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# Nature Versus Nurture: Masculinity, Socialization, and the Construction of Abusive Behaviour

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## Abstract

This study has revisited the nature-versus-nurture argument to explain abusive behaviour; however, this study adopts a viewpoint that the discussion becomes very limited when it comes to competing explanations of biology and socialization. Using qualitative research methodology, it critically analyzes the formation of abusive behaviours in the advancement of contemporary literature in disciplines like gender studies, sociology, psychology, criminology, and public health. This general synthesis basically challenges biological determinism, because it explains clearly that biological abilities can impact human behavior, but cannot evaluate the intensity of abusive conduct in any human. In fact, abusive conduct is shaped by social scripts and cultural approaches that link patriarchy/masculinity to dominance, emotional drive/control, status/entitlement, and perks and privileges. It has been analyzed that when male dominance and authority, masculine identity, and control are threatened, then abuse may be used to demonstrate gendered performance. In this study, the researcher has attempted to highlight abuse based on an interactionist understanding in which biological abilities are interceded by social factors due to socialization, cultural conventions, and institutional gender dynamics. This concept impacts the prevention of violence because it proposes that by changing harmful patriarchal norms and perceptions, and encouraging emotional awareness and literacy, the escalation of gender-transformative interventions can be challenged.

**Keywords**: Masculinity, Gender Socialization, Abusive Behaviour, Hegemonic Masculinity, Interactionist Framework.

## Introduction

Underlying causes of abusive behaviour in different research and debates are presented in the context of the nature-nurture debate. The factsheets show that masculinity is a central social aspect, because men are seen as perpetrators of interpersonal violence in higher ratios globally (Jewkes, 2002; Lippa, 2005). Since patriarchy/masculinity in the account of male aggression is explained biologically, researchers still argue that socialization, masculinity, and authority-based abusive behaviours are the key factors in giving rise to abusive trends (Connell, 2005; Kimmel, 2017). This concept reveals the shift from essentialist summaries of masculinity towards the understanding of socially constructed gender oriented behaviours, which are based on aggression and abusive patterns and

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evolve within social conditions and are reinforced and produced through social processes that encode male dominance, emotional control, superiority, entitlement, and control as key factors in expressing masculinity as accepted behaviour (Messerschmidt, 2018; Eliot et al., 2021). Behaviours and perceptions based on gender roles are learned and perceived through family relationships, association with peer groups, media, social platforms, and institutions. That is why we cannot limit ourselves solely to an individual's pathology and psychological tendencies; we must also examine the cultural scripts that legitimize particular expressions of masculinity (Bailey et al., 2016). In this article, I approach abusive behaviour from a masculinity and socialization perspective. My argument is that biology may help explain some human capacity for aggression, but it does not explain why abuse occurs or why it takes particular gendered forms on its own. Therefore, abusive behaviour is considered a socially adopted and learned practice, which is a result of exercising masculinity with its attributes like masculine identity, control and authority, emotional control, and superiority.

## Review of the Literature / Background

Argument on biological justification of aggression emphasizes on hormonal influences, specifically testosterone and many other factors like dominance and survival (Archer, 2006; Sapolsky, 2005). This point of view is very useful in a sense that it reminds us that aggression can have psychological and biological dimensions. But these explanations become meaningless and narrow when the perception is build up that dominance and violence is the natural factor as they are destined to do so. Not all men behave abusively, and abusive patterns differ from region to region; they are practiced differently across societies and relationships, i.e., we cannot explain abusive conduct solely on biological factors. Therefore, it is necessary to understand and learn how power, masculinity, and aggression are shaped within the socio-cultural context. This concept indicates that men possess a biological inclination to be superior, dominant, and aggressive in nature, which is a consequence of evolutionary pressures linked with the reproductive role and sense of competition (Sapolsky, 2005). Although certain studies have reported links between hormonal secretion and aggressive acts, these findings are not definitive (Sapolsky, 2005; Lippa, 2005). Critics contend that a biological perspective may naturalize violence and suppress the social context in which it occurs (Fine, 2017; Rippon, 2019). Significantly, a biological perspective is unable to account for differences in levels of abusive acts among different societies in different eras or gain insights into why most men do not act abusively while having the same biology as other men. The implications mean that biology needs to be viewed in a different social context.

