Abstract (summary)
This qualitative research turns to 24 male members of the Ethiopian Jewish community living in Israel to probe their feelings and thoughts concerning the changes that have occurred to their traditions and community post migration, and gain insight into the disproportionate rise in domestic murder and subsequent suicide committed by males in their community. During semi-structured interviews conducted in Amharit, the interviewees opposed the dominant discourse that cast murder and suicide as pathologies resulting from Ethiopian males’ failure to assimilate. In a resistant discourse, they revealed the oppression and destruction of a cultural heritage and identity and their struggles to regain their family and community. Paradoxically, these men perceived the Israeli democratic system of law and order as discriminating against men, and as depriving the Ethiopian community of the basic right to choose its own traditions and spiritual leaders (Kessim and Shmagaleh) who helped resolving marital disputes. Fearing court restraining orders, arrest, and imprisonment in the midst of a cultural and social void, Ethiopian males felt isolated and alienated with no community support. In a last resistant effort to regain their dignity while protesting against the oppression of the Israeli system of law and social order that discriminated against men and a dominant culture that had destroyed their community, Ethiopian males killed their spouse and committed suicide. [PUBLICATION ABSTRACT]

Ethiopian males account for the double acts of murder and suicide committed by males in Ethiopian families post-migration to Israel

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This qualitative research turns to male members of the Ethiopian community living in Israel to gain insight, based on their narratives, about the changes that have occurred to their family and community post migration that they may account for the disproportionate rise of spouse murder and subsequent suicide committed by males of their community. Ethiopian Jews living in Israel are 125,000 in number and compose 1.5 % of the Israeli population. Of these, 81,000 were born in Ethiopia and the remainder was born in Israel. Civil war, famine, and religious faith prompted the state of Israel to rescue the Ethiopian Jewry during two main rescue operations: Operation Moses (1981-1984) and Operation Solomon (1991) (Habib, Halaban-Eilat, Shatz, & Almog, 2010).

In Ethiopia, the Jewish community was patriarchal, with a hierarchy of authority based on age (elders), family authority by gender (males), and ethnic function (Kessim-rabbis or Shmagaleh-mediators) of its members (Ben-Ezer, 1992, 2002). Men worked in agriculture as farmers, blacksmiths, or potters, and were the only financial providers of the family. Women married at around 12 years old, and moved to live with the husband's extended family. They remained at home to fulfill the traditional roles of spouse and mother. The father, head of his family, made all decisions regarding other family members and represented the family in front of the community (Ben-Ezer, 1987; Doleve-Gandelman, 1990; Reitzes, 2008)

Patterns of communications in the Ethiopian community are regulated by a code of honor prohibiting from those occupying a subordinate position in the hierarchy of authority to argue, disagree, or say "no!" to a person of superior authority (father, husband or Kess). Disagreement or refusal may, at most, be expressed by remaining silent (Ben-Ezer, 2002; Kacen, 2006). Women and children who occupy a subordinate position in this hierarchy are not allowed to initiate a conversation, argue or disagree with the father or husband who is higher in authority. Saying "No!" refusing and arguing rather than remaining silent are signs of defiance, disrespect and lack of proper education that demand correction (Ben-Ezer, 1987; 1992; Kacen, 2006).
The father/husband had therefore the right and responsibility to chastise, educate and discipline his wife and/or children upon transgression of this code. The minimization and legitimization of domestic violence as educational beating is shown by the lack of words in the Amharic language for “domestic violence”, which is substituted by the terms "disagreement" and/or "marital dispute" when referring to this phenomenon (Kacen 2006). When a couple, in Ethiopia, could not resolve a marital dispute they would appeal to various circles of arbitration, negotiation, and mediation. Parents and other family members were the first to help in negotiation. They had the authority to direct, if not threaten, the couple to reach peace – Arak. In case the family was unsuccessful in achieving Arak and a woman continued to be abused by her husband, she could escape to the neighbors or go back to her parents. The dispute was then brought to the arbitration of the Shmagaleh, elders of the communities, whose authority, discretion, and impartiality was undisputed by all the members of the community including the abusive husband (Ben-Ezer, 2002).

The collectivist orientation of the Ethiopian community regards individual members’ identity as inseparable from the extended family and community (Ben-Ezer, 2002; Kacen, 2006). Consequently, the primary consideration of the Shmagaleh when resolving a marital dispute, is to preserve the social order and community’s welfare. The personal well-being of individual members is of secondary importance (Ben-Ezer, 2002; Kacen, 2006). Arbitration may last days or weeks during which the couple and their families appear in front of the informal court of Shmagaleh until peace- Arak is reached. If the husband is found guilty of abuse and peace-Avak between the couple has been reached, the husband will be summoned to go to his father-in-law, kneel on his knees, and ask for forgiveness. Women are exempted from this ceremony since it is judged too humiliating for women. Appeal to the Kess or Kessim, the Rabbi(s) of the community, is of a last resort in marital conflict resolution. The Kess’ presence and authority, usually, has a deterrent effect on the couple and push them to resolve their dispute. Nevertheless, if despite the Kess’ interference domestic peace was not reached, then the Kess and Shmagaleh would recommend the dissolution of the marriage (Ben-Ezer, 2002; Kacen, 2006).

Post migration to Israel, Ethiopian males facing structural dislocation with jobs no longer relevant in the Israeli economy. Being unemployed and working at best for minimum wage they no longer were able to provide for the financial needs of their family. (Habib, Halaban-Eilat, Shatz, & Almog, 2010; Fenster, 1998; Reitzes 2008).
As of 2006, the employment rate of Ethiopian immigrants, aged 22-64 years was estimated to be 55 percent. In the same year approximately 60 percent of Ethiopian families were under the care of social services (17,114 families) due to economic hardship and 44 percent of them were classified as having marital problems and/or with children at risk (Habib, Halaban-Eilat, Shatz, & Almog, 2010).

