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Article

Economic Abuse From Child and Youth Perspectives: A Review of the Literature

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Abstract

Research has established that the economic hardship caused by intimate partner violence (IPV), including economic abuse, is an important obstacle impeding women from leaving a violent partner. Furthermore, economic violence typically continues post-separation, also when other forms of abuse have ended. IPV—typically, men’s violence against women—is an issue of direct concern for children, even if the violent behaviour is not directed towards the child. A growing body of research has documented detrimental effects on children’s health, well-being, and cognitive development when exposed to IPV/domestic abuse. In recent decades, research has also explored children’s perspectives and strategies to cope with being exposed to violence in families. Economic abuse, however, is a form of violence that is seldom studied from a child’s perspective. This article aims to explore existing knowledge on economic abuse from child and youth perspectives, drawing from childhood studies, interdisciplinary violence studies, critical social work, and social policy studies. The research review is divided as follows: (a) findings on children’s direct and indirect victimisation of economic abuse; (b) findings on economic abuse in young people’s intimate relationships and the context of honour-related violence; and (c) findings on economic abuse concerning parenting, with discussions on possible implications for dependent children. Suggestions for further research are put forward.

Keywords

child abuse; child maltreatment; coercive control; domestic violence; economic abuse; economic violence; financial abuse; intimate partner violence; young people

Issue

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1. Introduction

The present article aims to explore existing knowledge on economic abuse from child and youth perspectives. Within the interdisciplinary field of childhood studies and in the sociology of childhood, the relation and tensions between a general child perspective and the perspective of children or that of an individual child is a central and contested issue (Alderson, 2013; Sommer et al., 2010). Adults may be asserted as adopting a child perspective when they are considering implications for children, for example, certain policies and decisions. A genuine child perspective implies seeking to understand children’s perspectives, relating these views to other relevant knowl-

edge and striving towards meeting or advocating the best interest of the child. Regarding research, I would argue that important work from a child(hood) perspective can be produced also without including children as respondents or informants, as exemplified by several studies included in this review. As Gulløv and Højlund (2003, p. 29) assert: “A child perspective is not an empirical entity that can be produced through the study of children’s statements and actions alone, but rather an analytical construction related to the theoretical considerations.” Moreover, critical analyses of adults’ discourses, decisions and practices concerning children are crucial to cast light on adult privilege and abuse of power, in turn aiming at changing these practices towards social

justice and improving children's lives (Bruno, 2018a; Eriksson et al., 2013). Intimate partner violence (IPV)—typically men's violence against women—is a paramount issue of direct concern for children, even if the violence is not directed towards the child. An extensive body of research has documented the detrimental effects on children's health, well-being and cognitive development from being exposed to IPV/domestic abuse (Evans et al., 2008; Fang & Corso, 2007; Huang et al., 2015). In recent decades, research has additionally explored children's own perspectives and strategies when coping with victimisation and exposure to violence in families (Callaghan et al., 2018; Katz, 2015; Överlien, 2017; Staf & Almquist, 2015). Economic abuse, however, is a form of violence that is seldom studied from child or youth perspectives. Particularly, children's narratives are absent in the few studies which do focus on economic abuse and its implications for children, as noted by Bruno (2018b) and Näsman and Fernqvist (2015).

Economic violence, financial abuse, economic coercion, and financial oppression are terms used in the literature to capture similar abusive acts. An often-cited definition of what constitutes economic abuse is "behaviours that control a woman's ability to acquire, use and maintain economic resources, thus threatening her economic security and potential for self-sufficiency" (Adams et al., 2008, p. 564). Among the numerous ways economic abuse can be exerted is by stealing or destroying the victim's property, excessive economic control by demanding receipts, denying access to a bank account, withholding money, not contributing to the household expenses, forcing the victim to borrow money from friends and relatives, or to commit fraud, preventing her from seeking education or paid work (cf. Chowbey, 2017; Fawole, 2008; Postmus et al., 2012; Sanders, 2015). Coerced debt is a prominent theme in the literature on economic abuse (Littwin, 2012; Sharp-Jeffs, 2015). Economic abuse is proposed as a broader concept than financial abuse, which specifically aims at restricting the partner's access to money, thus not including restricting resources such as transport, housing, employment, and education (Postmus et al., 2020). Other researchers argue that control and exploitation of women's reproductive and unpaid work in the home should also be included in the definition of economic abuse, not least in cases when women are living in slave-like conditions in marriages in which they have entered by coercion or by poverty (Anitha, 2019).