Notably, socialization theories highlight the processes by which people learn behaviour, values, and norms through social interaction. From a very young age, boys are socialised

to associate maleness with factors such as strength, control of emotions, competitiveness, and leadership qualities; vulnerability and empathy are often discouraged (Baker, 2012). Socialization occurs through parental interactions as well as societal narratives, such as books and stories of heroism and leadership, which display the desirable male traits and characteristics. The paper by Connell introduces the concept of hegemonic masculinity, in which specific forms of masculinity attain cultural dominance, while others become marginalized in society (Connell, 2005). In this regard, hegemonic masculinity can be said to legitimate the dominant position of men over women and other kinds of masculinities because it puts a social system of power and control into place. In this regard, abusive practices can become a tool for reasserting control or reasserting masculinity when men feel challenged or marginalized (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Moreover, research undertaken within the realms of feminism and critical criminology has shown a close association between violence and gendered relations of power, as opposed to mere deviation (Owen, 2012; Stark, 2007).

Violence and abuse, especially within a relationship, tend to have a pattern suggestive of coercive control that seeks to emphasize dominance rather than mere violence (Rivera & Scholar, 2020). The above is consistent with socially approved conventions of masculinity that emphasize dominance, control, and entitlement. The concept of "doing gender" in crimes also supports the above argument by showing how violence and abuse can be a resource for the production of masculinity when there are no other means of attaining masculinity available (Baker, 2012). This highlights the importance of understanding the interactive relationship between structural inequality and socially situated behaviour when arguing for the socially constructed origin of abuse. Moreover, scholars widely assert that the biology-culture debate is important in understanding the causes of abuse. Behaviour results from an interaction between biological potential and the social environment (Rutter, 2006; Milner, 2024). Yet, acknowledging biological influence does not undermine the significance of socialization in determining how an individual expresses or suppresses aggression. Through understanding abuse as a function of social construction, the implications of abuse prevention strategies are profound. Given the fact that abuse can be learned, it can also be "unlearned" (Flood, 2011). Demarcating abuse in terms of social constructionism and masculinity, the blame shifts away from immutable characteristics to social constructs. This highlights the importance of strategies that challenge detrimental "masculinities" in rediscovering non-violent approaches (Peate, 2020).

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article is to examine how masculinity and socialization contribute to the construction and persistence of abusive behaviour, moving beyond reductive nature versus nurture explanations. This study identifies that abuse should not be considered a

result of biological factors, in fact, it is originated from gender roles, power, social learning. In other words it established a new debate that it should not be taken as social behaviour, as it is learned through typical patriarchal mindset, superiority of males, and power to control others, above all it becomes normal social behaviour and it sustains as social paradigm. It adds that changing individual's attitude is not enough; in fact, changing social values and harmful masculine behaviours seems to be more appropriate.

## Objectives of the Study

This study has two prominent objectives:

1. To examine how masculinity notions are socially learned and how they turn into abusive and controlling masculinity oriented behaviours.

2. Second, to investigate the intersectionist perspective and how they can assist abusive behaviour without linking it to socialization and biological attributes

## Overview Research Question

The research question guides to understand the core concept of abusive behaviours, i.e., how behaviours based on masculinity and socialization helps to establish it as normalization and how nature-vs-nurture goes beyond debate?

## Conceptualization of Gender, Power, and the Social Construction of Masculinity

Rather than viewing abuse mainly as an individual defect or private failure, recent literature places it within gendered relations of power. This is important because abusive behaviour often becomes possible in social contexts where male authority, entitlement, and control are tolerated or justified. In this sense, violence and abuse should be analyzed not only at the level of the individual perpetrator, but also in relation to the social structures that reproduce unequal power between men and women (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2019; Jewkes, Flood & Lang, 2015). Masculinity is therefore better understood as a set of practices organized through power relations rather than as a fixed personal trait. The hegemonic masculinity framework proposed by Connell remains widely used, although it has been defined to emphasize that masculinity is fluid, context-dependent, and relational (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). More recent formulations show how hegemonic masculinity is achieved through every day practices that legitimize dominance and obscure responsibility for violence (Messerschmidt, 2018). In this understanding, violence is one possible way through which dominant masculinity may be performed, especially in intimate, familial, or peer contexts. Contemporary research also emphasizes

intersectionality, showing that masculinity is shaped differently by race, class, sexuality, nationality, and social location, thereby influencing both the form and meaning of abusive practices (Gibbs et al., 2020).