Based on the government official report and newspapers (police data being unavailable to the public), domestic violence, murder and suicide in the Ethiopian family were reported to have increased over the past decade (Loten, 2007; Kraft, 2007). In 2005, 53 percent of the charges brought to the police for intimate partner violence were initiated by women of Ethiopian origin. This percentage increased to 73 percent in 2006 (Loten, 2007). In the same years (2005-2006), males of Ethiopian origin were estimated to compose nine of 28 domestic murders reported to the police in Israel (Loten, 2007). Within a decade, between 2002-2012, 28 males of Ethiopian origin had murdered their spouse and subsequently committed or attempted to commit suicide (Blumenfeld & Kubovich, 2012) The suicide statistics of the Israeli Ministry of Health for the years 2007-2009 also shows that in comparison to Israeli males of the same age, the suicide rate of males of Ethiopian origin aged was 5.9 times higher for ages 15-24 and 5.8 times higher for aged 25-44, (Ministry of Health Statistics, 2011).

The above figures have been provided as evidence of the intense acculturative stress experienced by males of Ethiopian origin in the process of migration from a traditional patriarchal to a modern democratic society (Arieli, Gilat, & Aycheh, 1994, 1996; Arieli, Gilat, & Izak, 1994; Beiser, 1990; Kacen, 2006; Reitzes, 2008). Within a psychiatric discourse, Ethiopian males' loss of status and authority, and failure to acculturate had resulted in severe pathologies and consequent antisocial behavior including domestic murder, and suicide (Wallach, Weingram & Avitan, 2010).

Within a Feminist discourse, domestic violence has usually been explained within the framework of patriarchy, and the economic, social and political oppression of women in the family and society (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Feminist research focusing on the dynamics of migration and the rise of domestic violence post migration show that the above mentioned concepts are not insufficient to explain this phenomenon, especially in the case of families originating from patriarchal societies (Adelman, Erez, & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003; Erez, Adelman and Gregory, 2009). Post migration males from patriarchal society often experience a loss of status and
downward economic mobility due to their inability to gain employment. In contrast, females’ social status increases as they enter the work force and acquire greater social and economic power. Husband-wife and father-children role reversals observed to occur post migration often increased immigrant males’ social isolation and alienation (Campbell, 1992; Krulfeld, 1994). Consequently, immigrant males’ inability to accept the change in the balance of power in the family and renegotiate traditional gender-roles and communication patterns are additional factors that must be taken into consideration when explaining the rise of domestic violence post migration (Adelman, Erez, & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003; Erez, Adelman & Gregory, 2009; Hyman, Guruge & Mason, 2008).

While emphasizing the relationship between traditional gender-role attitudes, migration and increased risk of domestic violence, Feminists researchers rightly refuse to legitimate domestic violence in terms of culture, and ethnic traditions (Adelman, Erez, & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003; Erez, Adelman & Gregory, 2009). Rather than minimizing this phenomenon as educational beating, they demand the criminalization of such behavior and the processing of the batterer through the criminal justice system with zero tolerance for any violence against women post migration (Adelman, Erez, & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003; Erez, Adelman & Gregory, 2009).

Without legitimizing any violence against women this study adopts a critical post-modern perspective that deconstructs expert knowledge as another form of domination and cultural control. By unveiling Eurocentric conceptual categories of civilized self, progress and modernization imposed by dominant cultures on subordinate ones, this study is expected to reveal the contours of destruction and oppression of immigrant cultures and more specifically that of the Ethiopian community living Israel (Elias, 1978; Montreuil, & Bourhis, 2001).

Foucault’s (1978, 1980) argued that power and knowledge join in the dominant discourse of the powerful to produce a body of apparent self-evident truths–knowledge that controls the mind of the oppressed. Similarly, the concepts of cultural control and hegemony ideology have been used to refer to the invisible mind-control mechanisms that aim at civilizing subordinate groups and persuade them to participate in their own domination (Elias, 1978; Kurtz, 1996; Nader, 1997). Nader (1997) emphasizes that individuals in Western societies are not exempt from the same controlling processes that permeate all realms of the social life to produce conformity.
Yet, their belief in free will and choice often induces Western individuals’ conceptual blindness to the contradictions veiled beneath the surface of the dominant discourse (Nader, 1997, Scott, 1990).

Foucault (1978), Scott (1990), and Nader (1997) join in the dialectic of power and resistance to show that every dominant discourse includes contradictions and tensions that undermine it and give rise to an alternative resistant discourse. Hall (1999) also adds that to be influential, the posited self evident "truths" of the dominant discourse must in the first place be recognized as meaningful. Without such recognition, these messages lack legitimacy and will be met with opposition and resistance.

Israel has witnessed the disastrous consequences of cultural oppression and assimilationist policies that targeted Mizrahi immigrants originating from Arab countries in the 1950's to putatively save them from "their Levantine, primitive, backward oriental culture" (Shohat, 1988). Alienation, marginalization, and discrimination of the Mizrahi have given rise to a militant movement of the "Black Panthers" who have fought for the recognition of Mizrahi cultural heritage and traditions as legitimate and worthy of being included into public school curricula and textbooks (Shohat, 1999). The relationship between the cultural oppression and suicide among immigrants has been well documented in immigrant receiving countries such as Iceland, Israel, and Finland, whose dominant acculturation policy was assimilation (Berry, 1992; Berry & Kim, 1988; Geiger, 2002; Thorlindsson, & Bjarnason, 1998). The greater the demand for assimilation imposed on the immigrants against their will, the greater perception of discrimination, anomie, and alienation, and the greater the rate of suicide committed by immigrant group members (Berry & Kim, 1988; Geiger, 2002; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Horenczyk, Schmitz, 2003 Thorlindsson, & Bjarnason, 1998).