Nonetheless, article 3 in the Istanbul Convention defines violence against women as "all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty" (Council of Europe, 2011). Moreover, domestic violence is specifically defined in the convention as "all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence" (Council of Europe, 2011). Establishing the prevalence of physical

abuse has hitherto been prioritised in large scale studies on IPV. Additionally, historically, economic abuse has often been categorised as a form of psychological violence. Few quantitative studies have comprehensively—if at all—included economic abuse, and those that did indicate that economic abuse is far more prevalent than often thought (Leigh Doyle, 2020; Stylianou, 2018).

There is growing evidence and concern among scholars of the danger of policymakers assuming that economic resources are equally distributed within the family. Measuring economic well-being based on household income is increasingly questioned since this indicator neglects the realities of economic abuse (Branigan, 2004; Sharp, 2008; Voth Schrag et al., 2020). A scoping review of 44 empirical studies on households' acquisition and management of debt from a gender perspective revealed several examples of what in other studies would have been categorised as financial abuse. In their article, however, that term was not used, but instead the expression "unequal power relations" was employed (Callegari et al., 2020). Notwithstanding this downplaying of abuse, the authors do refer to the internationally established concept and widespread phenomenon of "sexually transmitted debt" (Kaye, 1997), which means that a woman is forced to provide pledge for her husband's business or to enter debt for his sake—with or without threats of physical or other forms of violence. While women's indebtedness often seems to be related to low income and the responsibility of others, men's indebtedness was more often related to bankruptcies, over-consumption, and unpaid maintenance. In most households with heterosexual couples, the man tends to have the most control over the household finances. In financially disadvantaged families, however, women are often responsible for making ends meet and for managing debt (Callegari et al., 2020).

Research has established economic hardship resulting from violence, as well as economic abuse, as important obstacles for women to leave a violent partner (Bullock et al., 2020; Voth Schrag et al., 2020). Furthermore, economic abuse typically continues post-separation, also when other forms of abuse have ceased (Branigan, 2004; Eriksson & Ulmestig, 2021; Fawole, 2008; Krigel & Benjamin, 2020; Miller & Smolter, 2011). Several studies show great difficulties for financially vulnerable mothers to receive the support they are entitled to when they are afraid of their partner and he refuses to pay maintenance/child support (Douglas & Nagesh, 2019; Fernqvist & Sépulchre, 2021; Natalier, 2017, 2018; Patrick et al., 2008). Indeed, most studies on economic abuse focus on women's victimisation. Nevertheless, narratives of economic abuse directed towards children or implications of this abuse for dependent children do appear in some of these studies. To my knowledge, reviews of the literature on economic abuse exploring this paramount issue from child or youth perspectives have hitherto not been published.

2. Methodology

2.1. A Scoping Review

One of the main purposes for scoping reviews is to provide a quick overview of available research conducted on a specific topic or area of research, including the identification of research gaps. It may serve as the first step in a larger study, or function as a stand-alone project (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Typically, scoping reviews are chosen to provide insights into areas of limited study. Any research review process implicates systematic features such as focus and explicit research questions, and rationale as regards exclusion and inclusion criteria. In contrast to systematic reviews, however, most scoping reviews do not prioritise the assessment of the methodological quality of the studies reviewed (Peterson et al., 2017; Pham et al., 2014). Instead, emphasis is on a comprehensive summary of content and of research activity related to a topic rather than on the standard of evidence (McColl et al., 2009).