**Socialization, Learning, and Gendered Behaviour**

Recent studies on gender socialization emphasize how masculine codes are reproduced through everyday interactions and institutional practices. Boys and men may be exposed to gender ideologies that discourage emotional vulnerability, privilege dominance, reward heterosexual achievement, and marginalize care giving or relational expression (Way et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2017). Contemporary social learning perspectives also show that violence is shaped not only by exposure to abusive behaviour but also by beliefs about entitlement, respect, control, and gendered authority (Gómez & Speizer, 2019). Longitudinal evidence suggests that children who grow up around controlling or abusive behaviour may be at greater risk of reproducing similar behaviour later in life. This does not mean that such behaviour is inevitable. Fulu et al. (2017) also show that gender-equitable norms and supportive environments can act as protective factors. The value of this evidence is that it moves the argument away from biological inevitability and toward the social conditions that either reinforce or interrupt abusive behaviour. Qualitative research further shows that perpetrators may draw on culturally available discourses of masculinity to justify coercion, control, and violence after the fact (Hearn, 2015; Bancroft & Silverman, 2011). Such discourses individualize abuse and deflect attention from its structural and gendered roots.

**Masculinity, Violence, and Abusive Practices**

The relationship between masculinity and violence has occupied criminological and sociological scholarship for several decades. Messerschmidt (2018) conceptualizes violence as a form of gendered action that emerges from structural inequality rather than from aggression alone. This model has been used to examine intimate partner violence, peer violence, and institutional violence. Empirical studies further show that strict or dominance-based masculine norms are associated with higher risks of violence and abuse. Quantitative research has linked beliefs in male entitlement, sexual dominance, and masculine discrepancy stress to intimate partner violence and related harms (Reidy et al., 2016; Santana et al., 2006). Conversely, gender-equitable norms are associated with lower levels of violence and more constructive relationship outcomes (Jewkes et al., 2015). A current set of conceptualizations of abuse includes the use of coercive control as a patterned practice as opposed to isolated incidents. Stark's conceptualization of coercive control has been widely adopted and extended in relation to how aspects of surveillance, isolation, and economic control correlate with norms regarding masculine expressions of control and ownership (Myhill & Kelly, 2018). This further supports the

argument that abuse is inscribed in normative processes of gendered conduct as opposed to aberrant performance (Cunha et al., 2018).

## Biological Perspectives and Contemporary Interactionist Approaches

Biological theories of aggression, including hormonal and evolutionary explanations, continue to be represented in interdisciplinary studies. Nevertheless, contemporary scholarship generally supports interactionist perspectives that locate biology within social and cultural contexts rather than treating biology as destiny (Fine, 2017; Rippon, 2019). Biological factors may influence emotional reactivity, but social norms, learned scripts, and institutionalized gender relations shape, how such emotions are interpreted, regulated, or expressed (Sapolsky, 2005; Fine, 2017; Rippon, 2019). Cross-cultural evidence also weakens universal biological explanations of abuse because the prevalence, forms, and social tolerance of abuse vary across societies in ways closely linked to gender inequality, restrictive gender norms, and culturally sanctioned conceptions of masculinity (Heise et al., 2019; World Health Organization, 2021).

## Gaps and Directions in the Literature

Since 2015, researchers have explored the gaps to understand the issue in a better manner and to expand it considerably, but still there is critical research gap needed to be explored. Though previous studies also hold significance, but they focused more on violence among heterosexual intimate relations and overlooked main causes of abuse, i.e., financial control, psychological abuse, and cyber abuse.

Similarly it lacks longitudinal studies, which can actually identify the transformation of masculinity and its formation throughout the life and how it facilitates the risk of abusive behaviour. The previous researchers have not focused on its prevention also, in fact majority of them focused only on critique within families. Only few have identified the prevalence of abuse in peer groups, schools, and social groups within the society. Therefore this study has attempted to focus on filling the research gaps and has provided the groundwork to fill these gaps.

