Men of colour, family violence and the global North:
A critical interpretive synthesis

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Abstract

Through a critical interpretive synthesis method, this paper examines the ways in which empirical research has constructed ethnically diverse men of colour's use of family violence in the global North. The findings identify six major interrelated themes including (1) women's employment and men's fragility, (2) men's inability to fulfil their breadwinner role, (3) domestic work in the global North, (4) social experiences and relational dynamics, (5) cultural transition and men's resistance, (6) men's experiences of trauma and distress. The analysis in this review employs feminist and postcolonial theories to demonstrate a need to increase men's visibility through abandoning static constructions of masculinities and discursive constructions of cultural othering. A vital implication for social workers is to navigate methods to decolonise their research and practice with ethnically diverse people of colour. In such an approach, men of colour's use of family violence is not merely an inevitable outcome of their trauma, marginalisation, or inability to transition to the modern world but rather a conscious choice that is underpinned by several intersecting factors. Recognising men of colour's capability to make choices is vital to working with them towards making safer choices for women and children in their families.

Key words

Men of colour, ethnically diverse, family violence, masculinities, cultural othering.

Introduction

Family violence is a persistent barrier for women, and their children, to access safety, health, rights, autonomy, and development (Cortis and Bullen, 2016; Webster, 2016; Kaspiew et al, 2017; Bacchus et al, 2018; Walker-Descartes et al, 2021). The prevalence of family violence across the globe, and within all cultures, is evident with an estimation of 31 per cent of women and girls over the age of 15 years old having been subjected to physical and/or sexualised violence by a current or former intimate partner (World Health Organisation, 2021). The diverse experiences of violence against women of colour living in the global North have recently gained more recognition in research and practice. Multiple factors were identified for women of colour's increased vulnerability including economic marginalisation, social isolation, cultural differences, and immigration visa status (Vaughan et al, 2016; El-Murr, 2018; Segrave et al, 2021; Ghafournia, 2017). Whilst much of this feminist intersectional research was focused on survivors' experiences, the lived experiences of men of colour who use the violence were largely invisible within this body of research. Therefore, a systematic review of the literature is needed as a first step towards addressing this gap in knowledge. This paper utilises the critical interpretive synthesis method to review the ways in which empirical research constructed ethnically diverse men of colour's use of family violence in the global North. The analysis in this review employs feminist and postcolonial theories to demonstrate a need to increase men's visibility through abandoning static constructions of masculinities and discursive constructions of cultural othering.

Family violence

A variety of terms and definitions are utilised in different jurisdictions to define violence and control against women within families. In this review, the term family violence refers to a pattern of deliberate abuse of power displayed in forms of harming actions and coercive control toward intimate female partners (Stark, 2009; Dutton and Goodman, 2005). Although the term family violence is often used to refer to multiple types of violence and control in family relationships (e.g., intimate partner abuse, child abuse, elder and parental abuse), in this paper, the term family violence is solely used to refer to intimate partner violence. Adopting the term family violence highlights the harm caused by this violence not only to female survivors but also to their children and the overall functioning of the family unit. This term is deemed more

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suitable for ethnically diverse communities of colour in the global North due to the significant role of *family* in the process of settlement and integration.

Theoretical framework

This review employs feminist and postcolonial theories to underpin a critical analysis of the ways in which empirical research constructed ethnically diverse men of colour's use of family violence in the global North. In doing so, I use feminist gender perspective to comprehend masculinities as fluid practices and negotiated meanings of successful *ways of being a man* (Connell, 1995). Critical to this understanding of masculinities is their plurality and hierarchy as well as their association with social power relations (Connell and Messerchmidt, 2005). Alongside this critical understanding of masculinities, I adopt feminist intersectional perspective to violence against women of colour to establish the political nature of the violence as a manifestation of interrelated oppressions of gender inequality and social difference (Crenshaw, 1991). An intersectional analysis exposes how systems of oppression collude with male privilege in shaping women of colour's experiences in the global North (Sokoloff and Pratt, 2005). In this context, postcolonial theory evidence how the Occident (the global North), through using its positional superiority, produces a binary knowledge in which the Occident becomes the norm, and the Orient is fabricated as the other. Key to this knowledge is the positioning of the Orient, its subjects, and cultures as inferior, which paradoxically enforces the supremacy of the *civilised* Occident (Said, 1978). In this review, I utilise this critical theoretical framework to explore how legacies of colonialism collude with male privilege to conceal men of colour's responsibility for their use of family violence.

