

Transformations in widow inheritance practices: The case of Uganda, Kenya & Tanzania

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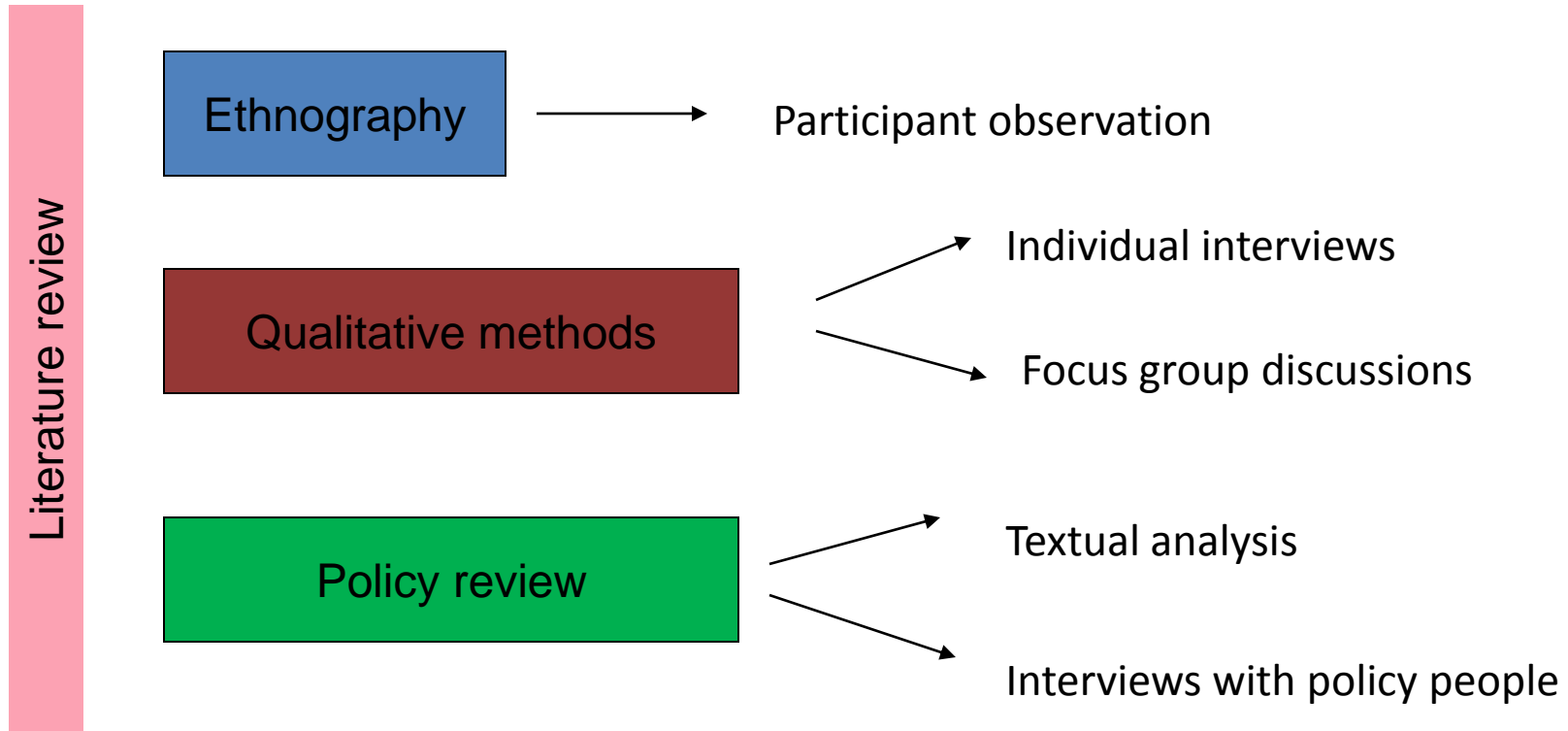
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East Africa: Setting and context

Methods

- Post-colonial feminist paradigm
- Social construction & grounded theory
- Participant observation, interviews, focus group discussions, policy review.