Despite the failures of assimilation policies worldwide (Berry, 1992; Montreuil, & Bourhis, 2001) and the dominant rhetoric of multicultural integration, the Israeli Ministry of Absorption continues to regard assimilation as the only "logical" strategy to absorb the Ethiopian “primitive and backward” culture and tradition into the melting pot of the Israeli Western-style dominant culture (Ben-Ezer, 1987, 1992; Fenster, 1998; Reitzes, 2008; Kacen, 2006). Given males privileged status in their community of origin Ethiopian men were assumed to have greater stakes in maintaining their “old ways” and therefore be resilient to change. In contrast the assumed subjugated status of Ethiopian
women and consequent lack of satisfaction rendered them a prime target of assimilationist policies that promised equal rights in a Democratic society (Fenster, 1998; Reitzes, 2008).

To expedite the process of assimilation, members of Ethiopian origin were dispersed throughout Israel and the concentration of Ethiopian Jews in each neighborhood was set to 4 percent (Yiftachel, 1998). The lack of consideration for the Ethiopian immigrants’ desire to remain with their extended family and community often resulted in the report of feelings of isolation with no community members to turn to in case of trouble (Benita, & Noam, 1995; Benita, Noam & Levi, 1993). It appears that an additional impediment to the integration of Ethiopian immigrants in Israel was the lack of recognition by the State of Israel of the respected spiritual leaders of this community and its informal mechanisms of social control. The Kaisim, "Rabbis" of the Ethiopian community were rejected by Orthodox Rabbinical movement for their lack of formal Rabbinical training (Yaar, 2003) and the Shmagaleh lost all authority as ultimate mediators in marital disputes and community regulation (Reitzes, 2008).

In Israel, the adversarial system of jurisprudence and the rule of law was to substitute the informal processes of mediation and conflict resolution. Blame was polarized onto one of the parties, marital dispute was defined in legal terms as domestic violence and criminalized. Ethiopian men who chastised their spouses were labeled criminals who could only be deterred by incarceration and women were instructed to resist violence, call the police, and obtain a court restraining order against the batterer (Kacen, 2006; Reitzes, 2008).

This research turns to male members of the Ethiopian community to probe their feelings and thoughts concerning the changes that have occurred in the Ethiopian community post migration, and from their accounts gain insight into the relationships between these changes and the disproportionate rise of domestic murder and suicide that occurs in their community. Adopting Foucault (1978), Scott (1990), and Nader (1997) dialectic of power and resistance within the context of immigration this study expects to reveal Ethiopian males' hidden scripts of resistance to the oppression and destruction of their culture and situate males’ acts of murder and suicide within the framework of resistant struggle to oppression.

Method
The sample included 24 males of Ethiopian origin recruited from four towns: Safed,
Haifa, Petach Tikvah, and Ramle, through a snowball informant method, by the acquaintance, and family members of the interviewers who were themselves of Ethiopian origin. The age of the participants ranged between 30 to 66 years, with a mean age of 46 years, and a median age of 51 years. The older participants aged 51 years and above had emigrated to Israel in years 1984-1985, and the younger half emigrated to Israel between 1990 to 1991. The socioeconomic level of the participants varied based on age, the level of education, and employment status. The older participants often lacked formal education, while those who had immigrated to Israel in their youth graduated high school while in boarding schools. The older participants who had worked in Ethiopia in agriculture were often unemployed and unemployable in Israel. The participants below the median age worked in an absorption center, in the municipality, and in factories, or as security guards checking bags for bombs at the entrances of supermarkets. These data are supported by the statistics of the Brookdale Institute on the socioeconomic status of immigrants from Ethiopian origin living in Israel (Habib, Halaban-Eilat, Shatz, & Almog 2010). The marital status of male participants was as follows: 18 were married, six had married for the second time (of them, two were widows), four were divorced, and two were widows and did not remarry. The number of children in the family ranged between one to seven children.

Once the purpose of the study was explained the participants’ consent was obtained. To preserve the participants' anonymity, all names were replaced by pseudonyms starting by Interviewee followed by the number, e.g., Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2, etc.

**Instrument**

The in-depth semi-structured individual interview was the main research tool of this study. The interview started as an informal conversation with the opening sentence: "How was it for men in Ethiopia and how is it today?" As the conversation progressed the interview became more focused and included an interview guide relating to the topics of male status and authority pre and post migration, women's changing roles, disciplining, corrective beating of women and children, marital-conflict resolution in Ethiopia and Israel, law enforcement and social control, and the rise of murder and suicide in the Ethiopian community.
Procedure

All interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and were conducted in the private atmosphere of the interviewees' home, at a time that was convenient to them. Several research participants were, at first, reluctant to participate in the interview until rapport was established. The interviewers, themselves of Ethiopian origin, conveyed to the participants a keen interest in finding out about their own cultural heritage. They specified their lack of affiliation with the Department of Social Services or any other governmental agency, and that anything said would remain anonymous. Since most of the respondents refused to be tape-recorded, to ease the process of simultaneous writing and listening, two interviewers who had the command of Hebrew and Amharit were present during the interview, with one interviewing and the other writing word-for-word the content of the conversation between interviewer and interviewee. The norms of the Ethiopian culture regulating respectful communication with those in authority are, (1) do not discuss personal matters, (2) provide very short "yes" or "no" answers, unless explicitly asked otherwise, (3) do not dissent or keep silent in case of dissent, and (3) be reserved, and do not reveal your feelings. These norms led the researchers to adopt a focused interview style. The interviewees' initial laconic answers were, therefore, followed by a frequent use of prompts such as "Could you please tell me more", "What do you mean?", or “Could you please give an example” to request from the interviewees to elaborate upon their answer and/or clarify their answers by providing examples.