2.2. Search Strategies and Inclusion Criteria

As stated in the Introduction, a child/youth perspective in research or on a certain issue does not necessarily imply including child/youth respondents/informants,

even if it often seems eligible in childhood studies and when aiming to promote children's rights. Accordingly, this was not an inclusion criterion for the present review (see Table 1). In this project, the process of identifying potentially relevant records comprised three stages: Firstly, a systematic search in the two databases Sociological Abstracts and Social Services Abstract was conducted. The search terms applied were "economic abuse," "economic violence," "financial abuse," and "economic control." Inclusion criteria were peer-reviewed articles and doctoral dissertations published in English between 2011 and 2021, which resulted in 106 records (see Figure 1). As expected, few of these abstracts mentioned children or young people. On the contrary, economic abuse against the elderly was a recurring theme. Therefore, a manual search in academic journals significant in child and youth studies and related social work comprised a second step. The following journals were included, with the same search terms applied as in the database search: *Childhood, Children & Society, Child Abuse & Neglect, Child & Youth Services Review, Child & Family Social Work, Journal of Family Violence*, which resulted in an additional 15 records. Thirdly, an additional 25 records were identified by screening reference lists of relevant articles, web searches and other sources such as grey literature. Relevant articles published before 2011 were then also included. Further, a

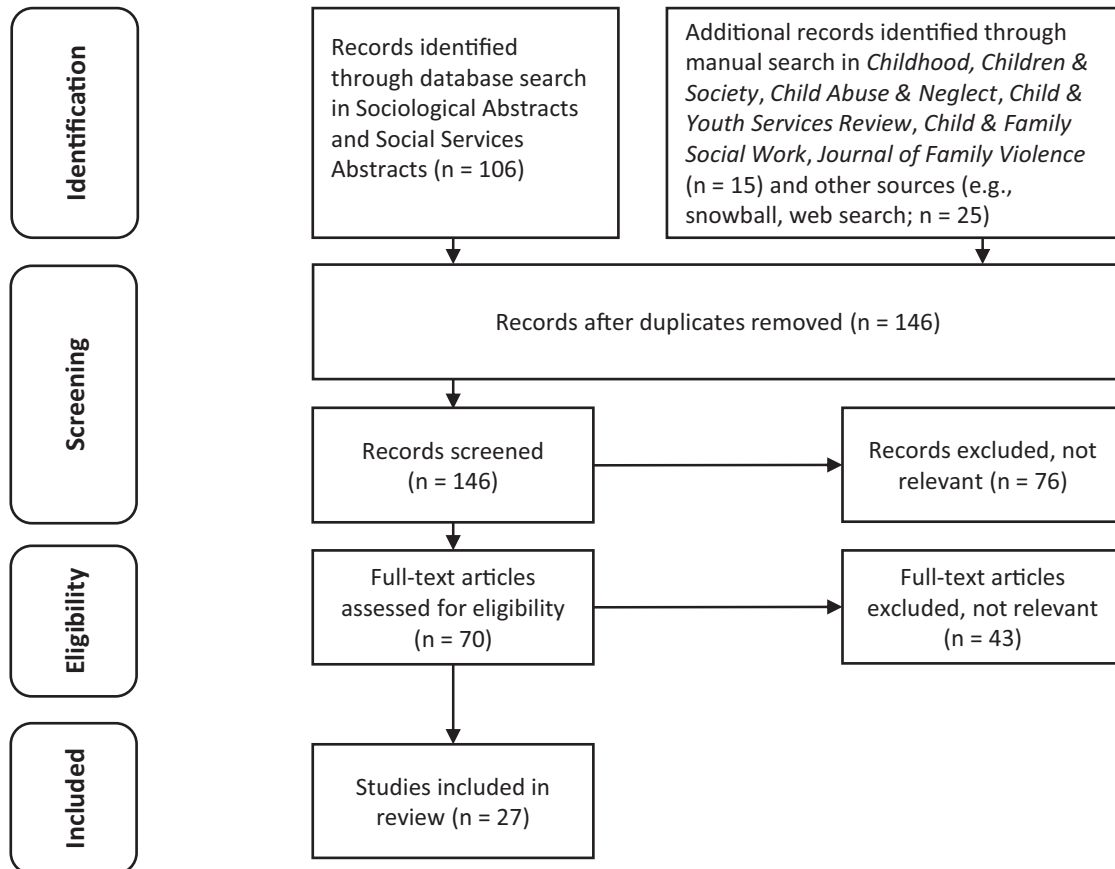


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram.

minor part of these records found by a manual screening of reference lists were academic reports and book chapters, not peer-reviewed articles. The search approach was thus broadened at this stage, in line with the more exploratory purpose of scoping studies, in comparison to systematic reviews (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Duplicates were removed during the process and the remaining 146 records were screened.

The database and manual search, as well as the screening of identified records, was conducted in December 2021. Studies that focused solely on economic abuse against elderly people or towards people with disabilities and studies that by "economic control" referred to control over territories (and not people) were deemed not relevant and excluded ($n = 76$). Thus, the remaining 70 full-text articles were subsequently assessed for eligibility based on their relevance from child and/or youth perspectives. Many of these articles ($n = 43$) were excluded from further review since they did not comprise any findings on economic abuse against children/young people or in relation to parenting. Quite a few of these excluded studies, however, contribute with important insights and contextualisation of the problem of economic abuse in general. Therefore, several of these are referred to in the introduction of the present article. Consequently, the final selection consists of 27 texts, of which 23 are peer-reviewed articles, one is an academic book chapter, another