Data collection



⇒ Triangulation of: 1) methods
2) data sources
3) study population groups

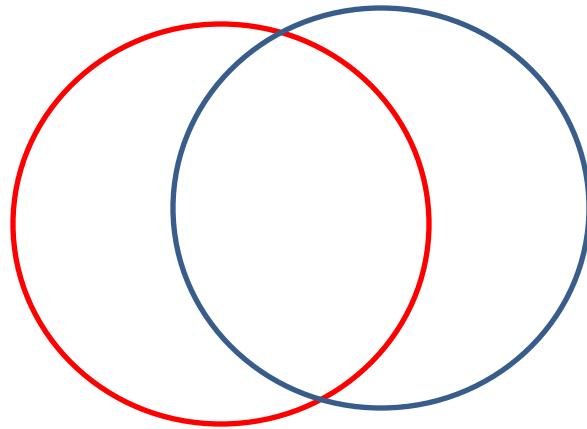
Methods

- Post-colonial feminist paradigm
- Social construction & grounded theory
- Participant observation, interviews, focus group discussions, policy review.
- Verbatim transcription, translation, data entry.
- Data analysis facilitated by CAQDAS – Atlas.ti.
- Ethical considerations and review mechanisms.

Universal phenomenon, contextual experience

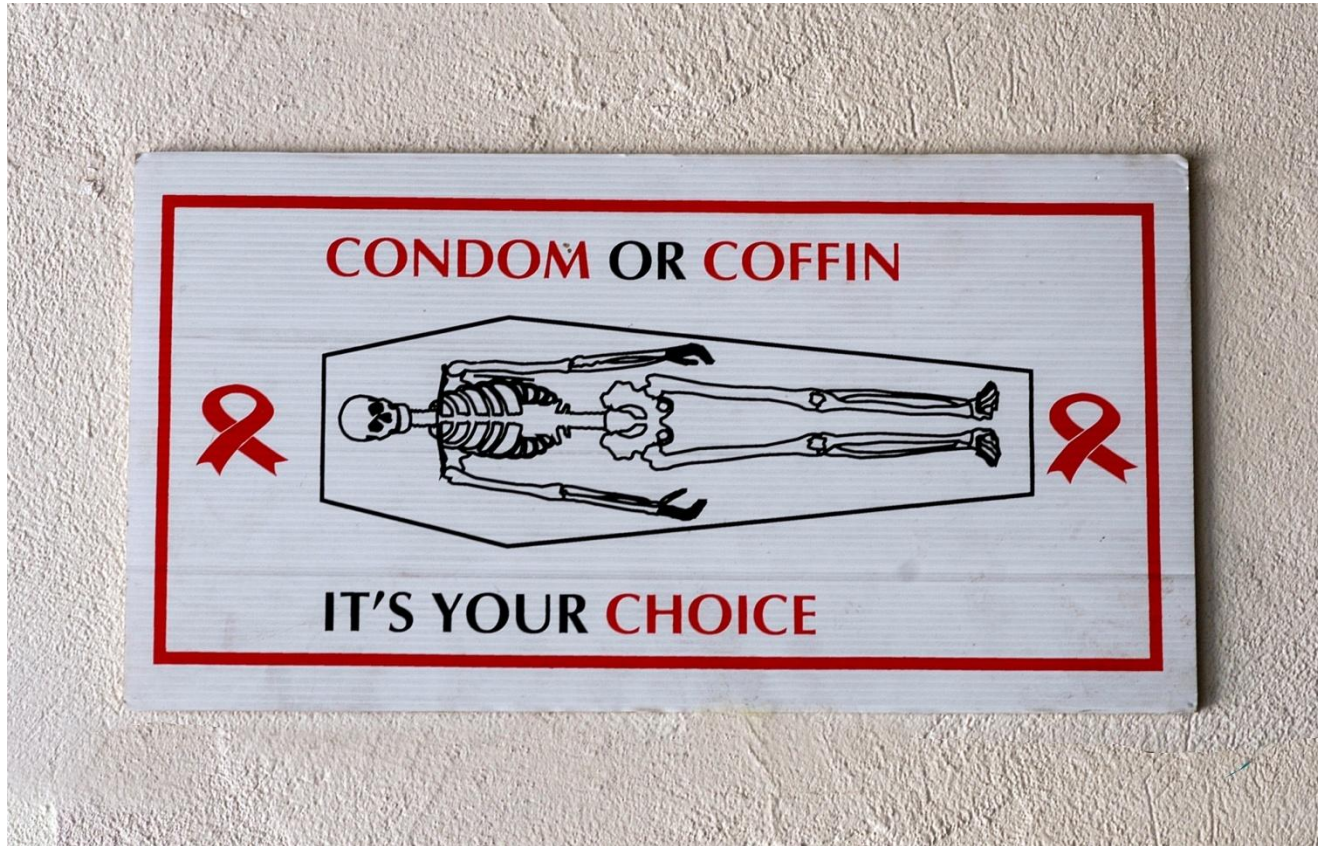
- Although universal,
- Widowhood is also gendered.
- Shaped by culture.
- Highly context-specific: time, place.
- Power play dependent on gender, generation, class, economics, culture, access to systems of redress, location, etc.