Data Analysis

Content analysis of information-rich interviews followed Strauss' (1987) constant comparative method. The interviews were transcribed and translated, and transcripts were read several times, for similarities and differences. Content analysis of the interviews relied on men’s memories of how life was in Ethiopia. These memories might have been idealized since idealization of the country of origin is often part of the acculturation process of disenchantment and frustration post migration (Gibson, 2000; Hofstede, 1997). Nevertheless, the stories the interviewees are telling about their lives in Ethiopia in comparison to their lives now in Israel are socially powerful and analytically important. Therefore, he questions of "objectivity” and fact validation are not relevant to this study (Bruner, 2004; Denzin, 1989; Holsti, 1969). By using direct quotes from the narratives, the authors allowed the readers to verify the reliability of the inferences and to comprehend Ethiopian males' subjective experience.
in their own words and from their own perspective (Bruner, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2001).

Results

Ethiopians males roles and status pre and post migration to Israel

When addressing the question, "What is a man for you?" the interviewees invariably answered to this question by reference to Ethiopian traditions. They mentioned the clear demarcation of gender roles and authority in the Ethiopian family and the respect and conveyed onto family members based on their fulfilling the expectations and responsibility attached to these roles. In their own words,

In Ethiopia my father was not more than my mother, they respected each other. Each one had his role. My father worked outside the house. This is how it was in Ethiopia. (Interviewee 11)

A man holds and manages the household. A man is an authority figure in the family. A man is owed respect. He is the leader of the house and a role model for his children. (Interviewee 21)

In Ethiopia hard work gave men authority and respect. In Israel the lack of employment, was an offense to males’ dignity. Some of the Ethiopian males interviewed conveyed the loss of confidence they had in themselves and in their ability to control their destiny.

In Ethiopia I was working harder for a living, but I had more confidence. Today I feel lack of self-confidence and loss of control because many things no longer depend on me. (Interviewee 3)

The interviewees also stressed all the respect women gave to their husbands while she attended to their needs. Their own words,

I expected food to be ready and that my wife waits for me quietly until I finish eating. Then my woman would bring a bucket of water and wash my feet. In Ethiopia, it was good, the husband was respected. Here there is not enough respect. (Interviewee 2)
The woman attacks man's respect when she does not do her job properly (Interviewee 9).

In Israel, women status changed they worked and assisted in the financial support of the family. Several of the interviewees, especially the more educated and younger among them, explained that women’s increased status in no way contradicted the mutual respect that should exist between spouses. In the words of the these interviewees,

Women have another status here. There they were only mothers. Here they go to work and make an income like me (Interviewee 6)

I do not believe that men have lost their status. Once men decided and women remained at home. In Israel, there is equality between men and women. If my women goes out to work and helps in the finances of the family, it does not mean that I have lost my status. We should explain to some men that this is not an offense to their status and respect. (Interviewee 14)

In Ethiopia, men were at the top; women were at the bottom. Here they have the same status. We have to respect each other. For some men this is hard to accept. (Interviewee 12)

To other interviewees, especially the older interviewees and less educated among them, it was hard, at least in the beginning, to accept that their spouse was “blooming” and no longer occupying a subordinate status. In their words

Women did not know anything else other than to serve men. Here women go to work and support their family. In the beginning it was hard to live with it. She is blooming. She learns the language and she has friends. I came to accept it even though it is hard because I was used to see men at the highest status.
To a few interviewees the change the balance of power and women’s increased status were perceived to be an affront to males’ respect and dignity. In their own words,

The Israeli culture is not easy with us [men]. It made life difficult for men when changing the balance of power at home. (Interviewee 1)

In Ethiopia, I was everything for the family. In Israel, it is hard. Men have lost their status and authority. (Interviewee 6)

In Ethiopia, a woman was submissive to her husband, like a son to his father. In Ethiopia men and adults were respected. Lack of respect hurts a man. (Interviewee 4)

Ethiopian male honor stayed in Ethiopian; we cannot bring it back. (Interviewee 7)

Transgression the Ethiopian code of respectful communication
Comparing past and present, the Ethiopian males interviewed in this research mentioned the many ways in which women stopped honoring the code of respectful communication. They no longer listened or paid attention to what they said and constantly challenged their authority on money issues, education and work. In their own words,

A woman attacks a man’s respect if she does not listen to him. I feel I have lost my honor. (Interviewee 7)

Women never argued. If they did not like something they would speak with other women. If there was conflict we would try to solve it. (Interviewee 5)

A women raises her head, opens her mouth; things she would not dare doing in Ethiopia. The words that she says make me very angry. “Give me money, learn to drive, and I want to learn to drive.” These words attack my sense of respect. (Interviewee 6)
Some of the interviewees attributed the breakdown of respectful communication and consequent affront to their dignity to the bad influence the Israeli culture had on women. In Israel, women had learned to yell, became arrogant and, constantly humiliated their husband. In the words of the interviewees,

The Israeli culture had a bad influence on Ethiopian women. Women are arrogant and speak more. They behave with lack of respect toward a man. (Interviewee 11)

Lack of respect hurts a man. Here I do not have the power that I had there. (Interviewee 6)

Children were also reported as no longer respecting or obeying their fathers’ authority. In the words of one of the interviewees,

In Ethiopia, children looked down, never straight into their father's eyes. The father spoke and children listened and obeyed. Here, children argue and do not listen to their parents. I do not see any advantage in Israeli education. (Interviewee 13)

The duty to discipline women and children

The Ethiopian tradition commanded of males to discipline their defiant and rebellious spouse and/or children. Humiliation, threats, psychological pressure, curses, raised voices, and glances of distain [“dirty looks”] were usually sufficient for husbands to assert their will and regain the authority and respect due to them. In the interviewees' own words,