Method

Review design

This paper utilised the critical interpretive synthesis (CIS) method described by Dixon-Woods et al (2006) to: (1) identify common themes in the analysis of ethnically diverse men of colour's use of family violence in the literature; (2) and to critically explore how such analysis have been informed by research methods and strategies. CIS is an iterative method that is known for its capability to synthesise heterogeneous body of research and stimulate critical reflection and theory generation (Dixon-Woods et al, 2006). In this method, critique is dialectic, evolving and

not stage-bound, thus stimulating an inductive approach throughout the reviewing process that serves to achieve the purpose of the review (Annandale et al, 2007). In this review, feminist and postcolonial theories are employed to enable an approach that increases male perpetrators' accountability through questioning the ways in which knowledge about men of colour is produced in this research field, and how such production is tied to the works of power (Foucault, 1978).

Review search and selection

In this review, search terms were confined to (migrant* OR refugee* OR "asylum seeker*" OR "migration experience*" OR "settlement experience*" OR acculturation) AND (culture* OR ethnic* OR African OR Asian OR "middle eastern" OR latin*) AND (men OR masculine* OR "gender role" OR father*) AND (offender* OR abuser* OR perpetrator* OR batterer* OR "family violence" OR "domestic violence" OR "violence against women" OR "intimate partner violence" OR battering OR "gender based violence" OR "domestic abuse" OR "wife battering" OR "spousal abuse"). Search terms were used to uncover research concerned with ethnically diverse men of colour's use of family violence in the global North. The search was limited to peer-reviewed empirical research that was written in English and published from the year 2000 onwards. The search was carried out using online electronic databases of *Informit, Social Services Abstracts, PsycINFO, Web of Science, Scopus, Cinahl Complete*, and *Sociology Source Ultimate*. Additional hand-searching strategies were also conducted in key academic journals and bibliographic database search engines utilising reference chaining techniques to explore adjacent, yet relevant literature. These search strategies yielded a total number of 1089 articles, which were considered in the review.

Screening for inclusion

Purposive sampling (Marshall, 1996) was utilised to include the most relevant articles that provided an analysis of men of colour's use of family violence in the global North. This method of sampling ensured the inclusion of diverse evidence, research designs, and adjacent literature (Annandale et al, 2007). Dixon-Woods et al (2005) argued that sampling is a key method to attain theoretical saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 2017), and sample adequacy (Bowen, 2008). Two screening stages were conducted refining the total number of studies included in this

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present review to 33 articles. Figure one contains a PRISMA chart illustrating inclusion of studies.
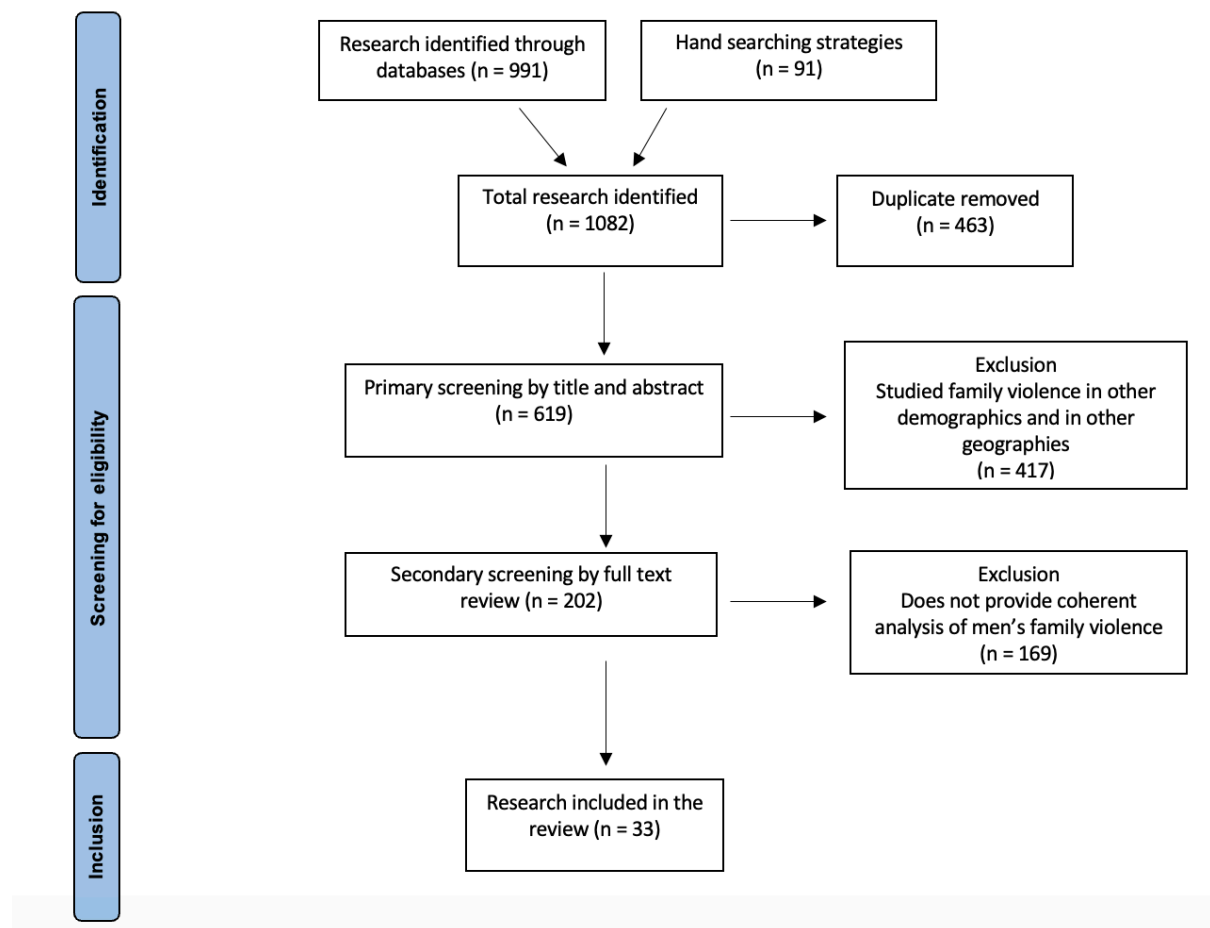