Widow inheritance, widow cleansing

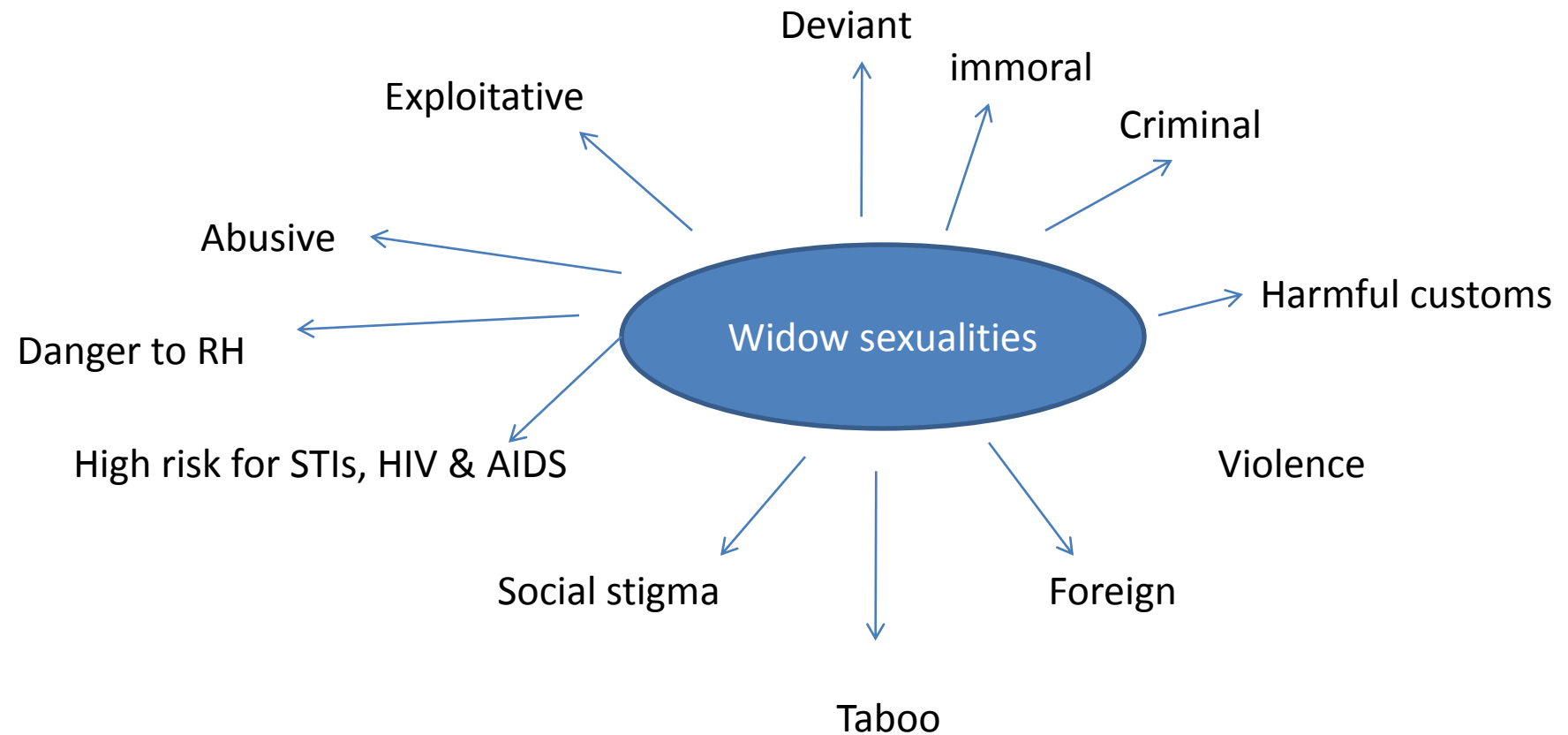


- Ambivalence in meanings.
- Variant performances by ethnic groups, clans.
- Transforming meanings and signification.
- Transformations introduced by targeted interventions e.g. religion and HIV and AIDS.