When she nags too much, I raise a voice and threaten divorce. I do not curse, but raise my voice. (Interviewee 2)

It all depends on the woman. If she was quiet with a dirty look or raising one’s voice, then that was enough. If she continues to argue and there is yelling, it may escalate to battering. Then, she can run away, and a whole process of negotiation is initiated until we reach peace. (Interviewee 6)
In general, the argument finishes with me having the last word. If she continues, I give her a dirty look and then she stops. (Interviewee 4)

Occasionally, raising one's hand, pinching, and beating were normative legitimate means for correcting children’s and spouse's lack of respect and unruly behavior. The interviewees mentioned in their narratives the time and circumstances under which educational beating was appropriate:

A father wants to educate his childlike in Ethiopia; but he cannot. In Ethiopia we would threaten the child that he would be beaten up, or you pinch him once and then made the gesture of pinching with my fingers and he understood that I did not like what he did. (Interviewee 15)

In time there would be yelling. Giving a small hit and it was finished. They say if you do not, you do not educate her, you do not love her. I think that at times hitting is too much, but at others she really deserves it! (Interviewee 10)

When she despises me, yells, or insult me at home. A woman who speaks disrespectfully to her husband can make him violent. Beating when educational is acceptable. (Interviewee 4).

One of the interviewees shared with us an incident that had led him to raise his hand on his spouse,

In Ethiopia my first wife did not give me respect when I came back home. She was doing everything with a lot of malice and contempt, and the food was not ready and not tasty. I was upset and angry. In the end, I raised my hand to her. (Interviewee 6).

Informal means of controlling violence against women
In Ethiopia, running away and complaining to the neighbors, to the husband's parents, and finally to one's parents, were for women facing an abusive husband normative escape routes prescribed by tradition. In the words of interviewees,
When a woman was beaten in Ethiopia she would run to the neighbors or go to the adults in the family, first to the father of her husband, to his brother, and in the last resort report to her family. (Interviewee 3)

In Ethiopia, the neighbors intervened. Disputes were settled by neighbors, uncles and parents. In this country, every man is out for himself. (Interviewee 9)

She ran away to her parents because I raised my voice at her. I looked for her there and found her there. I convinced her to come back after I apologized in front of her parents. (Interviewee 2)

The interviewees explained that when the extended family intervention was not sufficient they would go to the Shmagaleh, the elders of the community. They invariably emphasized that the solutions proposed by these negotiators were impartial and did not discriminate against men. Even when a husband was summoned to leave his home, he was helped to rebuild a new life. In their own words,

The elders of the community would solve the problems without discrimination and while considering what is good for men. (Interviewee 1)

In case of conflict, we try to solve it at home. If we cannot, we go to the Shmagaleh, the elders of the community. (Interviewee 2)

In the worst case when a man had to leave his family, the community would help him build a new life. (Interviewee 17)

While accepting the Shmagaleh’s solutions and community interventions as legitimate, the interviewees vehemently opposed outside interference of the dominant culture as aggravating conflicts. In their own words,

I raise my voice and curse in Amharit and say "Why did I come here to this fucked up country!" In Ethiopia there was always someone to turn to. Conflict stayed in the close circle of the extended family. Today it is much more complicated – nothing stays in the family. (Interviewee 17)
All the family members would help the couple; here everyone is against men. (Interviewee 13)

There are too many outside interventions that blow family disputes out of proportion and create a mess. (Interviewee 20)

Change in attitude concerning educational beating
Many of the interviewees had changed their views about chastising women. They realized that even when “educational” beating when women who challenged their authority was not acceptable. To minimize the gravity of their actions, in a manner of apology, they often explained that they had used beating only at the beginning of their marriage, in conformity with the Ethiopian code of honor, and in an attempt to educate their freshly wed spouse. In their own words,

The first time I raised my hand was early in my marriage. She was young and did not understand too much. (Interviewee 7)

When we were newly married, her parents invited us to their house. She wanted to stay there and refused to come back with me. On the way back home, I took care of the matter and made sure that she does not do it again. (Interviewee 3)

They had come to the realization that beating, as a means of regaining power, and consequent feelings of overpowering their rebellious spouses were, after all, an illusion of power rather than the assertion of power. In their own words,

I felt good with myself because I felt that I made her weaker.
(Interviewee 6)

Hitting helps restore your honor – It is just a feeling, not the truth.
(Interviewee 7)

Condemnation of social workers’ intervention
Despite the recognition that spouse beating was an illusion of power, the interviewees condemned social workers’ intervention for always taking women side, labeling men as
bad and violent and brainwashing women to call the police to expel their home. In the words of the interviewees,

The social workers create the problem. They are the ones who execute men. There is discrimination. They automatically take the women’s side. They see men as a bad element that prevents the family from functioning properly. They want to" help" women by taking the man out of his family. (Interviewee 15)

It is clear that they discriminate against men. The social workers teach women: "If he yells and does not want to bring money, it is dangerous, you have to complain." The problem is that they put in women’s heads all kind of ideas. And women follow them. (Interviewee 18)

In Israel there are institutions that push women to complain. A man is helpless and cannot do anything. (Interviewee 6)

Fathers have lost their authority because of the language and outside intervention – welfare agents have gone too far. (Interviewee 11)

**Blaming women as instigating men’s violence and consequent fear of being arrested**

The interviewees blamed women as instigating their spouse’s anger and pushing him to become violent, so that they can the police and have him arrested. In the words of the interviewees,

In Ethiopia, women had no rights. Here because of the women’s rights they cause men to lose their temper and become violent. (Interviewee 2)