Figure 1. Selection of identified research based on the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram (Page et al, 2021).

Identified literature[1]

The included articles (n = 33) presented a heterogeneous body of research that studied ethnically diverse men of colour's use of family violence in the global North. This body of

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[1] See supplementary table of included literature.

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literature includes qualitative studies (n = 29), quantitative studies (n = 3) and one study of mixed methods. These studies came from different countries in the global North including Australia (n = 9) New Zealand (n = 2), United States of America (n = 8), Canada (n = 6), United Kingdom (n = 4), Sweden (n = 1), Italy (n = 1), Germany (n = 1), and the Netherlands (n = 1). A supplementary table of included literature containing relevant details of the studies is available.

Data extraction and analysis

An in-depth process of extracting and summarising data from the literature was conducted to enhance familiarisation. The purpose, methodology, sample, limitation, and key findings of each study were summarised. NVivo 12 software was utilised to conduct a process of (data-driven) inductive coding (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The identified codes were constantly revised and examined in relation to each other before being grouped into categories and themes. This process was guided by applying critical theories, which were previously described, to underpin an analysis of the ways in which empirical research constructed ethnically diverse men of colour's use of family violence in the global North. The analysis in this review questioned how such constructions may contributed to concealing men of colour's responsibility for using the violence. Moreover, the analysis in this review critically examined how the presented findings in this body of literature were influenced by research methods and strategies. This critical approach stimulated the possibility to deconstruct conventional assumptions and common biases in this research field.

Findings of the literature

The data analysis in this review resulted in identifying six major interrelated themes in the literature. This includes: (1) women's employment and men's fragility, (2) men's inability to fulfil their breadwinner role, (3) domestic work in the global North, (4) social experiences and relational dynamics, (5) cultural transition and men's resistance, (6) men's experiences of trauma and distress. Although these themes are separately discussed in this section, it is important to keep in mind that in reality these themes are interrelated and contextualised:

Women's employment and men's fragility

Women's participation in the labour market was extensively discussed in the analysis of men's use of family violence in the reviewed literature. Women's paid work was often described as a pathway to increase resources, power, and autonomy. Research highlighted how such gains contributed to the escalation of family violence as women realised that they do not need to remain in unsatisfactory relationships (Hyman et al, 2008) nor to put up with ill-treatment (Grzywacz et al, 2009). In some cases, women's employment resulted in ceasing their partners' welfare payments, which caused further destabilisation as men became financial burdens (Ajlan, 2022). Women's employment was also seen as pathway to social status and integration (Satyen et al, 2020), and a pathway for women to form *modern* identities that overcome *traditional* gender role expectations (Satyen, 2021). Nevertheless, research indicated that women's employment and the performance of *non-traditional* roles was tolerated as a necessity for family functioning in the global North (Accordini et al, 2018).