‘Harmful traditional practices!’



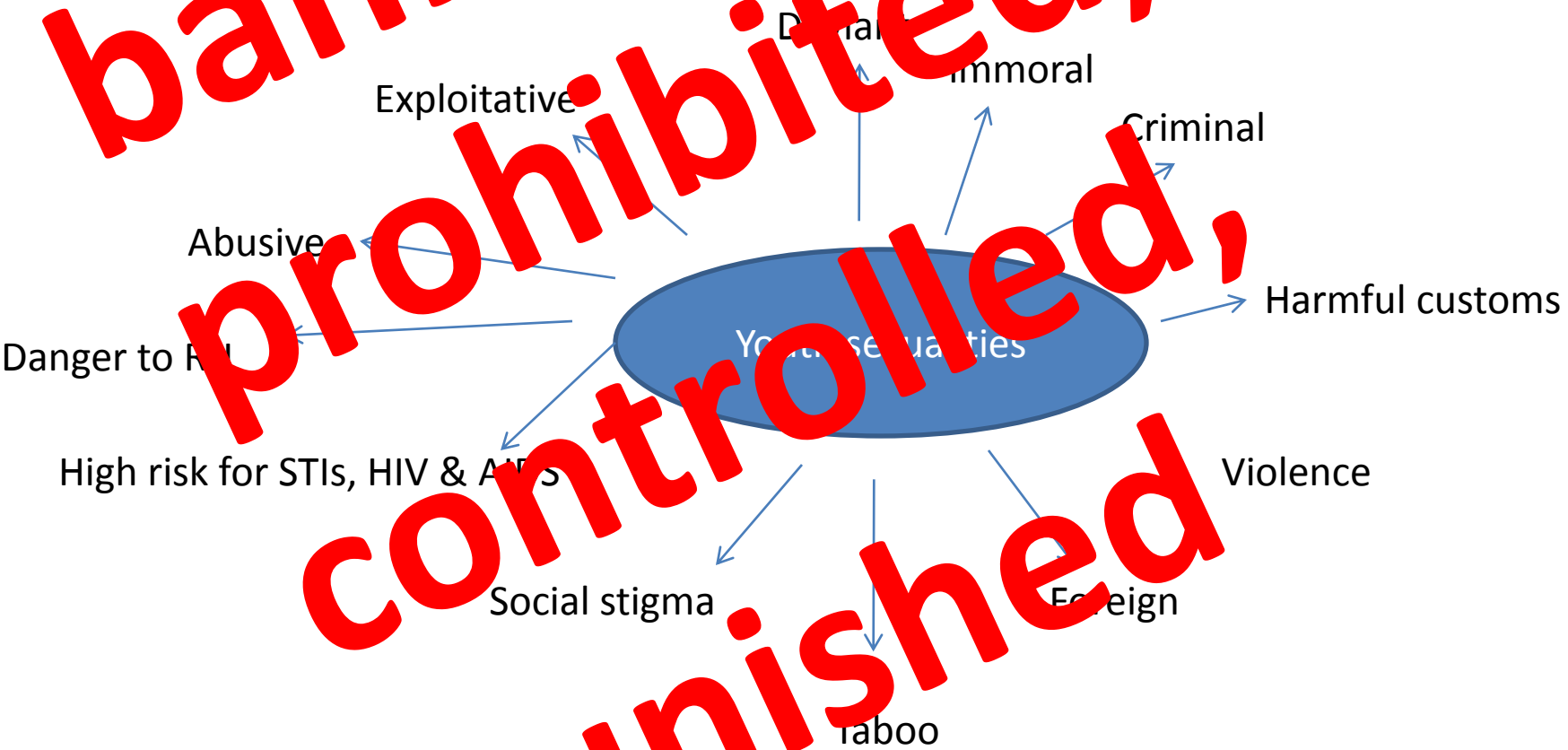
Widowhood and 'bad sex'



Widowhood and 'bad sex'

