



THE IMPORTANCE OF LEGISLATING MANDATORY REHABILITATION OF MEN WHO HAVE PERPETRATED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LEBANON





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**KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation
Research Clinic S.A.R.L**

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KAFA (Enough Violence & Exploitation) is a feminist, secular, Lebanese, non-profit, non-governmental civil society organization seeking to create a society that is free of social, economic and legal patriarchal structures that discriminate against women.

KAFA aims to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and exploitation since its establishment in 2005. It seeks to realize substantive gender equality through the adoption of different approaches, such as:

Advocacy for law reform and introduction of new laws and policies; influencing public opinion, practices and mentality; conducting research and training; and empowering women and children victims of violence, and providing them with social, legal, and psychological support.

Our focus areas are:

- 1) Family violence;
- 2) Exploitation and trafficking in women, especially in migrant domestic workers and women in prostitution;
- 3) Child protection, particularly from sexual abuse and gender-based violence.

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We hope that this study report will serve its purpose by achieving an actual amendment of the Law 293 that includes legislating the mandatory rehabilitation for male perpetrators. Moreover, we aim to reach out to more male perpetrators through "Choice, A Program for Men" and encourage them to enroll in this rehabilitation program, thereby committing to saying 'no to violence', and safeguarding themselves, women survivors, and their children. Our wish is for this study's benefits to extend beyond the immediate results and positively impact the community's perception and attitudes towards domestic violence in Lebanon. We also hope that our findings and recommendations will promote a less patriarchal society and a more gender-egalitarian society in Lebanon.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
GBV	Gender-based Violence
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex
OCD	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RIC	Risk Indicator Checklist
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a widespread issue in Lebanon with no official statistics on its prevalence, but well-documented by various organizations and studies. The COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis have resulted in an increase in the frequency and intensity of GBV cases, making it an urgent priority that needs immediate attention in the country. This research study aimed to investigate how patriarchal beliefs and patriarchal masculine identity negatively impact men's wellbeing and contribute to the development of male perpetrator's identity in Lebanese society. It also examined the importance of rehabilitating male perpetrators and legalizing the process. The study used a qualitative research design and various methods of data collection, including literature review, case studies, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews with key informants such as legal advisors, judges, and experts on domestic violence cases.

Patriarchy is a social system where men hold power and dominance over women in various stratas of society. It is perpetuated through the process of early male socialization and reinforced by various socializing agents (parents, peers, media, and society at large). In Lebanon, patriarchal culture marginalizes women, and gender inequality is deeply ingrained in both state laws and sectarian personal status laws. Patriarchal masculine identity in Lebanon is manifested and emphasized in beliefs and behaviors that relates to men preserving the family's honor, being the family's sole protector

and provider, and exerting dominance and entitlement over women and other family members. It is also manifested in emotional restraint and aggression, physical strength, and men's reluctance to express needs and seek help. Patriarchal beliefs and patriarchal masculine identity, which demands dominance, aggression, and risk taking, lead to the marginalization of men who do not conform to this stereotype. On the other hand, men who conform to this identity face negative impacts on their general health, psychological wellbeing, and suicide rates.

PATRIARCHAL BELIEFS AND PATRIARCHAL MASCULINE IDENTITY, WHICH DEMANDS DOMINANCE, AGGRESSION, AND RISK TAKING, LEAD TO THE MARGINALIZATION OF MEN WHO DO NOT CONFORM TO THIS STEREOTYPE.

Women's rights organizations and activists in Lebanon have been working to challenge and dismantle patriarchy through advocacy, activism, and legal reforms. Despite some progress, gender-based violence, discrimination, and obstacles to women's advancement still persist, with patriarchy deeply ingrained in traditional family dynamics, socio-cultural norms, state laws, and personal

status laws. Focus group discussions, in this study, revealed that men held varying attitudes towards patriarchy and gender equality, with some strongly adhering to patriarchal beliefs, others holding contradictory views, manifested in being partially egalitarian while still holding onto patriarchal beliefs, while some others being completely egalitarian. As patriarchy is gradually dismantled, men who strongly conform to patriarchal beliefs and those who hold contradictory beliefs, are facing cognitive dissonance and doubt.

Patriarchy places men in positions of power over their partners and other family members as well as power over other men in general. It is thus very difficult for men who conform to patriarchal masculine beliefs to tolerate vulnerable feelings such as powerlessness, shame or humiliation. While being in the position of power is an unearned benefit shared by men in general, it is also coupled with unrealistic expectations and burdens. Living up to the masculine standards required by this position of power has been proven to be challenging to maintain, which can exacerbate feelings of powerlessness and humiliation. Men often displace their vulnerable emotions of humiliation into anger, which is considered a powerful emotion that is acceptable for men to feel and express. On the other hand, patriarchy is responsible for the formation of the male perpetrator identity through legitimizing violence as a means of "discipline," in the family setting, which normalizes the expression of anger through gender-based violence. Other factors, such as the presence of a severe psychological disorder and anger displacement, may also contribute to the

formation of a male perpetrator's identity.