is an academic report published by a university and two are reports published by NGOs. In several of the studies included, economic abuse was not the main focus. Importantly, all studies included do not refer to the same definition of financial abuse, economic abuse/violence or economic control. Several studies used other concepts, such as "material violence." A few additional studies do not explicitly define the actions accounted for, but were included in the review nonetheless since I deemed the empirical examples as indications (rather than findings) of economic abuse. In line with scoping reviews' general focus on content and research activity before establishing evidence-based knowledge, this strategy seemed adequate.

3. Findings

The present literature review is structured as follows: (a) findings on children's direct and indirect victimisation

of economic abuse; (b) findings on economic abuse in young people's intimate relationships and the name of honour; and (c) findings on economic abuse concerning parenting, with discussions on possible implications for dependent children involved. As illustrated in Table 1, the predominant category is "qualitative studies, with findings on economic abuse in relation to parenting" (8), followed by the category "quantitative studies, with findings on economic abuse in the context of youth IPV or honour-related violence" (5). A few studies have findings in two categories but most only in one.

3.1. Children's Direct and Indirect Victimisation

Globally, child labour affects 152 million children (Ahad et al., 2020). Indeed, it may in itself be defined as abuse which is depriving child workers of education and play and with devastating impacts on health and life chances. Yet, a scoping review on child labour in Southeast Asian countries argues for the relevance of viewing child maltreatment as a distinct issue (Ahad et al., 2021). Since violence directed towards child workers is a neglected issue in research on child maltreatment, different types of abuse, such as physical, sexual, emotional maltreatment, financial exploitation, forced work, neglect, overburden, and indirect (witnessing) abuse in the context of child labour should be measured separately. Financial exploitation is here referred to as situations when the child worker is deprived of his/her wage (wage theft). The scoping review suggested sexual abuse to be the most researched type of abuse in this context, but all types are prevalent and under-researched (Ahad et al., 2021).

In welfare states, with publicly funded education and health care, economic abuse directed towards children is obviously less prevalent and has less severe implications than in societies permeated by poverty and millions of children exploited in labour. Notwithstanding, economic inequality and relative child poverty are on the rise in several affluent countries, especially affecting households with single parents (OECD, 2021). A few qualitative studies with child informants include examples of children's views and actions concerning post-separation economic issues (Ridge, 2017) and economic abuse. Callaghan et al.'s (2018) interview study with children ($n = 21$) of divorced parents does not focus specifically

Table 1. The empirical base of studies reviewed.