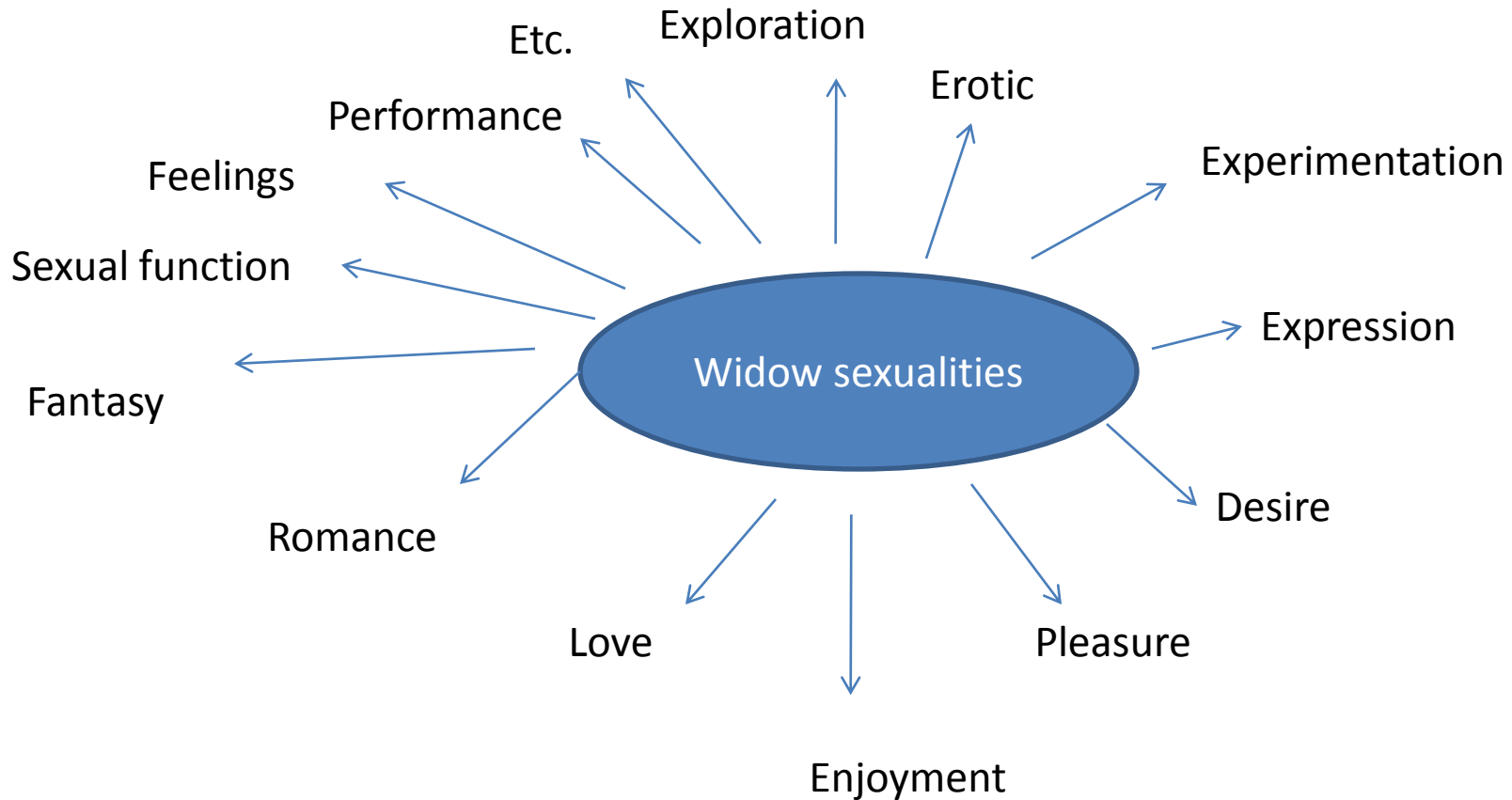
**banned,
prohibited,
controlled,
punished**

Young sexualities



Diverse institutionalised punitive mechanisms

Widow(er) sexualities as rights



Discussion

- Transforming meanings of widowhood
- The gendered nature of widowhood
- Heterogeneity of the widowed
- Revisit the feminization of poverty
- Who said 'tradition' was a rural thing?
- Victimization or wise plotting?
- Continuums of violence
- Tensions between cultural and public health
- Individual autonomy versus social coherence
- The applicability of a universal rights discourse

Policy and program implications

- Safety net in the absence of social welfare
- Cultural institution of symbolic signification
- Lack of protective legislature versus customary law claims + patriarchy
- Interlocked with property inheritance/ loss
- Beyond reification of tradition
- Break the invisibility.
- Can rights be the basis of legal reform, policy reformulation and programme reorientation?