"Choice, A Program for Men" is a rehabilitation program for male perpetrators of gender-based violence in Lebanon founded by KAFA in 2019. CHOICE aims at assisting men who have perpetrated violence of any kind (physical, verbal, economical, and sexual) towards their partners, children, and/or other family members to develop non-abusive relationships. The intervention toolkit consists of tailored one-to-one behavioral change work, utilizing various techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, and psychodynamic therapy. The program also aims to change men's patriarchal masculine beliefs and attitudes, which are considered the root cause of gender-based violence, and provide ongoing support and guidance to the workers who engage with male perpetrators.

This study presented two case studies of male perpetrators who successfully completed "Choice, A Program for Men". The success of the two case studies indicates that the program can positively impact individuals who have engaged in abusive behavior, helping them to understand the underlying reasons for their conduct and develop healthy approaches to manage their emotions and relationships. The effectiveness of rehabilitation programs for male perpetrators is generally influenced by the support of the legal system and the level of patriarchy in a given society. Therefore, a comprehensive approach to ensuring the success of "Choice, A Program for Men" in Lebanon, includes legislating the mandatory rehabilitation of male perpetrators and promoting a less patriarchal society.

Legislating mandatory rehabilitation for male perpetrators of domestic violence can increase enrollment in rehabilitation programs, increase perpetrator's accountability, limit dropout, ensure compliance, and reduce recidivism. Legislating mandatory rehabilitation can also empower women to report abuse and have positive impacts on male perpetrators, women survivors, and their children.

In Lebanon, Law 293 provides a woman survivor, who has suffered abuse, with a protection order within 48 hours of disclosing the abuse at the Urgent Matters Civil Judge. The protection order may include measures such as prohibiting the perpetrator from committing further violence, evicting him from the house, and requiring him to provide alimony to the survivor. A woman survivor, as mandated by the law 293, can also report the perpetrator at a police station or file a lawsuit against him. The lawsuit typically proceeds through the Public Prosecution and is ultimately heard by the Penalty Judge, who can issue a penalty verdict. This penalty verdict may involve punishment measures such as a fine or imprisonment, and/or rehabilitation of the perpetrator depending on the level of abuse. Although Law 293 provides some protection for survivors, incomplete protection for women persists, as the rehabilitation of male perpetrators is not included in the protection order and is only considered as part of the penalty verdict. As such, it is recommended to legislate the mandatory rehabilitation for male perpetrators of violence in the protection order as soon as the woman survivor reports abuse, especially that the penalty verdict route can take years to reach its purpose. This would ensure immediate protection for women and

prevent further abuse, as the lengthy process of a penalty verdict could result in increased violence.

This study recommends an action plan for mandating the rehabilitation of male perpetrators of domestic violence through protection orders issued by the Urgent Matters Civil Judges upon disclosure of abuse and reporting. The plan also includes follow up and reporting mechanisms between the perpetrator rehabilitation program and the judges to ensure close monitoring of the progress throughout the intervention.

This study also concludes with key recommendations for fostering a less patriarchal society in Lebanon, which is an essential factor for ensuring the success of "Choice, A Program for Men." The recommendations suggest implementing a comprehensive approach to changing public opinion on patriarchal masculine stereotypes by incorporating gender equality topics into civic curriculums, reinforcing public awareness campaigns, and promoting parenting styles that prioritize gender equality. It is also recommended to collaborate with key stakeholders, such as lawyers, judges, and police officers, to implement effective strategies within the Lebanese legal system that aim at better responding to domestic violence cases. It also recommended to have a dedicated group of judges specialized in handling domestic violence cases and to establish one civil law of Personal Status for all sects in Lebanon.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is an urgent and global human rights concern, and is estimated to affect an average of one in three women in their lifetime.¹ GBV is prevalent in all regions, including in high-income and low- and middle-income countries. The WHO global report on the prevalence of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence¹ found that the highest prevalence of GBV occurs in the African and South-East Asian regions at 33%, while high-income regions experience a 22% prevalence of GBV. In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the WHO regional grouping to which Lebanon belongs, asserts that the prevalence of GBV reflects the global average at 31%, although no official data currently exists on the prevalence of GBV in Lebanon.² Despite the non-existence of official statistics on the incidence and prevalence of GBV in Lebanon,² local and international organizations and academic studies have rigorously documented the phenomenon of GBV in the country. A 2017 UNFPA report estimated that family and domestic violence were the most reported cases of GBV, with “an average of 1 in 2 persons reported that they personally know someone subjected to domestic violence.” Of those reported incidents, 65% of cases were perpetrated by family members, and 71% took place within the survivor’s or perpetrator’s household.³ In Lebanon, GBV disproportionately affects women and girls, with other specific categories at higher risk of being subjected to GBV. These at risk categories include elderly women, persons with disabilities, the LGBTQI+ community, and migrants.⁴

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lebanon witnessed an alarming increase in GBV cases, leading to a shadow pandemic across the country. Based on KAFA’s 2020 annual report, incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) in Lebanon have risen significantly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to their findings, the number of reported GBV cases increased in 2020 in comparison to previous years. The pandemic-related lockdowns were identified as the primary cause for this surge, which left women and children confined to their homes with abusive partners and family members. The report further revealed that the pandemic has led to an increase in the severity of violence, with more women experiencing life-threatening injuries.⁵ In addition, the report pointed out that the economic crisis, worsened by the pandemic, has made it even harder for women to leave abusive partners. An Internal Security Forces report found that domestic violence rates had doubled between December 2020 to February 2021.⁶ The compounding crises in Lebanon and the resulting increase in cases of violence against women and girls has made addressing and preventing GBV a more pressing priority than ever.