Integrating into a new economy in which both partners were expected to work was described in the reviewed literature as a source of stress and conflict. Particularly, when it results in changes in family life and gender role expectations (Ashbourne et al, 2021; Grzywacz et al, 2009; Humpage et al, 2020). Research also highlighted the difficulties women face to sustain a successful participation in the labour market and in navigating laws and public safety in the global North, and how such difficulties negatively impact their marital relationships (Shirpak et al, 2011). Women's unemployment and subsequent financial hardship was also seen as an additional stress to already strained relationships (Tse, 2007). It is important to highlight here that women's levels of participation in the labour market in the global South were not investigated as part of the analysis in the reviewed literature. Little is known about how women's employment in the pre-migration context related to the occurrence or escalation of family violence, and how such patterns were transitioned into the post-migration context.

The emotional effects of women's participation in the labour market on ethnically diverse men of colour were also highlighted in this body of literature. Research indicated that women's increased power, as a result of their employment, caused men of colour to feel disrespected (Grzywacz et al, 2009), challenged (Mungai and Pease, 2009), alienated in their own homes (Okeke-Ihejirika and Salami, 2018), and to experience a rupture to their sense of masculine identity (Pasura and Christou, 2018). Research concluded that men resort to violence to assert

their dominant status as women transgressed gender role expectations (Alcalde, 2011). These findings were echoed in Kim and Sung (2015) quantitative research that suggested employment of female victims, and not the unemployment of male abusers, is a key predictor of serious family violence as men feel frustrated by their female partners' achievements.

It is important to note that men's described fragility as a consequence of women's employment is not an inevitable outcome. The reviewed literature also highlighted cases in which some men spoke about women's employment in positive terms (Humpage et al, 2020) and highlighted the importance of maintaining employment and contributing financially (Satyen et al, 2020). Interestingly, there is little known about levels of education and employment of men who voiced their fragility in the reviewed literature. Thus, it has been difficult, in this review, to conclude on the personal attributions that may contribute to men's fragility and, thus, use of family violence.

Men's inability to fulfil their breadwinner role

Men's inability to fulfil their breadwinner role was remarkably used in the analysis of men's family violence in the reviewed literature. Men's breadwinner role was described as essential to being a man (Pease, 2009) and fundamental to their self-worth (Rees and Pease, 2007). Men's failure to fulfill such an integral role due to unemployment or downward job mobility following their settlement in the global North was seen as a leading cause of men's moral injuries. The injuries, described in the literature, include dissatisfaction (Rees and Pease, 2007), anger (Tse, 2007), disrespect (Pease, 2009), resentment (Bui and Morash, 2008), frustration (Fernbrant et al, 2013) and worthlessness (Fisher, 2013; Okeke-Ihejirika and Salami, 2018). Research also highlighted how men experienced an erosion of status in the home (Bui and Morash, 2008; Zannettino, 2012; Tlapek et al, 2020) and a sense of loss due to their inability to fulfill their expected roles as men (Muchoki, 2013). Research concluded that men resort to family violence as a strategy to re-establish their status in the home (Fisher, 2013; Bui and Morash, 2008) and to exert control over uncertain times (Zannettino, 2012; Tlapek et al, 2020).

Research has shown factors that can contribute to the likelihood of certain groups of ethnically diverse men of colour to sustain such moral injuries than others. Satyen (2021) highlighted that aging was a key factor for male participants to experience the effects of unemployment and underemployment on their *traditional* gender roles. Whereas McIlwaine (2010) emphasised

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that class, nationality, and political migration were key factors for male participants to experience challenges to their masculine identity. Quantitative research also highlighted additional factors associated with high levels of partner abuse. This includes working in manual labour and pre-migration military involvement (Bui and Morash, 2008) as well as levels of education and acculturation (Kim and ung, 2015; Bhanot and Senn, 2008). It is important to highlight here that nuanced understanding of men's inability to fulfil their breadwinner roles, their use of family violence, and the contributing factors is vital to overcome any potential determinism.

Re-establishing control through using family violence was not the only strategy known to ethnically diverse men of colour to compensate for their loss of status in the home. Bui and Morash (2008) research showed that sending remittance helped men to compensate for their loss of status through establishing respect across borders. However, sending remittance has become a source of family conflict as remittance led to financial neglect (Bui and Morash, 2008) and accusations of financial mismanagement (Poeze, 2019). Humpage et al (2020) also highlighted men's ability to adapt and reinvent new identities, such as becoming *involved dad* and *good cooks*, as strategies to maintain the underlying expectations of care and protection of their masculine roles. In a more nuanced analysis, Pasura and Christou (2018) suggested four possible strategies that men may adopt to compensate for the loss of their hegemonic masculine identities following their settlement in the global North. This includes withdrawal, accommodation, resistance, as well as endorsement and subversion. This nuanced analysis was only possible due to its ability to explore the context in which men forged their masculine identities in a more fluid and hybrid fashion instead of relying on static constructions of masculinities (Pasura and Christou, 2018).