The woman does it on purpose to push the man to become violent so she can call the police and lock him up. She curses, does not prepare food on time, she looks at him disdainfully so that he reacts negatively. It is as if she is waiting to be beaten. (Interviewee 3)

Here, it is forbidden to yell to raise your hand. Women bring a situation where you have to do what they want [raise your hand] so they can finish the story and liberate themselves by getting rid of their husband. (Interviewee 12)
Some of the interviewees shared with the interviewers the constant fear of losing control, becoming violent and being arrested. In their own words,

It is a problem in this country to argue with a woman. I leave the house so as not to turn violent. I try not to swear. (Interviewee 3)

She despises me, treats me bad, ignores me and behaves as if she does not hear me. She says, “Shut up! Who asked you?” In many ways, beating helps to understand. Unfortunately, the law does not allow it and that's why our women take revenge on their husbands. They say, "I will send you to jail. Who do you think you are?" (Interviewee 3)

Here fathers have lost their rights; they are scared to educate their children. Fathers who hit their child find themselves at the police station. (Interviewee 15)

Condemnation of the dominant system of formal control
The interviewees explained that by putting wives against their husbands and children against their fathers, the Israeli dominant culture and its system of formal control had done more harm than good to the Ethiopian family. They had contributed to destroy males' authority as husbands and as fathers and to annihilate the bonds that united them to their children. The interviewees explained how helpless Ethiopian males had become in Israel. In their own words,

Instead of solving problems they create new ones. A man is expelled from his home, he is humiliated. They really destroy him. (Interviewee 20)

Children answer back and do not respect what I say. In this country there are all kinds of control and some people prevent me from doing what I must be doing—educating my children. (Interviewee 6)

In the Israeli culture men have lost all authority to educate their children. (Interviewee 1)
In Israel fathers no longer have ties with their children. They are helpless; they no longer know what is permitted and what is forbidden. (Interviewee 14)

Accounting for the disintegration of family and community bonds

The interviewees explained that the constant threat of outside intervention by the welfare services and by agents of law and social control had destroyed the social bonds that united Ethiopian males with their family and community. In the interviewees' words,

The bonds in Ethiopian villages were warm and intense and everyone knew what was happening to the other. If someone was not behaving right we immediately felt it. Everyone would help; even neighbors who were not related to the family would come to help. This strong support and help gave strength even to those who had extreme thoughts. In Israel I barely see my neighbor. I just tell him Shalom and that it. It is social isolation. (Interviewee 17)

The problem in Israel is with too much dependence on the Israeli law and courts. If someone is not okay we go with the law and report him and then he is arrested. If you go by the law and he is arrested the whole family disintegrates. Relationships change and are no longer the same. If you find this and that law to make me a transgressor, then I am no longer your father. I detach myself from the relationship and our bonds are broken. This is not simple. (Interviewee 16)

In their narratives, the interviewees opposed a dominant culture and mechanism of social control that implicitly rejected their traditions and cultures. To support their claim they mentioned the lack of recognition by the Israeli culture and institutions of their religious leaders, Kessim, and their mediators the Shmagaleh. In their own words,
That they did not accept the Kessim and their status as Rabbis hurt the Ethiopians and their culture, and their pride and especially their Jewishness. (Interviewee 11)

I guess we cannot deny reality. Our generation is humiliated. It started with our Rabbis, the Kessim who were humiliated by the Rabbinical Court. Then, men received a blow in the name of the law and equality. (Interviewee 3)

In the midst of an emotional and cultural void, with no spiritual leaders to guide them, Ethiopian males felt annihilated, isolated, and miserable. In their own words,

In Ethiopia women were quiet and did not need too much attention. Here, women are at the center and they switched roles with the men. The system has taken men off the stage and women are the only important actors. From a society of men we became a society of women. The system is responsible for male frustration. (Interviewee 12)

Women in Israel are too liberated! Look how miserable men are. They sit in prison and women rejoice and think they are important. (Interviewee 3)

Women who are liberated always threaten to kick men out of the home. (Interviewee 7)

**Accounting for males’ murder and suicide**

When accounting for the domestic murder and suicide the interviewee emphasized men’s alienation and isolation from the community and its support system, coupled with the constant threat of arrest, imprisonment, and expulsion from their family. Facing the disintegration of the family and the community and having no one to turn to, males ultimately killed their spouse and committed suicide. In the words of the interviewees,
I believe that men commit suicide because of honor. In Ethiopia, women and children respected the father, and the neighbors respected each other. We all lived together. Here, we have been dispersed and we do not know people or neighbors. Here, men have no one to talk to, someone of authority. His head goes on fire. He no longer knows what he is doing. He kills her and himself. (Interviewee 18)

All suicide starts from a bad interpretation of the social worker. They do not understand the cause of violence. Had they understood, it would be easy to correct. Ethiopians want to keep their Ethiopian culture. Israeli society is alienating them from it. (Interviewee 5)

As much as I understand, a married couple fights the social worker, and the police tell him to leave. Now he tells himself, “Where I will go?” He does not have a home or money. He asks himself, “How can I be like that all my life?” Therefore, he goes and kills his wife and commits suicide. (Interviewee 12)

In the interviewees' narratives emerged a strong protest against discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes of institutions that were blind to the Ethiopian culture. Change in their own eyes had to be gradual and culturally sensitive.