Lebanon currently holds a low rank in the international indexes that measure gender equality within countries.² The country is currently ranked 132nd in the world on the Global Gender Gap Index,⁷ a standard measurement for gender gaps on the economic, political, education, and health

levels. Following interviews with lawyers, judges, psychologists, campaigners, and caseworkers, KAFA confirmed that patriarchal beliefs are the root cause of GBV. These beliefs reinforce gender inequality and stem from the social norms that give men power over women and consider violence against women to be acceptable. These social norms also justify gender-based violence by normalizing men's lack of impulse control and aggression which is often the result of the absence of male socialization to self-regulate.⁸ According to KAFA, the main types of violence in Lebanon are verbal, financial, physical, and sexual. Men also use other tactics to assert their control over women such as isolating them from their social networks, using children as a mean to get their way, imposing gender roles as well as parenting roles, and resorting to the men's family to reinforce chauvinism. Child abuse is also widespread across the Lebanese society.⁸ The harmful effects of gender-based violence are innumerable, affecting women, children, and families, and stretching over into the community and into social and economic life.⁹

LEBANON CURRENTLY
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Lebanon is a state party to a multitude of human rights conventions, and in ratifying these conventions, is under legal obligation

to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights. Several steps have been taken in recent years towards the fulfillment of these principles, including legislation and policies aimed at eliminating violence and discrimination against women. In 2008, the CEDAW Committee (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women), which is formed by independent experts who monitor the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, found that violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, sexual violence, and violence committed in the name of honor, was pervasive in Lebanon.¹⁰ Consequently, the CEDAW Committee implored the Lebanese state to prioritize appropriate legislation to address violence against women in the country. In 2014, the Lebanese parliament passed Law No. 293/2014 in its aim to address GBV in Lebanon.¹⁰ The law consists of several articles that criminalize GBV and facilitate the protection of women in the case of being exposed to GBV. As mandated by this law, a woman survivor of abuse can obtain a protection order from the Urgent Matters Civil Judge within 48 hours of disclosure of abuse. This protection order, based on the severity of abuse, includes different measures of protection; such as preventing the male perpetrator from perpetrating further violence, expelling the perpetrator from the house, and mandating him to pay alimony to the survivor. A survivor, as mandated by this law, can also choose to take a different route; she can report the male perpetrator at a police station or file a lawsuit against him. This lawsuit usually goes through the Public Prosecution to reach the Penalty Judge. The Penalty Judge is responsible for issuing the

penalty verdict; which can include, based on the level of abuse, punishment measures (paying a fine or imprisonment) and/or rehabilitation of the male perpetrator. Despite the progressive step towards protective legislation, a key limitation in the current Law No. 293/2014 is that the rehabilitation of male perpetrators is not included at the level of the protection order, but only enforced at the level of the penalty verdict.

Working with women and children survivors is necessary for addressing GBV. However, interventions on this level alone are not sufficient. Given that men are the primary perpetrators of gender-based violence, the engagement of men and perpetrators is fundamental to addressing and preventing GBV. GBV is directly linked to gender inequality, thus interventions aiming to prevent and limit incidents of violence must necessarily include the participation of men. Interventions targeting men's attitudes and behaviors have been described as primary prevention and protection strategies, as they aim to address the root causes of violence against women, and decrease the risk of GBV perpetration. Evidence has shown that engaging men in preventing GBV positively affected men's beliefs, attitudes, and behavior towards violence against women and gender equality. Numerous studies conducted in various countries and contexts have found that GBV interventions that target men, including awareness campaigns and rehabilitation programs, "result in more gender-equitable beliefs and practices, reduced intimate partner violence, and fostered greater communicative and supportive emotional relationships with partners and family members."¹¹ Engaging

men in GBV prevention is an approach that is supported by existing social and public health research, and is in line with Lebanon's current national strategies and commitments to human rights conventions. As such, in 2017, Kafa proposed several amendments to Law No. 293/14, including mandatory rehabilitation of the male perpetrator as part of the protection order.¹²

II. RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

A. Research Aims

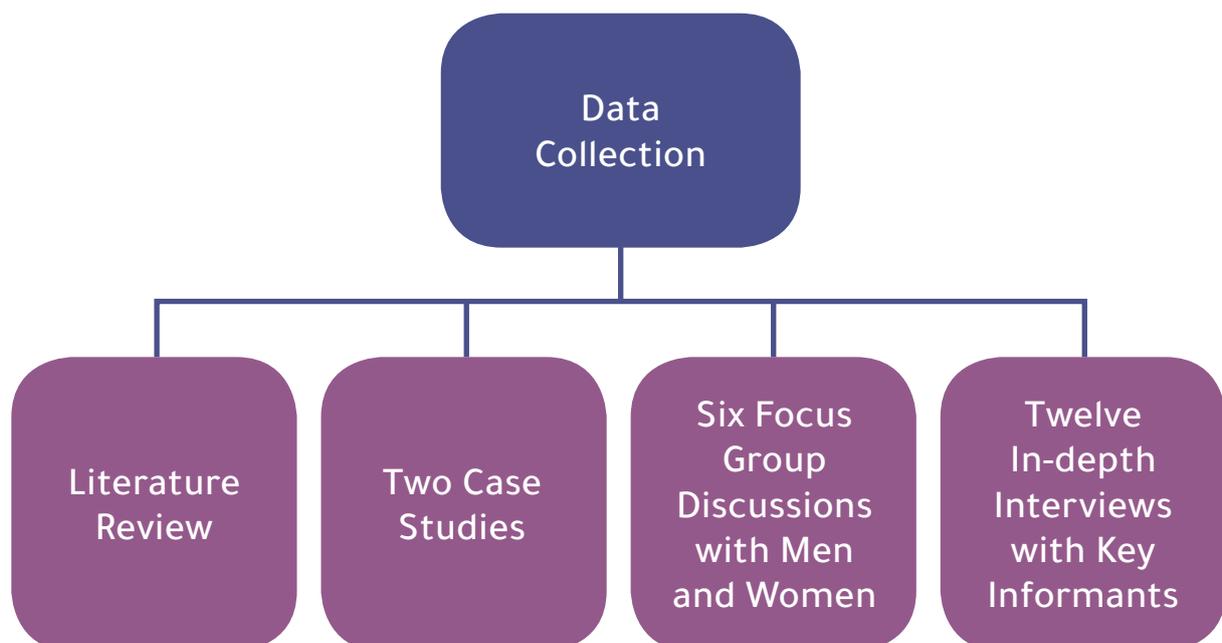
This research study has two main aims:

- ▶ Exploring the negative impacts of patriarchal beliefs and conformity to patriarchal masculine identity on Lebanese men in general, and their impacts on the formation of male perpetrator's identity in particular.
- ▶ Understanding the importance of mandating men, who engage in perpetrating violence, to complete a rehabilitation program.

B. Research Design

This study followed a qualitative research design that included four main sources of data collection; literature review, case studies, focus group discussions with men and women, and in-depth interviews with key informants (Figure 1). Data generated from the focus group discussions and key informants' interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis approach.

Figure 1: Illustration of the Data Collection for this Research Study



1. Two Case Studies

- **Case Study 1:** Prepared by former male perpetrator worker at KAFA organization, Mr. Karim Khalil, and discusses the rehabilitation of a male perpetrator who completed “Choice, A Program for Men”
- **Case Study 2:** Prepared by former male perpetrator worker at KAFA organization, Mr. Tony Abou Zeidan, and discusses the rehabilitation of a male perpetrator who completed “Choice, A Program for Men”

2. Six Focus Group Discussions

- **FocusGroup1 (FG1):** Eight Women Beneficiaries recruited from KAFA organization, conducted at KAFA facility (Badaro- Beirut)
- **FocusGroup2 (FG2):** Nine Women Beneficiaries recruited from KAFA organization, conducted at KAFA facility (Badaro- Beirut)
- **Focus Group 3 (FG3):** Eight Women Beneficiaries recruited from KAFA organization conducted at KAFA facility (Badaro- Beirut)
- **Focus Group 4 (FG4):** Eight Men Beneficiaries recruited from Mousawat Association, conducted at Mousawat NGO facility (Tripoli- North Lebanon)
- **Focus Group 5 (FG5):** Eight Men Beneficiaries recruited from Abnaa Saida Association, conducted at Abnaa Saida NGO facility (Saida- South Lebanon)
- **Focus Group 6 (FG6):** Six Men Beneficiaries recruited via social media ad on Facebook and Instagram. This focus group discussion was completed virtually via zoom.

¹ The initial research plan included four focus group discussions (two with women and two with men). Another two focus group discussions (one with men and another one with women) were added at a later stage to obtain a comprehensive data on the studied topic.

3. Twelve In-depth Interviews with Key informants

- Two senior psychologists, heavily involved in domestic violence cases, at KAFA organization
- International technical supervisor, an international expert on domestic violence cases and rehabilitation of male perpetrators, and the founder of “Choice, A Program for Men”
- Key researcher and psychologist, an expert on the formation of man’s identity in Lebanon
- Three former male perpetrator workers, involved in the rehabilitation of male perpetrators, at KAFA organization, as part of “Choice, A Program for Men”
- Manager of “Choice, A program for Men” at KAFA organization
- Two legal advisors (lawyers) heavily involved in cases of domestic violence in Lebanon
- Two judges; Urgent Matters Civil Judge and Penalty Judge, involved in cases of domestic violence in Lebanon