Domestic work in the global North

The reviewed literature extended its analysis through examining the effects of change in economic roles on the redistribution of domestic work. This *new reality* for ethnically diverse men of colour was highlighted in the literature as a potential fuel for tension and family violence. Particularly, when men were refusing to take on new domestic responsibilities and when women resented men's assumptions of their dual responsibilities for domestic and paid work (Hyman et al, 2008; Grzywacz et al, 2009; Khawaja and Milner, 2012). Research

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indicated that men felt that they have been expected to change overnight (Hyman et al, 2008) and their attempts to engage in domestic work were heavily criticised by their female partners (Grzywacz et al, 2009). Men were also challenged by the unclarity of gender roles in the global North (Mungai and Pease, 2009), and they were too proud to ask their female partners for guidance to undertake domestic work (Khawaja and Milner, 2012). It was further highlighted that the *traditional* division of labour learned in the global South left men and women poorly unprepared to confront this *new reality* in the global North (Grzywacz et al, 2009).

Adjustment to an egalitarian distribution of domestic work was framed as necessary for successful transition to the new life in the global North (Mungai and Pease, 2009). Nevertheless, the outcomes of such an adjustment varied across the literature. In some cases, women reported positive changes and new possibilities of relational growth (Accordini et al, 2018; Tlapek et al, 2020; McIlwaine, 2010). Men did not only take on domestic responsibilities as their female partners participated in the labour market but also described it as fair and necessary for family functioning (Humpage et al, 2020; Hyman et al, 2008; Shirpak et al, 2011; Satyen et al, 2020). In other cases, limited changes to rigid patriarchal roles division were found (Accordini et al, 2018; Pease, 2009) and evidence of some clinging to vestiges of power were also clear as men wanted to retain the final say on domestic matters (McIlwaine, 2010). It was further highlighted that men felt frustrated and nostalgic about the loss of *traditional* division of labour (Grzywacz et al, 2009) and were hesitant about doing domestic work as they perceived it to be degrading to their sense of being men (Muchoki, 2013), diminishing of their power (Khawaja and Milner, 2012), and a loss of self-respect (Okeke-Ihejirika and Salami, 2018; Rees and Pease, 2007).

Noteworthy, positive scenarios of transitioning to a more egalitarian distribution of domestic work were often associated with research participants who held higher levels of education and employment and those of younger age. Most interestingly, the renegotiation of domestic work was largely framed across the literature as a post-migration phenomenon. There is little known in the literature about patterns of the renegotiation of domestic work in the global South, and how such work of renegotiation transitioned into the global North, and further related to men's use of family violence.

Social experiences and relational dynamics

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Men of colour's social experiences in the global North were also explored in the analysis of men's use of family violence in the reviewed literature. Research highlighted the effects of social marginalisation on men's emotional wellbeing and adaptation process as a key determinant for their family's quality of life (Fernbrant et al, 2013). Social marginalization was found to be a significant destabilising factor for men's feelings of power in the public sphere, thus, contributing to an exaggeration of masculinity (McIlwaine, 2010), and urging of a compensatory need to exert power within the home (Alcalde, 2011). Nevertheless, social marginalisation was also found to be an opportunity for men to connect with their emotions in a manner that transform negatives traits associated with hegemonic masculinity (Montes, 2013), and to contribute to the acceptance of changing gender practices, especially in the home (McIlwaine, 2010).

Social isolation also emerged in the literature as a risk factor for the occurrence and escalation of family violence and in shaping help seeking behaviours (Tse, 2007; Rees and Pease, 2007). Research highlighted that women's negotiating power was diminished in the post-migration context as they were deprived of the protection of their extended family and social networks (Tse, 2007; Accordini et al, 2018). The loss of practical support from extended family and social networks contributed to relational stress and taxing dependency (Khawaja and Milner, 2012; Rapaport and Doucerain, 2021). Social isolation was also found troubling for men who migrated to unusual proximity to their partner's extended family (Charsley, 2005) and men who lost their financial security and support networks (Accordini et al, 2018). Nevertheless, research highlighted the positive effects of being distant from extended family and support networks in the post-migration context. This includes increased joint decision-making, balanced responsibilities, improved communication and negotiation skills and increased mutual self-disclosure, which overall led to enhancing levels of intimacy and closeness within couple relationships (Hyman et al, 2008; Accordini et al, 2018; Shirpak et al, 2011).