	Children's direct or indirect victimisation	Economic abuse, youth IPV, and honour-related violence	Economic abuse in relation to parenting
Quantitative	1	5	2
Qualitative	4	3	8
Mixed methods	1		
Research reviews	1		
Children/Youth informants (qual.)	2	2	
Children/Youth respondents (quant.)	2	4	

on children's direct victimisation of economic abuse but explores children's strategies for tackling coercive control and stalking. Several examples in their paper can however be interpreted as indications of economic abuse, for instance, narratives of how fathers with restraining orders seek out children and try to exchange money, food, or gifts for information about the mother, or for manipulating the children into having contact with them. Callaghan et al. (2018) cite a boy who explicitly states that he is not going to "be bought." In addition, he details how he has to lie to his father about financial issues. According to the authors' interpretation:

Mark is aware of the way that financial control functions to limit his mother's capacity for agency in her life. He supports his mother in resisting this by lying about her access to money, actively protecting her from the risk of control. (Callaghan et al., 2018, p. 1568)

Another interviewed boy describes how he also actively resists manipulation by using a different strategy: accepting gifts but without giving any information in return, which the authors suggest produces a sense of self-reliance and confidence. I would argue that the examples of perpetrators trying to buy contact could be interpreted as indications of economic abuse directly towards the child because the perpetrator withholds money that the child is entitled to, using money as a means of control—not only towards the mother but also towards the child. The informants were aware of their own economic hardship as an effect of IPV and clearly wished for no contact with the perpetrator. The study highlights how children can have their own adversity as well as agency, regardless of the vulnerability of the non-abusive parent. Similarly, drawing from interviews with 15 mothers and 15 of their children, Katz (2016) found that not only did these children often resist the physical and emotional abuse of their mothers, but also financial control, for instance by defying the abuser's rules, by collectively hiding purchases and secretly going to the cinema. Coercive control (including economic abuse), however, may severely disempower children and adults alike, and hamper their resilience (for an elaborated discussion of the concept see also Katz et al., 2020; Stark, 2007; Walby & Towers, 2018).

A particularly striking finding, Sharp (2008) concludes from her interview study with 55 women in the UK, was the recurring overlap between economic abuse towards women and their children. Not only were the children indirectly affected by the economic abuse exerted against their mother, but in addition, the interviewed mothers reported how partners and ex-partners would steal the children's toys, Ipads, other belongings, and savings. In addition, the abuser could threaten children and have them involved in the abuse of their mother. One informant detailed how her ex-husband had their eldest daughter forward threats such as: "If your mum stops the

contact, I'll stop the maintenance money, then she can't pay rent, then you'll lose your house and then you'll have to come and live with me" (Sharp, 2008, p. 32).

The direct implications of economic abuse on children are only examined in two of the quantitative studies reviewed. A large longitudinal study with data collected from 20 American cities examined the effects of early childhood exposure to IPV on delinquency at age nine (Huang et al., 2015). Interestingly, exposure to IPV was measured as the mother's experiences of economic abuse and physical violence (thus not including other forms of IPV) in this study. The baseline data contained 4898 mothers and the last follow-up survey was conducted when the child was nine years old. Out of 4898 cases, 3400 children responded to the survey in year nine. Additionally, data were collected from teachers and parents. Both physical and economic abuse were found to have persistent and long-term effects on parenting and children. Regression estimates revealed that overall high levels of IPV increased the odds of neglect and physical punishment. Still, in comparison to physical violence, economic abuse had a stronger association with both neglect and child delinquency. The authors call for early interventions such as programs and policies that strengthen the parent-child bond and empower caregivers, since the negative effects of early trauma can be reversed with proper support (Huang et al., 2015). According to Voth Schrag et al. (2017), prior to their exploratory study there existed no research on young people's (adolescent) exposure to economically abusive tactics (EAT), including financial exploitation, economic control, and employment sabotage. Drawing from a sample of 105 girls aged 12–19 years with experiences from their involvement in the child welfare system and recruited for trauma-focused group treatment, the authors suggested that EAT may have a unique association with mental health indicators for girls who, in addition, are exposed to physical IPV. Nearly half of the sample reported having been exposed to moderate or high levels of EAT, indicating the need for including this type of IPV in screening tools designed for children (Voth Schrag et al., 2017).