C. Ethical Considerations

This research study followed the international ethical standards of conducting a scientific study. All participants took part in this research study on a voluntary basis, without any form of coercion. Before obtaining any data from participants, they were given an informed consent, which was explained by the researcher, and that detailed the aims of the study, procedure, overview of participation, participants’ rights, risks and benefits of participation, and compensation. During data collection, participants had the right to skip any question and/or withdraw from the study, at any time, even after signing the informed consent, without bearing any negative

consequences. The privacy and confidentiality of participants was also ensured during and after data collection. Specifically, no identifiers (name, phone number, email, etc..) were collected as part of this research study. Participants' responses are also presented, in this report, using pseudo-names without any reference to their actual identity. Moreover, the researcher took notes (using a pen and paper) during all focus group discussions and key informants' interviews without audio-recording any of these discussions. In addition, the transcribed data of participants' responses (although it didn't include any identifiers) was stored on the researcher's laptop using a password-encrypted file and was not shared with any 3rd party. Finally, the written consent forms, collected from this study, were stored in a safe place at KAFA organization's facility, and will be discarded after five years following the completion of this study.

III. PATRIARCHY WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE LEBANESE CONTEXT

A. Definition of Patriarchy

'Patriarchy' refers to the social system of gender inequality where men occupy positions of power and dominance over the rest of society.¹³ The patriarchal system grants men power and privilege across different spheres of society, including in the political, economic, social, religious, legal, moral, and family spheres. Most societies are organized according to a patriarchal structure, where men hold the highest level of authority within social hierarchies.¹⁴ Patriarchal relations exist on the macro level (family, society, culture, economy, politics, religion, and laws) as well as the micro levels (personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors), as individuals themselves could hold patriarchal attitudes and beliefs.¹⁵ Patriarchy, as explained by one of the psychologists in this study, "*starts at the level of the nuclear family where the father/brother hold the authority, dominance, entitlement and power over other family members.*" In this system, social norms mandate men to be the sole breadwinner, sole protector, and sole decision maker in the family, while women are mandated to be homemakers and caregivers. In addition, within this structure, men are also expected to hold the guardianship and responsibility for women and children in the family.

Patriarchy, as a system of gender inequality,

is perpetuated and reinforced by "early male socialization". Early male socialization refers to the process through which boys learn and internalize social values, norms, and expectations that are associated with masculinity and male gender role. This process typically starts during childhood and continues throughout adolescence and adulthood.¹⁶ Early male socialization is enforced by the following socializing agents; parents, peers, media, and society at large. It reinforces patriarchy by promoting aggressive and dominant behavior. Boys are encouraged to be tough, competitive, and dominant over women and other men who don't conform to these ideals, while being discouraged from showing vulnerability or expressing emotions.¹⁶ Parents, peers, and society, as part of the early male socialization, implement gender policing strategies to reinforce these gender norms and expectations through using social pressure and punishment, in the form of teasing, bullying, and social ostracism. Gender policing pressures men to conform to a set of masculine qualities such as assertiveness, independence, competitiveness, toughness, rationality, dominance, authority, entitlement, aggressivity, and risk taking, while it restrains and even punishes men for showing common feminine traits, such as emotional expressiveness, compassion, nurturing, cooperation, and vulnerability.¹⁷ This emphasis on aggression and dominance is also reinforced by the representations of masculinity in media

that depicts men as strong, powerful, fearless, and in control.¹⁸

On the other hand, patriarchy as a system of gender inequality, is deeply ingrained in the Lebanese state laws and personal status laws. For instance, women, unlike men, are prohibited by the state laws, from passing their nationality to their non-Lebanese spouses or children born to foreign fathers.¹⁹ As explained by the lawyers in this study “*In Lebanon, there exists fifteen personal status laws, administered by the sectarian personal status courts, for the eighteen sects. Male dominance is deeply entrenched in the laws governing marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance. These laws place men as the head of the household and mandate that women obey their husbands (الأولاد), or else they are deemed guilty. Some of these laws also give men the right to discipline their wives.*” In addition, as mandated by these laws, fathers have the right to be the guardians of their daughters until they are married. In other words, women are viewed as minors and denied agency for their own lives, even after reaching adulthood. Furthermore, as part of the divorce proceedings, a man has the right to divorce his wife without taking her consent, whereas a woman must obtain his consent or present a valid reason (such as infidelity) to obtain divorce. Finally, men are predominately given the priority when it comes to child custody and inheritance.¹⁹

On another note, women in Lebanon still face significant barriers and discrimination that hinder their access to the labor market and career advancement; women are underrepresented in most senior

management positions and are even paid less than men in some work.²⁰ When it comes to political participation, despite the high level of education among Lebanese women, their participation in the Lebanese parliament is estimated to be 6.25%, which is among the lowest rates in the world.²¹

It is important to recognize that patriarchal systems can vary widely between countries and even within local areas of the same country. The stereotypes mentioned in this section are prevalent in Lebanon, but other countries may have different manifestations of patriarchy.