Research further explored the effects of peer relationships and social liberty acquired in the post-migration context on men's family violence. Bhanot and Senn (2008) quantitative research suggested that an increased interactions with peers from *a less patriarchal culture* in the global North was associated with attitudes that were less supportive of *wife beating*. Nonetheless, new ideas and views about intimate relationships learned by migrant women from

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newly acquired interactions were found to be a source of conflict within couple relationships (Grzywacz et al, 2009). Men were also found to rely on their male peers to police gender hierarchy and reinforce hegemonic forms of masculinity (Alcalde, 2011). Social liberty in the global North was described as a potential source of conflict in families, since men and women were able to engage in dissimilar social norms outside the home (Rees and Pease, 2007). In some cases, men conflated women's liberty with sexual licentiousness, and women indicated that men become more promiscuous (McIlwaine, 2010). The reviewed literature indicated that men's feelings of sexual jealousy were traced back to men's feelings of inferiority (Bui and Morash, 2008) and possessiveness (Grzywacz et al, 2009), such feelings were found to be associated with escalating levels of family violence.

In this section, it was evident that social experiences such as marginalisation, isolation and involvement have different effects on intimate relationships in different contexts. This includes both relational growth and family violence. Arguably, this review illuminates the nuance outcomes of social factors and their relevance to family violence; thus, the review debunks determinism and its conventional assumptions of men of colour.

Cultural transition and men's resistance

Men's cultural transition to the global North was highly investigated in the analysis of men's use of family violence in the reviewed literature. Research attributed men's superiority and toleration of violence against women to cultural beliefs (Kim-Goh and Baello, 2008; Tse, 2007), patriarchal systems (Satyen, 2021), sociocultural and religious contexts (El Abani and Pourmehdi, 2021) or a combination of religious, family, and community obligations (Mungai and Pease, 2009). In these *traditional* superstructures, men were seen as protectors and the place of women is in the safety of their homes (Accordini et al, 2018). Intimate partner violence was described as a corrective measure (El Abani and Pourmehdi, 2021), and a consequence for women's transgression of traditional arrangements (Mungai and Pease, 2009; Alcalde, 2011) and a sign of weakness, thus women were expected to remain silent (Accordini et al, 2018).

Research findings indicated that men's superiority and toleration of violence against women were often normalised (Fineran et al, 2022), internalised (Tse, 2007) and socialised (Alcalde, 2011) from an early age in the global South. On the one hand, some research concluded that acculturation and education would result in diminishing tolerance for violence against women and enhance *egalitarian* gender role attitudes (El Abani and Pourmehdi, 2021; Kim-Goh and Baello, 2008; Bhanot and Senn, 2008). On the other hand, research highlighted that counter hegemonic practices were already emerging in the global South, and the prevalence of gender equality in the global North is just a myth (McIlwaine, 2010). Furthermore, research urged for an intersectional analysis to understanding the intertwined relations between men's use of family violence and their cultural values and beliefs (Rees and Peace, 2007; McIlwaine, 2010). It is important here to be clear that violence against women is a violation of human rights, which occur in all cultures and communities across the globe. One must remain critical of cultural hierarchies and cultural determinism, their false representations, and their racist arguments.

The sociolegal intervention systems and the liberal values of the global North were found disruptive to *traditional* men's superiority. Research highlighted how men perceived domestic violence, family law and child protection intervention systems as threatening to their status (Muchoki, 2013; Khawaja and Milner, 2012; Fisher, 2013; Okeke-Ihejirika and Salami, 2018), and detrimental to their families (Ashbourne et al, 2021; Satyen et al, 2020; Rees and Pease, 2007). Furthermore, men were challenged by women's rights and gender equality in the global North (Shirpak et al, 2011; Pease, 2009; Okeke-Ihejirika and Salami, 2018); they felt unfairly treated by the legal system, and that women were taking advantage of this new paradigm (McIlwaine, 2010; Hyman et al, 2008; Satyen et al, 2020; Satyen, 2021). Income support payments to women were also described as a constant source of anxiety to men as the payments undermined their breadwinner role (Fisher, 2013; Pasura and Christou, 2018; Zannettino, 2012) and gave women financial power (Muchoki, 2013). Research highlighted that woman insisted on taking their new role in managing finances (Fisher, 2013), which sparked intimate partner abuse (Zannettino, 2012), and ongoing conflicts in the family (Khawaja and Milner, 2012). Moreover, men were concerned that women were unprepared for such role, and they were misusing their new rights (Khawaja and Milner, 2012). In some cases, income support

payments enabled women to terminate their unwanted intimate relationships (Khawaja and Milner, 2012; Ajlan, 2022).