## Theoretical Framework

This study has been guided through three relevant perspectives: Social Contructionism, Critical Masculinity Studies, and interactionism. The reason to combine all these three perspective is to understanding abusive behaviour based just on one theory is not possible as single theory cannot explain the issue fully. Discussing the usefulness of these perspectives highlights that through Critical Masculinity we can identify the imbalanced

gender relations. And by using constructionism, we can learn how abusive behaviours are normalized in our daily life practices, whereas, interactionism helps to understand simple division of nature-vs-nurture via recognition of socio-biological and psychological factors, as these factors may operate in individual capacity or collectively. Hence these perspectives elaborates that masculinity does not have fixed traits, in fact, it can be seen as social practice, which changes in different circumstances and is shaped by relationships, power, and cultural influence (Connell, 2005). The importance of this study augments, because here abuse is not dealt only as individual's act or personal failure. It is rather taken as gendered expectations, social interactions, and imbalanced gender relations. Critical Masculinity Studies provides a framework, which shows that masculinity comprises of many forms in unequal mannerism (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is a very important concept as it explains how patriarchy gets associated with power, dominance and strength. When these behaviours become usual practice then these ideals are normalized and thus create a social environment in which abuse becomes a common, repeated, and a justified practice. It does not mean that masculinity necessarily produces abuse, in fact, it creates an understanding that few men considers it a masculine trait to exercise undue power and create conflicts.

The theoretical framework is not only viewed as an issue of authority between individuals, but it also focuses on ideological and structural systems as a core issue. This framework explains the fact that abuse is linked to masculinity, i.e., abuse is a kind of reactionary act by asserting or reasserting gender power to deal with threats to masculinity and sustain their status (Messerschmidt, 2018). This framework shows another dimension and moves beyond the concept of gender victimization, shifting the question from "why men abuse at the individual level" to a question of "how culture translates masculinity as an acceptable privilege for men and getting benefits out of it."

Social Construction Theory floats a complementary analysis, which explains the process of the formation of masculinity standards and how they are normalized. This school of thought, having a manhood-act and social constructionist perspective, argues that masculinity is not a natural or inborn trait; it is, in fact, a combination of socially defined meanings, socio-cultural practices, and individual or collective acts, which is learned through social interaction and established social perceptions (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009). The value of this perspective lies in its focus on lifelong gender socialization through family, peer groups, schools, media, workplaces, and other institutions (Way et al., 2018). From this position, abuse may be understood as a gendered performance that draws on available cultural narratives to legitimize control, authority, and power in intimate or familial relationships (Hearn, 2015; Bancroft & Silverman, 2011). Finally, interactionist insights are used to directly address, and move beyond the biology/nurture divide, that structures the article's research question. This stance recognizes that human behavioural

responses result from the dynamic interplay between biological and environmental factors (Rutter, 2006). It also refutes biological determinism, which suggests that neurophysiology drives reactive behaviours (such as arousal and aggression), whereas interpretation, regulation, and communication are largely driven by social and cultural forces (Fine, 2017; Rippon, 2019). From the perspective of this research, an interactionist position would state that biological aggression is mediated by a set of learned schemas for masculinity, and that an individual's use of a real or imagined slight, as a prompt to self-reflection, or as a stimulus to argument, or as a provocation to coercive violence, will depend on the set of gender scripts he has internalized to resolve all these conflicts.

In summary, the resulting integrated theoretical framework guides the analysis as a whole. It facilitated a critique of biological essentialism, in particular, by highlighting the role of social construction in shaping gender scripts. It depends upon the idea of hegemonic masculinity to clarify why the practice of abuse is consonant with the cultural constructs of power and control. It relies upon social constructionism to explain the transmission and acquisition of those constructs. It relies on interactionism to eliminate the problematic dualism, instead locating biology within a wider social ecology. Through a lens of abuse as a dynamic construct of the social world, the underlying theoretical premise directly supports the study's macro claim and implications of preventing abuse by transforming the social constructs and structures in which it is couched, paving the way for gender transformation work towards the promotion of other, non-violent versions of masculinity (Flood, 2011; Jewkes et al., 2015).

## Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative desktop review using thematic synthesis. This approach was considered appropriate, because the fundamental purpose of this article was to compile, critique, and theoretically develop the existing scholarly discourse on the complex relationships between masculinity, socialization, and abusive behavior. Desktop reviews enable the systematic retrieval, critical assessment, and synthesis of published scholarly literature to develop an evidence-informed argument and identify central themes, areas of consensus, and knowledge gaps within a subject or field of study (Snyder, 2019). This approach enabled a critical examination of the nature-nurture debate on masculinity and abusive behaviour without collecting new empirical data, since the article sought to integrate findings across sociology, gender studies, criminology, psychology, and public health.

## Data Sources and Search Strategy

In this study, rather than primary empirical data, existing scholarly literature was used. Google Scholar, PsycINFO, PubMed, and Sociological Abstracts were used to search

reseacr material. Boolean and keyword techniques were used to explore relevant material on abusive conduct, masculinity, and socialization patterns. The keywords and terms used for searching material are: manhood, violence, coercive control, gender norms and values, gender socialization, and interactionist approaches. In order to maintain validity, the researcher has focused on incorporating current literature through books, peer-reviewed journals, and official reports from institutions like the World Health Organization. The literature incorporated in this study is in English and mainly published within the time period 2000 to 2024. Previous researches are discussed in this study, because they also highlighted various factors based on gender disparity and were conceptually valid. Though post 2000 research were of great importance and were included in this study, but recent studies are included more vigorously to establish closer look and to understand the core issue.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

The literature was selected for its relevance to the article's central focus. Sources were included when they examined the construction of masculinity, male gender socialisation, or the relationship between masculine norms and abusive, violent, or coercively controlling behaviour. The review also included sources that engaged with the nature-versus-nurture debate or presented empirical evidence on gender norms, attitudes, and perpetration in relation to gender-based violence. Sources were excluded when they relied solely on biological determinism and did not consider social context. Also, sources were excluded when they discussed violence or abuse without a gendered or socialisation perspective, or when they were mainly clinical or diagnostic in focus without contributing to the sociological argument of the article. Literature with weak evidence, unclear argumentation, or limited methodological credibility was also not prioritised.

**Data Analysis and Synthesis**

Thematic analysis has been used as per the outline briefed by Thomas and Harden (2008). The retrieved literature was organized systematically, and then it was analyzed critically, in which theoretical standpoint, methodological firmness, and limitations were kept in mind to present the facts that are still unfolding. Based on the article's theoretical framework (critical masculinity theory, social constructionism, and interactionism), which served as a guide for analysis, the themes were progressively identified and coded. Themes identified a direct relationship to the structure of the article’s argument: the limits of biological explanation, the mechanisms of gendered socialization, the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and abuse, and the transition to interactionist models. The themes were used to construct a comprehensive argument on how abuse is a social construct, thereby resolving the article's overarching question.

This research is a desk study that reviews publicly accessible, published literature and, therefore, did not require formal ethics committee review for involving human subjects. Nonetheless, considerable effort has been devoted to interpreting and presenting sensitive content. This research also cautions against stigmatizing terms and does not portray abusive practices as a natural trait of the male or any other social group, and strictly adheres to the critique of the abusive power structures. In the synthesis process above, the prioritized literature includes those with stronger moral foundations and, where appropriate, prioritizes the safety of the victim-survivors.

## Limitations of the Methodology

The desktop methodology approach, although robust in theoretical synthesis, also suffers from inherent limitations. First, it depends entirely on the availability and quality of literature in existing databases, which may be subject to publication bias. Second, the search approach may have overlooked some studies in non-English-language literature or in earlier pre-publication stages. However, these natural limitations are addressed by the study's very purpose. It seeks not to produce new empirical findings but to present a critical theoretical synthesis. The identified gaps now yield new, valuable conclusions that guide future studies.

## Findings

The literature reviewed for this article points to four related findings. These findings do not suggest that biology is irrelevant, nor do they imply that masculinity automatically produces abuse. Rather, they show that abusive behaviour becomes more understandable when biological capacity, gendered socialization, power relations and social context are considered together. In this sense, the findings challenge simple nature-versus-nurture explanations and support a more interactionist reading of abuse.