B. Definition of Patriarchal Masculine Identity

Patriarchal masculine identity refers to the socially constructed set of beliefs, values, and behaviors that are commonly associated with being a male in a given society. Men are often expected to display qualities such as physical strength, emotional stoicism, assertiveness, and competitiveness, while downplaying qualities such as vulnerability, emotionality, and empathy. This form of masculinity is also reflected in a social hierarchy that positions masculinity as dominant and superior to femininity.²²

In this study, based on the focus group discussions and key informants' interviews, it has become apparent that patriarchal masculine identity is manifested in Lebanon through the following set of beliefs and behaviors (Figure 2):

1. **Emphasis on Preserving the Honor of the Family:** Men are expected to uphold their family's reputation and honor, which is

closely tied to women's behavior, particularly their sexual conduct and virginity. As a result, men may feel a sense of responsibility for controlling women's behavior, particularly in their relationships and sexual conduct, in order to protect the family's honor. For instance, one man during the focus group discussions asserted that "nothing is shameful for a man, but a woman's behavior that deviates from the social norms brings dishonor and shame to the entire family." Another man added that "a man is the one who defends the family's honor (العرض والشرف); he is responsible for taking care and watching out for his mother, sisters, and wife." In addition, one-third of men during the focus group discussions asserted that violence is justified when the wife engages in any form of emotional and sexual infidelity.

2. Emphasis on Being the Sole Financial Provider: Men are mandated to be the sole financial providers for their families, while women are expected to focus on childcare and domestic duties. One man during the focus group discussions asserted that "although it can be extremely pressuring these days to be the sole breadwinner, due to the economic crisis and the exponential increase in family needs, it is our duty as men to uphold these societal expectations." Additionally, a psychologist in this study confirmed that "some men find providing financial support as the only mean to express love and care for their family members, rather than displaying affectionate behaviors." In the same context, a woman during the focus group discussions confirmed that "my dad used to leave our gifts (العديّة) aside and was reluctant to hug or kiss us."

3. Emphasis on Dominance and Entitlement: Women during the focus group discussions asserted that a man, as mandated by the patriarchal masculine identity is "the sole decision maker in the family, while everyone else must follow his words (كلمتو ما بتصين اتنين)" and "his decisions are neither negotiated nor compromised". In the same context, a man during the focus group discussions claimed that "a man by nature is a complete human being (كامل بطبيعته) that a woman can rely on; he understands life perfectly well, he is always able to make accurate decisions, and what he says is always correct." Another man added that "women are only free to choose their field of study and their husbands, while everything else falls under the responsibility of the man". Finally, a psychologist in this study claimed that "patriarchal masculine identity entails that a man is always right, and he can do anything he desires as long as his behavior conforms to the patriarchal beliefs. Everything is justified for him except for displaying common feminine traits, while women are expected to serve him. A man must be dominant inside and outside the house, or else he may be bullied by his peers."

4. Emphasis on Emotional Restraint and Aggression: Men are socialized to control, suppress, and limit the expression of vulnerable emotions- or the emotions that are perceived as "weak"- such as sadness, fear, shame, helplessness, hurt, and guilt, while they are encouraged to express powerful emotions such as anger, blame, hatred, jealousy, and vengefulness. A man during the focus group discussion asserted that "I find

it hard to express my love to my parents, and my father also had a hard time expressing his emotions to us." When faced with life challenges, men are socialized to prioritize reason and logic, to stay firm and serious, or to express themselves through anger and aggression. One of the psychologists in this study asserted that *"as mandated by the patriarchal masculine identity, the expression of anger and aggression is a sign of masculinity, control, and power."*