The state has to understand the culture from which we came and that we cannot change habits in a minute. Things that are forbidden in Israel were OK in Ethiopia, like educational authority and beating. Here they are called abuse. (Interviewee 15)

Change has to start by the state's recognition of the Smagaleh and the informal means of conflict resolution that take place in our community. Social workers have to respect our privacy, respect Ethiopian men. Social workers are murdering Ethiopian males. (Interviewee 20)

*Israeli cultural control and hegemony ideology*
Proud of their heritage, the interviewees condemned the Israeli culture that stigmatized them as primitive. In fact, the Israeli culture had much to learn from Ethiopian traditions and from the way members of the Ethiopian community related to each other. In the words of the interviewees,

They relate to us as if we are backward and do not understand. They are surprised when we understand something. (Interviewee 3)

The problem in Israel is that they try to emphasize the parts that are missing in our culture and they do not try to relate to it. We do not argue with them out of respect, but the Israelis look at our behavior as a sign of weakness and inferiority. Israelis have much to learn. They must learn how to behave respectfully toward each other. (Interviewee 19)

The Israeli culture is a culture with no family values. (Interviewee 5)

**A black Ethiopians’ resistant discourse**

In an alternative discourse, the interviewees expressed the pride of being black and Ethiopians that they wanted to teach to their children. In the interviewees' words,

We have accepted the fact that we live here. The culture is not our culture, the color is not our color, and the place is not our place. It is like they took you from the moon and put you somewhere else. (Interviewee 11)

I am proud to be Ethiopian. Children have to be proud of their color, of their culture. We have a strong culture. We have to be together, united. (Interviewee 13)

Our children should be proud of their heritage, of their food and their color. We have a great culture. Here there is racism; they call them black. I am proud of my heritage. (Interviewee 14)

**Discussion**

This qualitative study adopts Foucault (1978), Scott (1990), and Nader (1997) dialectic of power and resistance when deconstructing the Israeli dominant discourse
of assimilation and the expert knowledge that explains Ethiopian males domestic murder and violence as a pathology resulting from intense acculturative stress. In a bottom-up perspective while conducting in-depth interviewees this qualitative study empowered Ethiopian males to show, in their own words and from their own perspective the contradictions included in dominant discourse and account in an alternative resistant discourse for the disproportionate rate of Ethiopian Israeli men who had murdered their wives and thereafter committed suicide in their community. This research is unique in that it turned to the males of the Ethiopian community to gain insight into the impact of immigration on domestic murder and subsequent suicide.

It is to be emphasized that gaining access to this relatively closed Ethiopian community and getting its members to provide their views and elaborate honest responses was not easy given the code regulating respectful communication patterns that demanded to provide short "yes" or "no" answers, to be reserved, without revealing one's feelings. Being themselves members of the Ethiopian community and sharing the same code of honor, the interviewers had also to be convinced of the importance of interviewing the members of their community with constant requests for probes, clarifications and elaborations, which meant for both interviewees and interviewers to transgress their cultural code. Being attributed the status of researchers high respect was conferred by the interviewees onto the interviewers. In contrast, being an elder in the Ethiopian community conferred status and authority to the interviewees, and commanded the deference and respect of the interviewers. These communication dilemmas were often partially resolved thanks to the genuine interest expressed by the interviewers to know more about their own culture. Conducting the interviewees in Amharit increased rapport and empowered the interviewees to share part of their world without feeling misunderstood, threatened, or alienated.

Comparing their life style in Ethiopia to that in Israel, the participants in this research expressed males' frustration consequent to unemployment and inability to provide for the needs of their family with resultant loss of dignity. In Ethiopia, males had the right to discipline and chastise their rebellious women and children, yet the term "domestic violence" did not exist in Amharit and murder/suicide were unknown in their community (Kacen, 2006). Culture and traditions indicated prescribed normative paths of resistance against abusive husbands. Women could leave the
home and go back to her parents who would try to resolve the conflict. When marital dispute continued, the conflict was brought in front of the respected elders of the community, the Shmagaluch and Kaisim who usually were successful in bringing peace-Arak back to the family and community. The stories the interviewees told about their lives in Ethiopia in comparison to how it is now, in Israel, might have been idealized, as it usually is in the process of acculturation when immigrants evoke with nostalgia idealized memories of their country of origin (Gibson, 2000; Hofstede, 1997). Nevertheless, regardless of whether Ethiopian men’s memories were accurate in relation to males’ unquestioned authority and total respect of their wives in Ethiopia, and regardless of whether life was always lived according to ideal cultural patterns, male research participants’ stories of the past are socially powerful and analytically important.

The findings of this study reinforce those of other researchers concerning male downward mobility, and the need to renegotiate traditional gender-role attitudes and hierarchy of authority post migration from patriarchal societies (Habib, Halaban-Eilat, Shatz, & Almog 2010; Fenster, 1998; Erez, Adelman and Gregory, 2009; Reitzes, 2008). In Israel, Ethiopian women’s increased income-generating ability had changed the balance of power and augmented their decision-making ability. Most participants in this research had come to the realization that their traditional assumptions about male and female status, roles and communication patterns were filled with contradictions and had to be modified. Facing women’s increased income-earning capacity and decision making power men had to renegotiate more egalitarian gender-role conceptions.

Other researchers on migration have pointed out that poor levels of language proficiency and lack of job skills relevant to the receiving country increased the likelihood of father-child and husband-wife role reversals post migration. With previous studies the present study show that women joining the work force and children assuming the roles of interpreter, translator, and “cultural broker,” often decrease fathers/husband’s authority and status and thereby, augment their alienation and powerlessness due to their inability to fulfill their traditional roles as father and family provider (Jones, Trickett, & Birman, 2012). In line, with other research in the field of migration, the findings of this study show that males' inability to renegotiate postmigration patriarchal gender-role attitudes and communication patterns, social isolation, as well as loss of community and family supports that existed pre-migration
were contributing factors to males' alienation and domestic violence (Erez, Adelman, & Gregory, 2009; Hyman, Guruge, & Mason, 2008).