## The Primacy of Social Construction over Biological Determinism

As per initial findings of the study just biological explanations are not enough account on abusive behaviour. Psychological and biological factors are essential parts of human conduct, but the literature review suggests that these factors are shaped and regulated as the by-product of social context (Fine, 2017; Rippon, 2019). It is important to understand that abuse is practiced in all societies but not in the same manner. Different cultures have their own ways to perceive ideas, therefore prevalence and acceptance of abusive behaviour among spousal relationship may vary due to gender inequality, gender norms, and tolerance of male control (Heise et al., 2019; World Health Organization, 2021). Careful interpretations are needed to conduct research on testosterone and other Research

on testosterone and bio-psychological influences, because it will help to explain all the aspects linked to dominance, emotional control, and competitiveness, but there is no evidence that biology can be a direct reason of abuse (Archer, 2006; Sapolsky, 2005). Same biological capacity can be articulated in different ways based on social atmosphere. For example, one person can manage anger through withdrawal, dialogue, and self-projection, whereas some express by showing power, control or violence. These differences cannot be examined on the basis of biological factors only, thus we should keep in mind the importance of socially adopted gender traits, social guidelines, and definitions of masculinity. Similarly biological explanation cannot explain why few men sharing same biological capabilities and capacities do not practice violence and never adopts abusive behaviours (Jewkes, 2002; World Health Organization, 2021).

## Hegemonic Masculinity and the Normalization of Controlling Norms

The second finding is that abuse is often linked to particular forms of masculinity that give value to dominance, authority, and control. This does not mean that masculinity itself is abusive. Rather, the concern is with dominant or hegemonic forms of masculinity that give right to have control over women, children, whereas other men appear normal, reserved, or defensible (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In this sense, abusive behaviour is not always an expression of abnormality. In some cases, it can reflect an exaggerated commitment to gendered expectations that have already been socially rewarded. Socialization plays a central role in this process. From childhood, boys may learn that masculinity is associated with toughness, emotional restraint, authority and the need to command respect. At the same time, vulnerability, care, apology and relational equality may be discouraged or treated as signs of weakness (Way et al., 2018). These lessons do not affect all men in the same way, but they can shape how some men interpret disagreement, rejection or a partner's autonomy. What should be understood as ordinary conflict or difference may instead be read as a challenge to masculine authority. This finding is supported by studies linking male entitlement, sexual dominance and masculine discrepancy stress to intimate partner violence and related harms (Reidy et al., 2016; Santana et al., 2006). It is also visible in research on coercive control. Practices such as isolation, surveillance, intimidation, and economic restriction are not random behaviours. They often reflect deeper assumptions about ownership, provision, authority and control within intimate relationships (Stark, 2007; Myhill & Kelly, 2018). The literature therefore suggests that abusive conduct should be examined not only as individual wrongdoing, but also as behaviour that draws meaning from wider gendered expectations.

## Mechanisms of Learning and Reinforcement

The third finding concerns how abusive behaviour is learned and reinforced. The reviewed literature suggests that people do not simply become abusive because they have been exposed to aggression. They also learn the meanings attached to power, respect, gender,

authority, and control. Family relationships, peer groups, media messages, cultural narratives, and institutional practices can all contribute to the way masculinity is understood and performed (Gómez & Speizer, 2019). Messerschmidt (2018) suggests that it is useful, because he shows how violence can become a way of "doing" masculinity when a man feels that his authority, status, or control has been challenged, and this does not excuse abusive behaviour. Rather, it helps explain how some perpetrators make sense of their actions. In some accounts, abuse is justified through claims of provocation, disrespect, jealousy, disobedience, or loss of control (Hearn, 2015). These explanations are important because they show that perpetrators often draw on available gendered narratives to defend or minimise coercive behaviour.

Bancroft and Silverman (2011) further show that control within the family can become a strategy through which abusive men attempt to maintain authority. This is particularly significant because abuse is not limited to physical violence. It may also involve emotional manipulation, intimidation, control over money, isolation from support systems, or the use of children and family roles to maintain dominance. Within male peer groups, dominance, emotional detachment, and control over partners may also be affirmed or tolerated. In this way, abuse can be learned, repeated, and socially validated in settings where particular forms of masculinity are rewarded rather than being challenged.