3.2. Young People's Intimate Relationships and Economic Abuse in the Name of Honour

Recent studies suggest that IPV is at least as prevalent in young people's dating relationships as among adults (Korkmaz, 2021; Taylor & Mumford, 2016). Since no questions on economic abuse are included in any large-scale studies targeting adolescents, we have even less knowledge of the extent of this type of violence among youth. Out of the 146 records initially screened for this review, only four papers examine economic abuse in young people's intimate relationships (forced marriages excluded), all written in an American context. Drawing from an analytical sample of 728 10-to-18-year-olds surveyed for adolescent IPV, all of whom had a current or recent

dating relationship, the authors conclude that although only 8.8 percent reported having been economically controlled in their relation, 17.7 percent reported requests for lending money from their partner. Moreover, these money lending practices were associated with a heightened risk of serious threats and physical violence (Copp et al., 2016). A more recent survey (n = 1553) conducted by the same research team confirmed the conclusion that financial disagreement in young people's intimate relations contributes to conflicts that may escalate into violence. The authors argue for adding training in financial management to evidence-based violence prevention programs such as Safe Dates (Copp et al., 2020).

As mentioned in the introduction of the present article, the economic consequences of IPV, in general, are immense. Various types of abuse tend to have mutually reinforcing and cumulative effects. For example, economic control may be used to isolate and further psychologically and sexually abuse and exploit the victim. Out of fear of physical violence or because of visible marks from such violence, the victim may avoid going to class or working outside the home. Evidence on the economic effects of specifically adolescent IPV is presented in a longitudinal study with 498 women currently or formerly receiving welfare. This study demonstrated that adolescent IPV survivors completed significantly fewer years of education and earned significantly less than non-victimised women, also after controlling for several variables such as adult IPV (Adams et al., 2013). Another longitudinal study with 4898 mothers (mean age 26 at baseline) revealed that for those who at baseline reported being subjected to economic or physical IPV in particular, economic abuse tended to increase over time. Furthermore, regression analyses found a significant and negative association between economic abuse and the likelihood of marriage or cohabitation at year 5, indicating that economic abuse does not necessarily prevent women from ending abusive relationships. On the contrary, the authors assert that economic abuse may lead women to distrust abusers and to avoid more stable union formation with them. In conclusion, they call into question policies and practices that push marriage promotion, also in the context of IPV, arguing for a shifted focus toward violence prevention (Huang et al., 2013).

Child marriage and forced marriage are often understood to be intrinsically related to honour-based violence. Yet, from a global perspective, poverty stands out as the leading cause of child marriage. Far from all child marriages are arranged regarding protecting the family's honour. With child marriage, however, the circle of poverty continues (Ayga & Rampagane, 2013). Child marriage is a severe violation of children's rights with detrimental effects on health, education, and employment opportunities, increasing the risk of all forms of IPV and economic hardship. Narratives of informants who have been married off as minors are scarce. Moreover, research on this topic tends not to focus on economic abuse. An interview study with 15 women in rural Ghana

who had entered marriage as children is a contribution in this regard. To note, the women were more inclined to recognise economic abuse—the husband withholding money or refusing to economically provide for the family—as a form of violence or maltreatment, in comparison to sexual abuse. All informants were economically dependent on their husbands and with limited autonomy and few had any formal education (Amoah et al., 2021).