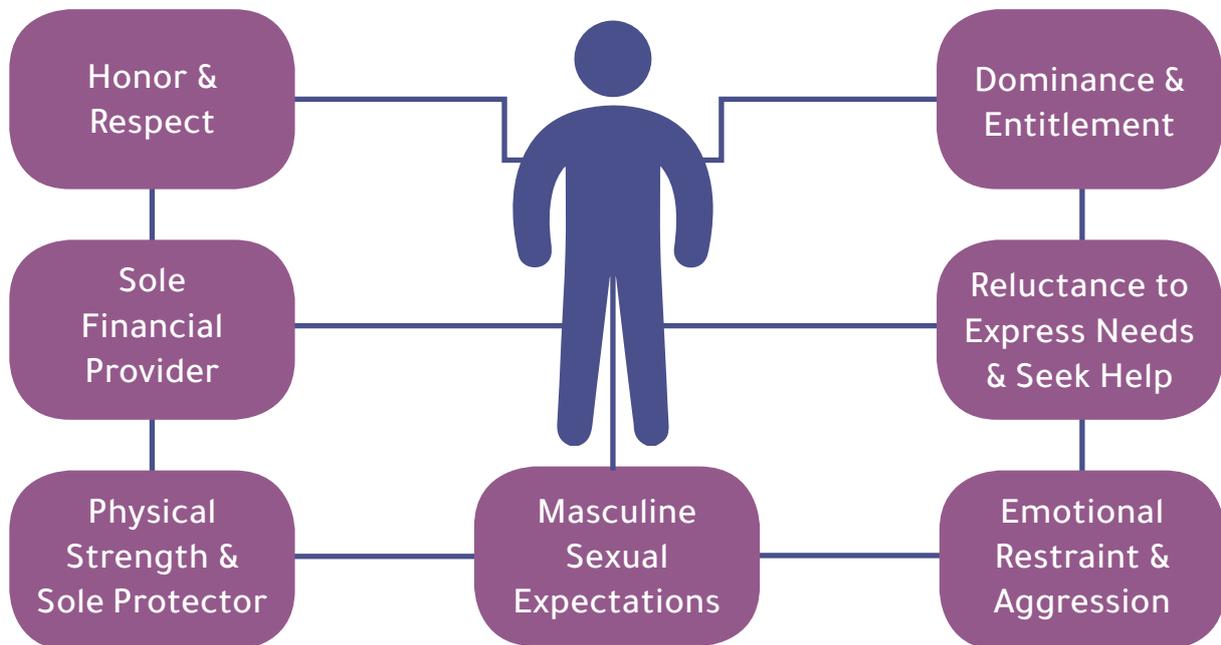
5. Emphasis on Physical Strength and Being the "Sole Protector": Patriarchal masculine identity often places importance on certain physical characteristics that are associated with masculinity, including short hair, beards, deep voices, and muscular builds. While not always the case, these physical traits can be seen as markers of masculinity and may be expected of men. Furthermore, men are expected to have strong physical strength to be able to fulfill their role as the "sole protector" in their families. It is noteworthy that fulfilling the role of "sole protector" includes, in addition to physical strength, other forms of control such as control of mobility, agency, and access to human and financial resources. Men are also expected to engage in manual labor, and/or to participate in strenuous exercise or other physical activities. A man during the focus group discussion asserted that *"a man is the one who possesses strong physical stamina and can protect his family."*

6. Emphasis on Masculine Sexual Expectations: As mandated by the patriarchal masculine identity, men are socialized to be heterosexuals; heterosexuality is

associated with strength and masculinity, while homosexuality is associated with femininity and considered a threat to the traditional gender roles. Moreover, men are sometimes praised for having a wide range of sexual experiences, while women are often judged and stigmatized if they are not virgins. A perpetrator's worker in this study asserted that *"when it comes to sexuality, a man's masculinity is measured by his level of aggressivity in bed, rather than his attunement to his partner's romantic and sexual needs"*. Another psychologist in this study claimed that *"some married men believe that they have the right to demand or force sex with their wives at any time, even without their wife's consent, which is considered a form of marital rape."*

7. Reluctance to Express Needs and Seek Support: The patriarchal masculine identity mandates that men don't express their need for support or seek any form of psychological help. Men are socialized to be strong, tough, and self-sufficient, while seeking help is viewed as a sign of weakness or failure, that subjects them to social ostracization and marginalization. A man during the focus group discussion asserted that *"we were raised on the notion that the whole family would crumble if the father, as the head of the household, discloses his weakness and need for support. As such, it is extremely challenging for men to seek any form of help and psychological support when they need it the most."*

It is noteworthy that these are common generalizations of the patriarchal masculine identity, and that the manifestations of this

Figure 2: Manifestations of the Traditional Masculine Identity in Lebanon

identity can vary greatly from one man, context, or region to another in Lebanon.

Based on the above manifestations of the patriarchal masculine identity, it is apparent that this identity dismisses traits traditionally associated with femininity; such as emotional expression, seeking help, empathy, sensitivity, and nurturing, and regard them as “weak”.²³ However, these so-called “feminine traits” are in reality humanistic traits that are essential for ensuring good psychological wellbeing and healthy interpersonal relationships for both men and women. For example, empathy allows individuals to connect and understand each other on a deeper level, sensitivity equip individuals with the ability to respond to their own emotional needs and those of others in their surroundings, and nurturing trait allows individuals to build strong and supportive relationships while caring for each other. In the same context, there are several traits that are associated with masculinity that are positive

and beneficial; such as self-reliance and self-confidence, courage and resilience, being the protector and provider in the family.²² These traits of a “good man” when they’re used to exert power and control over women and children, as mandated by patriarchal beliefs and patriarchal masculine identity, can become extremely harmful and lead to negative consequences on the general health, psychological wellbeing and interpersonal relationships of men as well as women and children in their families. For example, over-emphasis on self-reliance and resilience can lead to a lack of emotional intimacy in relationships, disconnection from others, feelings of loneliness and isolation, ignoring one’s emotional needs, and reluctance to seek help when needed.²² Moreover, being the sole protector can lead men to exercise a form of control on women and children in the family; through this role, men can restrict the autonomy, mobility, and social connections of their partners and children, and justify their use of violence as a form of “discipline”.

Similarly, being the sole provider can lead to men exerting control over the financial resources of women and their children, as women are often expected to be caregivers and do housework. Moreover, being the sole provider can lead to immense stress and powerlessness in case men face economic hardship or are unable to find employment. It can also lead to lack of involvement in the family life, when men are mandated to work long hours and overtime to fulfil their role as the sole financial provider in the family.²² In conclusion, it is important to recognize the value and importance of all humanistic traits, regardless of whether they are traditionally associated with masculinity or femininity, and to work towards a more inclusive and equitable understanding of what it means to be a healthy individual. By doing so, we can create a more supportive and understanding society that values and promotes the well-being of all individuals regardless of their gender.