**The Necessity of an Interactionist Model: Moving Beyond the Binary**

The fourth finding is that an interactionist model offers a stronger explanation than the nature-versus-nurture binary. The literature does not support the view that abuse is simply caused by biology. At the same time, it would also be too simple to ignore biological and psychological capacities altogether. A more balanced explanation is that human beings may have capacities for aggression, emotional arousal, or defensive reaction, but the expression of these capacities is shaped by social learning, gendered expectations, and relational context (Rutter, 2006). Within this interactionist understanding, biology may be seen as part of the background of human behaviour, but not as a direct cause of abuse. A person may experience anger, jealousy, fear, or humiliation, but these emotions do not automatically become violence or coercive control. The response depends on what the person has learned about masculinity, power, conflict, accountability, and emotional regulation. For this reason, the same experience of threat or frustration may lead to different responses: reflection, withdrawal, negotiation, verbal aggression, physical violence, or sustained coercive control. This finding helps to explain individual differences without relying on biological determinism. Some men may experience pressure to prove masculinity, but not all respond through abusive behaviour. The movement from masculine insecurity or identity pressure to abuse is shaped by personal history, emotional regulation, peer norms, cultural scripts and the degree to

which dominant masculine ideals have been internalized (Fine, 2017; Rippon, 2019). The interactionist model is therefore useful because it keeps biological, psychological, and social explanations in conversation, while still recognising the central role of gendered socialization and power.

## Discussion and Implications

The facts propose that neither abusive behaviour be considered as biological destiny, nor as psychological failure alone. Rather it can be defined more convincingly by understanding the contributing factors of masculinity, which makes abuse more prevalent in communities through dominance, emotional restrictions, and performing masculinity as an accepted norm. This does not conclude that every man is an abuser, it means that the circumstances makes violence justifiable and it is repeated frequently (Connell, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2018). The core effort of this study is not to limit abuse to biological determinants and a person's psychological issue; rather it should be taken beyond complexes and individual's pathology. The literature review shows that abusive conduct is a by-product of socially adopted and learned masculine norms, power sustenance, and institutional patterns. Therefore, argument on nature-vs-nurture should be viewed as an initial stage. This is marginalized only when the explanation of abuse is limited to environment and biology. More appropriate approach is to see aggression and emotional reactionary behaviour in the context of gender scripts and its practice and evaluation (Rutter, 2006; Fine, 2017; Rippon, 2019).

This argument expresses both theoretical and practical implications. If we look at it through a theoretical perspective, then it supports the debate that abuse is basically practiced within power relations rather than the inborn nature of a man. It is very important to understand this difference, because if we consider it as an inborn instinct of a man, then prevention options will become limited and feeble. However, if we consider it as a social feature, then we can focus on preventive measures and can change the norms, relationship patterns, and can restructure the institutions that actually promote the control and accept violence as a normal practice. From a practical perspective, these results hold great importance for the gender-transformative approaches to prevention. Such theories should not only sensitize men to stop practicing violence or using it as a power tool, but also should make them understand that manhood means respecting women, stopping over exercising control, and maintaining balanced relationships. Therefore, to stop violence, it is important to take measures that can promote the accountability concept, care and consent, and promote non-violent forms of masculinity to establish true masculine identity (Flood, 2011; Jewkes et al., 2015; Flood, 2019). Given these gender-based concepts, the best forums to change mindsets are families, schools, peer groups, religious communities, workplaces, and media, because these spaces repeatedly produce stereotypical masculine ideals.

This argument also identifies the areas where research is further needed. The existing research still focuses on physical abuse among heterosexual close relationships. The areas where more research is needed are economic and psychological abuse, forceful control and intervention, and violence mediated by technology. Similarly, using longitudinal studies, it is necessary to explore how masculinity is formalized in different phases of life, how challenges are dealt with, and how it can be changed with time. Though extensive critique of harmful masculinity is well presented empirically, attention should still be given to researching areas like balanced gender relations, caring and accountable behaviours to support it actively. Prevention of violence does not mean controlling and curtailing harmful gender practices; in fact, it should help to shape and formalize masculinity positively. The restructuring of this concept has important theoretical as well as practical implications. Theoretically, it rejects the essentialist model, which considers maleness as the core reason for violence, and further analyzes that there are some other factors as well that reinforce violence as a social norm, like power structures, socialization, gender roles, and institutional monopoly (Kimmel, 2017).