The reviewed literature further highlighted men's resistance to cultural transition; Men were challenged by the new cultures in the global North as they felt their *traditional* roles were questioned (Khawaja and Milner, 2012; Muchoki, 2013). Women's cultural assimilation was found to be a source for control and violence as men feared that *assimilated* women are unable to meet their *traditional* gender role expectations (Satyen, 2021; Alcalde, 2011; Zannettino, 2012). Research highlighted that men's resistance may also occur on a collective scale were ethnic communities of colour turn inwards to police patriarchal gender roles (El Abani and Pourmehdi, 2021) and become more *traditional* and *oppressive* to maintain control over women (Tse, 2007). Nevertheless, research also highlighted that securing employment, housing and legal status were more liable factors for conflicts within couple relationships than cultural transitioning (Rapaport and Doucerain, 2021). In one case, research participants spoke of biculturality as a pathway to cultural transition that combined elements of both worlds (Shirpak et al, 2011).

Noteworthy, a persistent pattern, and to various degrees, was evident in the reviewed literature in which the world was constructed in opposing South/North binaries. One is traditional, patriarchal and collectivist and the other modern, egalitarian, and individualist. Family violence then was framed as an outcome of an unsuccessful transition between the two worlds. Evidence of critical evaluation of the role of public policy in creating pathways for ethnically diverse people of colour to transition and integration was not found in the literature. One must question if the accomplishment of such transition is dependent on access to resources or on reforming *ingrained* values and beliefs.

Men's experiences of trauma and distress

Men of colour's individual experiences of past traumatic events and current life stressors was also explored in the analysis of men of colour's use of family violence in the reviewed literature. Research highlighted that childhood experiences of witnessing and experiencing abuse were significant factors in determining men's responses to changes in their traditional gender role and status in the post-migration context (Alcalde, 2011; Fineran et al, 2022). Additionally, exposure to structural and family violence in the global South was seen as an

obstacle for the adaptation process and risk factor for poor mental health and intimate partner violence in the post-migration context (Fernbrant et al, 2013). Pre-migration traumatic experiences of war and political conflict were described as overwhelming, and the inability to cope with the impact of such events often left men on the verge of becoming violent (Zannettino, 2012). Nonetheless, research urged for more complex analysis of family violence, particularly as women's experience of traumatic events in the global South did not correlate with perpetration of family violence in the post migration context (Rees and Pease, 2007).

Research further explored the effects of life stressors in the global North on men's family violence. Post-migration stressors such as navigating foreign systems and re-arranging family life in a new context were reported to increase distance and conflict amongst couples (Ashbourne et al, 2021). Research indicated that men's inability to cope with and overcome settlement challenges has left them with extreme frustration, often causing them to lash out at their family members (Zannettino, 2012). Women were described to experience difficulties coping with additional duties in the post-migration context without their partners' support, which often led to stress within intimate relationships (Khawaja and Milner, 2012). Research highlighted that couples communication quality and dyadic coping are vital to adapt to new environment with many stressors (Rapaport and Doucerain, 2021). Racism and discrimination were identified as major life stressors that increase men of colour's need to exert power within the home to compensate for their experience of disempowerment (Alcalde, 2011), and to decrease women's ability to access employment and autonomy (Tse, 2007). Other contributing factors to family violence were also identified including drug and alcohol misuse and problem gambling (Tse, 2007; Fernbrant et al, 2013).

It is important to note here that the exploration of men's experiences of trauma and distress were not as common as other themes identified and mainly appeared in research conducted with refugees and undocumented migrants. One must remain critical when engaging with trauma/stress-based examination of family violence, as the responsibility of the violence must remain with the perpetrator.

Discussion of the findings and implications

A primary task of this critical synthesis was to report on themes identified in the analysis of men of colour's use of family violence in the reviewed literature. The findings identified six major interrelated themes including (1) women's employment and men's fragility, (2) men's inability to fulfil their breadwinner role, (3) domestic work in the global North, (4) social experiences and relational dynamics, (5) cultural transition and men's resistance, (6) men's experiences of trauma and distress. The findings of this review show that changes in paid and domestic work and roles in the post migration context were often found to contribute to power imbalances and conflict in intimate relationships. Whereas social experiences in the global North pertaining to marginalisation, isolation and involvement were found to result in different effects on couple relationships including both family violence and relational growth. Most interestingly, discussions in the literature pertaining cultural changes/differences in the global North often highlighted men of colour's use of family violence as a result of their inability to transition from *traditional* gender roles into a more *egalitarian* model of family relationships. The literature also attributed men of colour's use of family violence to the effects of their past trauma and current life stressors. The findings of this body of research showcase the diverse experiences of men of colour who use family violence in the global North.

