violence. Most violence perpetrated by men rather than women (Uses the ecological model)
- At individual level those men may:
 - Abuse substances
 - Have attitudes supporting sexual coercion
 - Have impulsive and antisocial tendencies
 - Be hostile towards women
 - Have history of being sexually abused as children
 - Have witnessed sexual family violence as children

DO SOME PARENTS KNOW WHAT DAMAGE THEY'RE CAUSING TO THEIR CHILDREN?



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Relationship factors

- Peer influence (sexually delinquent peers (gang rape))
- Strong patriarchal relationship in family environment
- Emotionally unsupportive backgrounds for our young men
- Family honor (need to be flagged but not an issue in Africa currently)

Community factors

- Poverty leading to crisis in male identity
- Lack of employment opportunities especially for men
- Lack of police and judiciary support in country
- Tolerance to sexual violation against women by men
- Weak community sanctions against those men who sexually violate women

Societal factors

- Supportive norms of sexual violence against women
- Supportive norms of male superiority
- Weak laws and policies related to sexual violence
- Weak laws related to gender equity
- Social violence

Solutions for the sexual violated women and child

Initial effort: The current medico-legal convening of sexual violence against women and way forward thereafter

Thank you for listening!