In practice, it redirects prevention from a narrow focus on individual perpetrators to broader efforts to transform the normative spaces that render abusive conduct intelligible or acceptable. Prevention, therefore, requires gender-transformative approaches that challenge harmful masculine norms while fostering emotional literacy, accountability, consent, care, and non-violent forms of masculine identity (Flood, 2011; Jewkes et al., 2015; Flood, 2019). Additionally, this synthesis highlights important gaps in the literature to inform the design of a course for further research. There is a need to focus further attention on the full spectrum of abusive conduct, including psychological, economic, and technology-facilitated violence, in addition to other forms of violence. Moreover, there is a need to focus attention on the development of long-term studies to follow how masculinities are constructed and evolve into different forms across the life course, and how such developments moderate the risk of violence or desistance. Finally, while there is a rich critical literature about the dangerous effects of harmful forms of masculinity, one of the major implications of this literature is emphasizing the need to actively focus attention on the development of positive forms of protective masculinities. There is a growing body of literature about caring, justice, and emotionally engaged forms of masculinities, suggesting that there is potentially a great deal to be learned about how these forms of identity are constructed to think about how positive alternatives to violence might be actively realized; in other words, how to develop protective factors in addition to deconstruct the architecture of violence (Elliott, 2016).

## Recommendations

Analysis of the constructs of masculinity and abuse, as well as their relation to socialization, has various specific recommendations that entail the transformation of

masculinity and its given definitions through societal efforts that are required to bring changes at the various societal levels. At both institutional and learning levels, it is crucial that gender-transformative learning is integrated into school curricula from a young age. In addition, these interventions should move beyond awareness-raising to deconstruct negative hegemonic masculinity and promote positive alternatives, with a focus on key outcomes such as emotional intelligence, consent, conflict resolution, and relationship-building. Concomitantly, professional development opportunities must be provided for key agents in influential roles, such as teachers, social workers, healthcare professionals, and judicial authorities, to enhance their understanding of the gendered nature of coercive control and to challenge stereotypes that obscure or conceal violence. Interventions in the community and in the media are equally important.

Public health interventions should challenge these social norms that associate masculinity with dominance and power, rather than promoting narratives of care, equality, and positive bystander interventions. There should also be investment in grassroots organizations working with men and boys in critical conversations about masculinity, encouraging support groups in which these non-violent and equal versions of masculinity are reinforced. In addition, media regulations should also be formulated to encourage varied expressions of masculinity rather than associating male identity with aggression. Policy and research should be focused specifically on ensuring that violence prevention is attached to a primary prevention framework, which addresses the gender-based factors of social drivers of violence, as mentioned explicitly in the ecological model. At this point the need to conduct longitudinal research, as it is more appropriate and such studies can identify the root causes and can bring change in stereotypical masculine roles among boys and men at different phases of life. This study reflects for future research to look more closely how masculinity is reinforced at workplace, among peer groups, and at communal level. These studies can bring social change and change in mindsets by their practical intervention.

## Conclusion

This article emphasizes that nature-versus-nurture fails to explain abusive behavior adequately, as the debate is too narrow. Biological and psychological explanations may add meaning to indicate human capacity regarding aggression, but they fail to identify why some societies tolerate abuse and how it is transformed into specific gendered forms of abuse. The literature reviewed in this study validates that abuse is initiated through social trends, imbalanced power relations, and male dominance, which is linked to manhood, control and authority, emotional control, and entitlement. Or, in a way, we can conclude that the interactionist perspective presents a more accurate and balanced explanation regarding abusive behavior. Though it recognizes biological abilities, it still considers that violence stems from socio-cultural and relational context. It is very

important to understand that, to prevent violence, correcting an individual's behaviour is not enough (Whittemore, 2005). Along with this, social setup, behaviours should also be addressed, which is the actual root cause of encouraging and rewarding harmful forms of masculinity. The primary importance and central significance of emotional awareness/literacy, participation of functional community, liable institutions, and promotion of caring behavior, gender-equitable masculinities and caring is to establish safer, balanced gender relations and a healthy, livable community, where non-violent practices can offer peace in the society.

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