A subsequent task of this review was to critically explore how the analysis of men of colour's use of family violence have been informed by research methods and strategies. The analysis in this review found little information known about the participants' socioeconomic attributions. Data extractions in this review indicated that 70 percent of the reviewed studies (n = 24) did not report explicit information regarding its participants' levels of education and 60 percent of the reviewed studies (n = 20) did not report explicit information regarding its participants' levels of employment. In these studies, ethnically diverse men of colour's identities were largely condensed to their cultural backgrounds and migration journeys. This absence of information impedes a nuanced understanding of ethnically diverse men of colour's use of family violence. Remarkably, men were the sole participants in a small number of studies (n = 9) (Pease, 2009; Alcalde, 2011; Mungai, N.W. and Pease, 2009; Muchoki, 2013; Okeke-Ihejirika and salami, 2018; Poeze, 2019; Humpage et al, 2020; Fineran et al, 2022; Bhanot and Senn, 2007). From which only two studies specifically identified including men who are known to use family violence, that is men who are engaged in family violence service interventions (Alcalde, 2011; Fineran et al, 2022). This points to a gap in the literature; and highlight the

need for future research to recruit men who are known to use family violence to gain further insights into their lived experiences and use of family violence.

A critical perspective in the analysis found a need for more nuanced understanding of ethnically diverse men of colour's use of family violence in the global North. An investigating framework is needed to gain an insight into how men of colour in the global North may re-invent their masculine ideologies as their positions in the structural and gender hierarchy changes (Collin and Messerschmidt, 2005). Roberts and Elliott (2020) draw attention to how ingrained prenotions about marginalised men, including men of colour in the global North, enforce a hierarchy in which white middle-class men are often imagined in the literature as the bearers of progressive masculinities. At the bottom of this hierarchy men on the margin were often imprudently depicted as backward and violent in response to their marginality. It can be argued here that capturing men's agency navigating new realities and hierarchies in the global North, and how such navigation intersects with their use of violence in the home, is key to abandoning such prenotions of static constructions of masculinities and their potential determinism. In such an approach, men of colour's use of family violence is not merely an inevitable outcome of their trauma, marginalisation, or inability to transition to the modern world but rather a conscious choice that is underpinned by several intersecting factors. Recognising men of colour's capability to make choices is vital to working with them towards making safer choices for women and children in their families.

The analysis in this review also pointed out evidence of a persistent pattern across the reviewed literature in which the world was constructed in opposing North/South binaries. For example, women's employment and the renegotiation of domestic work were largely framed as an unprecedented experience for people of colour that only occur in the global North. There is little information in the reviewed literature about such experiences in the global South, and, if this had occurred, how this may have been associated with family violence, and subsequently transitioned into the global North. This framing alluded to a construction of the global South as a uniformed and static context in which women have no agency and/or access to opportunities. In contrast, the global North was presented as a fluid and negotiable context in which women are relatively liberated from gender subordination. Further to the binary construction, this review also highlighted how men of colour's use of family violence was

constructed as an unsuccessful transition between two worlds. One is traditional, patriarchal and collectivist and the other is modern, egalitarian, and individualist. Volpp (2001) argues that the construction of women of colour as an *oppressed other* by default masks structural oppression and denies women of colour their agency and voice. Taking a feminist intersectional perspective here reveals how cultural othering colludes with male privilege in concealing men of colour's conscious choice to use family violence. It can be argued here that abandoning discursive constructions of cultural othering is key to holding men of colour accountable for their use of family violence.

It is significant to emphasise that the construction of ethnically diverse men of colour as modernity-incompatible, emasculated, marginalised, and traumatised subjects can be traced within histories of colonialism. Edwards Said's remarkable work Orientalism (1978) offers a postcolonial framework that critically examines the ways in which the Occident (the global North) fabricated a Eurocentric narrative of the Orient (the global South) and its subjects for the purpose of conquest and domination. Postcolonial theory in the tradition of Said (1987) exposes this nexus of power and knowledge, and how false representations are used to establish and maintain colonial power relations. Research in this field must remain critical of this colonial legacy, and the ways in which such narratives continue to deny people of colour their agency and voice. A vital implication for social workers in the global North is to navigate methods to decolonise their research and practice with ethnically diverse people of colour. In this context, social workers would benefit from using critical reflection methods to question how their knowledge of ethnically diverse people of colour is shaped by colonial legacies, as well as its persistent and subtle prejudicial representations. Arguably, associating men of colour's use of family violence with emotional outbursts, resulting from their inability to overcome traditional gender roles and/or settlement complexities, has concealed men's responsibility for their use of family violence, and further contributed to men's impunity. Alternatively, adopting pluralistic, fluid and nuanced understandings of men of colour's cultures and masculinities is essential to tackle gender and colonial power relations.

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