Foucault (1982) dialectic of power and resistance that views wife beating and repression in terms of fear of losing power rather than an act of power were implicitly evoked by the interviewees who had come to realize that beating was an illusion of power and no longer acceptable. Nevertheless they condemned women's verbal attacks on their dignity due to their inability to support the family as well Israeli cultural control and hegemony. They opposed the dominant Israeli culture that viewed Ethiopian culture as backward and primitive and condemned and its law enforcement agents for discriminating against men, labeling them bad and violent and for pushing women to call the police and obtain court restraining orders. The perception of discrimination by the criminal justice and social services systems have often been attributed to male immigrants' inability to renegotiate traditional gender-role attitudes and communication patterns (Hyman, Guruge, & Mason, 2008; Volpp, 2001). In this study, male perception of discrimination rather suggests the contours of resistance to an adversarial system that polarizes conflict by blaming only men, and criminalizing their behavior while doing very little to solve marital conflict. The solution provided by the criminal justice system was, from the interviewees' perspective, not better and far more destructive than the community-based remedies and negotiations initiated by spiritual leaders whose authority was no longer recognized by the Israeli Government.

Feminist experts (Adelman, Erez, & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003; Erez, Adelman & Gregory, 2009) on domestic violence post migration have justifiably refused to legitimatize spouse abuse within the context of culture. They often opted for Zero tolerance policies and deterrence of such behavior by prosecuting the batterer through the criminal justice system. With other critics (Elias, 1978, Nader, 1997) the findings of this study shows that the advocates of state intervention and judicial intervention to combat gender-based violence of immigrants does resolve the problems but rather accentuate them by oppressing and destroying the so called “primitive cultures” and the traditional means of conflict resolution that worked. By rejecting the informal means of marital conflict resolution that existed in the Ethiopian community, the Israeli Western system of law and order had optimized conflict and paradoxically increased domestic violence and other forms of anomic behavior (Fenster, 1998;
Consequently, the humiliation, and affront to males' respect and dignity may not uniquely be accounted for unemployment, and by the inability to renegotiate patriarchal gender roles attitude and consequent acceptance of a more equalitarian balance of power. Additional factors are to be included in order to explain males’ alienation and frustration namely, the oppression and destruction of a cultural heritage and traditional mechanism of social control by the dominant Israeli culture.

It is to be emphasized that the lack of government recognition does not necessarily preclude informal socio-legal mechanisms of control to operate as is evidenced among Druze, Bedouins, and Haredi ethnic groups in Israel. These ethnic groups have often chosen to live in separate neighborhoods and remote villages to maintain their cultural heritage and traditions (Arar, & Haj-yehia, 2010; Golub, 2009). However, the lack of resources, political power, and geographic dispersion made it difficult for the members of the Ethiopian community to reconfigure the hierarchy of communal leadership that sustains such informal processes.

Durkheim (1897/1951) stressed, in his book on Suicide, the importance of interpersonal relationships, social support, and cultural identification in the processes of social integration and regulation. Strong social bonds between family and community members create intense feelings of solidarity, commitments and, common goals and values that give life its meaning and purpose. Disruption of such bonds results in alienation and anomie which are the precursors of murder and suicide. With several eminent moral psychologists and sociologists (Hirschi, 1969; Kohlberg, 1975; Piaget, 1966) the author concludes that the fear of punishment and reprisal on its own does not command the respect of the social norms. Norms fulfill their restraining and regulating functions only if they are perceived as morally binding by the individuals whose behavior they aim at regulating (Durkheim, 1897/1951).

In a similar vein, Hall (1999) argued that to be influential the messages of the dominant discourse must first, be recognized as meaningful. Without such recognition, these messages will lack of legitimacy and be met with opposition and resistance. In Israel, the dominant Israeli system of law and social control with its courts’ restraining orders and removal of males from their family were perceived by Ethiopian-Israeli males as racist and oppressive. The perceived lack of legitimacy of Israeli law and order coupled with the constant fear of reprisal, court restraining
orders and arrest in the midst of cultural void, set the stage for anomic behavior, murder, and suicide.

Borrowing Foucault’s (1978, 1980), Scott’s (1990) and Nader’s (1997) concepts of resistance, Ethiopian males’ domestic murder and suicide may be resituated within the context of power and resistance and be viewed as moments of resistance in Ethiopian males’ attempts to regain their dignity and cultural identity. In these last resistant struggles, Ethiopian males break through the racist and repressive dominant system to reveal what had, so far, been silenced: the destruction of social bonds that once united Ethiopian males to their community and the chaos created by the loss of a culture and its traditions that gave direction and purpose. (Begley-Soroff, 1995; Ben-Ezer, 1987; Fenster, 1998; Kacen, 2006). Consequently, rather than stereotyping Ethiopian males as murderers who had failed to assimilate into a modern culture and categorizing their traditions as backward and primitive, bottom-up initiatives are needed to give Ethiopian males' and community leaders' a voice in order to recreate their community.

This study in no way legitimize batterers or domestic violence, but shows that our adversary legal system and Eurocentric Western culture often create selective blindness to informal control mechanisms and relevance of restorative remedies of other immigrant cultures. Additional qualitative research could include in their sample Ethiopian Israeli women. The comparison of Ethiopian males and females’ memories of their life and traditions pre and post migration would complement males' stories about their life in Ethiopia and thus broaden our understanding of structural and cultural changes that occurred post migration to Israel and their impact on the double phenomenon of domestic murder and suicide in this community. By taking an inside look at Ethiopian males' subjective reality and their accounts of domestic murder and suicide in terms of racism and cultural oppression this study show the eminent need to revisit assimilationist policies. Without abandoning the democratic notion of equality for all genders under the law, formal recognition by the State of Israel of the authority of Ethiopian community spiritual leaders would encourage the reinstatement of informal means of control and restorative remedies and thus rechannel of males' resistant struggle toward community building.

References