Several studies on honour-related violence towards young people and particularly girls comprise findings on economic abuse, although none of them elaborates on these findings to any great extent. A prevalence study on honour-based violence in Sweden, drawing from a survey of 15-year-olds (n = 6002), found higher levels of multiple forms of violence and control among respondents who experience honour norms in their families. Fifteen percent of girls in this group reported being subjected to material violence (having valuable items destroyed) in comparison to 7 percent of girls not living with honour norms (Strid, Baianstovu, & Enelo, 2021). The qualitative sub-study of the same project detailed how economic abuse appears to be a central feature in this context. According to both victimised youth and service providers, economic abuse was described as an effective way to control and limit victims' scope of action. Similar to economic abuse in intimate partner relations, the abused in the name of honour were often not allowed to have their own credit card or mobile phone (Baianstovu et al., 2019). Further, a Canadian interview study with 34 welfare professionals working in social work, education, healthcare, settlement, and law enforcement emphasised that forcing girls to work (at home or elsewhere) is a predominant example of financial abuse in the context of honour-based violence and oppression. The findings suggest that economic stress, trauma and mental health issues may further aggravate intergenerational conflicts in some migrant families (Blum et al., 2016; on economic abuse in transnational contexts see also Singh, 2019).

3.3. Economic Abuse and Parenting

As mentioned previously, child maintenance is a key issue concerning economic abuse. State policies in several countries are increasingly emphasising parental cooperation post-separation, which creates difficulties for parents who take the main responsibility for children and enhance the risk of continued economic abuse, also when other forms of violence have ended (Bruno, 2018b; Fernqvist & Sépulchre, 2021; Harris, 2015; Natalier, 2018). Importantly, comparative analysis demonstrates the potential of child maintenance to significantly contribute to income for single parents and thus reduce child poverty (Hakovirta & Jokela, 2019; Skinner et al., 2017). In a survey of 1357 single parents, published by the British NGO Gingerbread, only 16 percent stated that they received all the maintenance they were entitled to each month, 34 percent that they received no maintenance at all, and 86 percent that they considered the

Child Maintenance Services to allow their ex-partners to exert financial abuse towards them and their children by withholding maintenance (Richardson & Butler, 2021). Several studies suggest that fathers make considerations about maintenance according to which extent they perceive that the mother facilitates the relationship between them and the children and if they consider that she has earned it, based on how she behaved in their previous relationship (Skinner, 2013). Mothers, on the other hand, may avoid pursuing a formal child support order if they believe this could create tensions and negatively affect the father–child relationship. The welfare state places high demands on separated mothers to deal with economic hardship resulting from IPV. In an interview study with divorced mothers with experience of economic abuse in Sweden, a recurrent theme was the dilemma of having to choose between struggling for children’s rights to protection or provision. In one informant’s narrative:

I let him have everything. For the sake of the children, I don’t argue over money. We need peace and quiet. If this is how he must have it, then let him feel all our property is his....He went to the pawnshop with the children’s art....He is so greedy. The children need a desk, but can’t have it. Our oldest son [17 years old] is in pain; he really needs a proper bed but sleeps on a thin mattress....The children get some money from my friends, but I don’t tell him. He would take the money. (Bruno, 2018b, p. 9)

In the same article, court orders in welfare benefit appeals and contested contact cases were analysed, with the conclusion that financial abuse in the context of parental separation was a non-question in the domain of welfare benefits and the domain of child contact framed as a conflict between equal parties. Cooperation with the perpetrator is often required by the authorities (Eriksson & Ulmestig, 2021; Näsman & Fernqvist, 2015). In addition, mothers seeking assistance to obtain maintenance for their children may be punished or subjected to micro-aggressions from case managers (Fernqvist & Sépulchre, 2021; Natalier, 2017), controlling and disempowering them as parents in similar ways as their ex-partner do. However, studies also comprise examples of effective support from social services—emotionally as well as financially (Ulmestig & Eriksson, 2016).

In the US, where the safety net is considerably weaker than in, for example, Sweden, IPV is a leading cause of feminisation of homelessness. An interview study with 46 currently and formerly unhoused mothers reveals that a majority reported having been severely abused by partners, institutions, and authorities, and that reporting abuse often could deepen hardship. Public housing policies implied that the mothers could be evicted for behaviours of others, even if unaware of these. For instance, a mother of six children described how she was made homeless after the arrest of her

boyfriend for having marijuana worth 12 dollars (Bullock et al., 2020). Another policy, which adds to the hardship, is that when child support is formalised in the US, but not paid, low-income mothers who depend on food stamps and rent assistance are penalised for money they do not actually receive. Consequently, children most in need of support are the least likely to receive it (Harris, 2015).

4. Conclusion

Despite increasing evidence of the serious impact of economic abuse on adults, this scoping review shows that the prevalence and impact of children’s and young people’s exposure to, or direct victimisation of this type of, IPV is a marginalised and often unseen issue in research. In particular, children’s views and strategies to cope with economic abuse are almost entirely unknown. Nevertheless, several of the studies reviewed suggest detrimental effects of economic abuse on parents and children, which should be addressed by further research. For example, the large study by Huang et al. (2015) revealed that in comparison to physical violence, economic abuse had a stronger association with both neglect and child delinquency. Another theme is the significance and prevalence of economic abuse in different cultural contexts. Both quantitative (Strid, Baianstovu, & Enelo, 2021) and qualitative (Baianstovu et al., 2019; Blum et al., 2016) studies suggest that economic abuse is a prominent form of abuse in the context of honour-related violence and oppression. In essence, the present review confirms the need for intersectional perspectives in this area of research, since economic abuse is a multifaceted societal problem with considerably diverse implications for different groups of survivors (cf. Anitha, 2019; Bullock et al., 2020; Postmus et al., 2020; Singh, 2019).

Qualitative research on economic abuse remains of great importance, not least because such studies can capture more expressions of violence and with more nuances than can be captured in a survey. Since few questions about this type of abuse are usually included in prevalence studies on violence, the extent of the abuse may be underestimated (Leigh Doyle, 2020; Postmus et al., 2020). In addition, research indicates that informants tend to disclose experiencing more forms of economic abuse in qualitative interviews than they report within questionnaires, which illuminates the importance of using multiple research methods (Sharp, 2008). More knowledge is needed about the survivors’ own strategies, experiences, and needs—in general, but not least from children’s and young people’s own perspectives. The studies by Callaghan et al. (2018) and Katz (2016) are contributions in this regard, both casting light on children’s resistance to financial control. Still, these studies explore children’s experiences of coercive control more broadly and do not focus specifically on economic abuse.

In this review, studies that only focus on economic hardship resulting from violence, without any reports

or indications of economic behaviours as a means to exert control, exploit or in any other way cause harm, are not included. It could certainly be argued that the economic consequences of IPV are not the same as economic abuse. Furthermore, all financial disagreements within intimate partner relations or between ex-partners, parents and children or others in the household are not acts of violence. Yet, abuse can be more or less intentional. Drawing from a broad, multi-level understanding of violence (Strid, Humbert, et al., 2021) and a feminist tradition of continuum-thinking (Boyle, 2019; Kelly, 1988) it would be difficult to determine exactly when an unequal relationship becomes an abusive one, and when the economic impact of IPV is not also a part of the abuse. Providing an elaborated discussion on the various understandings and definitions of violence and abuse is outside the scope of this article. Both more theoretical and empirical explorations of different forms of violence, on several levels and in various contexts, are indeed required. In conclusion, I concur with Krigel and Benjamin (2021), among others, who underscore the need to critically examine the state's priorities and role concerning economic abuse and other manifestations of IPV. Children's and young people's adversity concerning all kinds of abuse must be taken into consideration, in research, policy, and professional practice. Research-based knowledge is crucial to improving policy, practice, and support measures aiming at reducing poverty and enhancing social justice.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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