C. Impacts of Patriarchal Beliefs and Patriarchal Masculine Identity on Men's Wellbeing

Patriarchal beliefs and patriarchal masculine identity impose an unhealthy stereotype of masculinity upon men. This stereotype demands men to be dominant, aggressive, and impulsive. A question that raises itself here, as illustrated by a male perpetrator's worker in this study, is *"what about men who don't conform to this rigid prototype; men who have different sexual orientation or those who prioritize being nurturing, understanding, and loving over dominance and aggression?"* The answer to this question is simple: patriarchy fails to account for the diverse range of expressions

and identities within the male population, while subjecting men who don't confirm to this rigid stereotype to marginalization and social ostracization. Even men who conform to this patriarchal masculine identity are burdened by its narrow constraints. For instance, the burden of being the sole financial provider can create significant stress and pressure for men, especially that in recent years the family's needs had exponentially grown and the country is witnessing severe economic crisis. Patriarchy seems to be a system with double standards; along with the privilege of power that is bestowed on men comes a great amount of burdens and unrealistic expectations of consistently living up to the "masculine standards".

1. General Health

Conformity to the patriarchal masculine identity has negative consequences on men's general wellbeing. Pressures to engage in risky behavior in order to assert masculinity lead to dangerous health behaviors such as reckless driving, extreme sports or dangerous activities, and carrying weapons.²⁴ Moreover, the expectation of self-sufficiency and self-reliance can influence men's medical seeking behavior, where "displaying a concern for one's wellbeing may be deemed feminine or weak."²⁵ On a global level, men's mortality is higher than women. Men are also more likely to have diseases, including cardiovascular diseases and diabetes that can be prevented if they seek proper medical care.²⁵ Global patterns of cardiovascular disease morbidity are reflected in Lebanon, where men are more likely to develop cardiovascular diseases.²⁶

2. Psychological Wellbeing

Literature on mental health and masculinity has illustrated that the burdens of the patriarchal masculine identity is correlated with lower emotional intelligence, poor mental health outcomes, in addition to decreased mental health service seeking behaviors.^{27,28} Patriarchy negatively impacts men's emotional intelligence; one man during the focus group discussion asserted that "most men struggle with differentiating and labeling their own emotions; we were raised not to express ourselves, we think and feel something while we express something else." In the same context, a psychologist in this study confirmed that "*patriarchy is extremely unjust towards men; in our clinics we come across many men who are unable to express their feelings, men who are unable to be intimate and romantic with their partners, and men who struggle to maintain close relationships with their children, friends, and work colleagues.*" Another male perpetrator's worker in this study added that "*men often struggle to express their bottled-up emotions, which can lead to unresolved feelings that can manifest in various ways, such as anger and aggression, as well as conditions like depression, alcohol abuse, and substance dependency.*"

Bearing the financial burden of the household as sole breadwinner also has negative consequences on men. For example, a study on men's mental health in Lebanon found that "men considered financial obstacles as major drivers to stress and mental health issues [...] because of their failure to secure employment, improve their family's economic situation, and meet aspirations for a better life."²⁴

A national study on mental health seeking behavior in Lebanon found that men are less likely than women to discuss their mental health issues or seek professional help.²⁹ Men experiencing mental health symptoms are also more likely to report "aggression, substance use, and engaging in high-risk behaviors that can negatively affect their health, relationships, and well-being."³⁰ A psychologist in this study confirmed that "*in our work, we frequently encounter men who have reached alarming stages of psychological distress and physical problems, yet they still resist seeking help because they were taught that 'seeking help is a sign of weakness.'*"

3. Suicide

Unrealistic financial responsibilities, emotional expression restraint, social ostracism for not conforming to patriarchal masculine identity, and reluctance to seek help due to the patriarchal beliefs, all contribute to heightened levels of suicide in men. A study on suicide patterns in Lebanon between 2008-2018 found that the number of male suicides were on average double the number of female suicides in most governorates.³¹ Moreover, with the worsening economic crisis, men face the mounting pressure of the role of being the sole provider for their households. While no official statistics have been published yet, informal data from Embrace, a local NGO that runs a national suicide hotline, confirms that between November and December 2022, out of 29 reported cases of suicide in Lebanon, 79% were males. In addition, notable cases of suicide in the media have highlighted this economic pressure; it is reported that some of these cases were a result of the increasing difficulties faced by men in providing for

their households. For example, in December 2019, N.F., a 40-year-old father of two living in the Arsal region, died by suicide after being unable to cover the costs of his wife's cancer treatment.³² As the crisis progresses, these pressures can only be expected to compound even further.

D. Patriarchy is Being Contested and Challenged in Lebanon

In recent years, patriarchy has been contested and challenged in Lebanon through various means, including activism, advocacy, and legal reforms. Women's rights organizations and activists are leading these initiatives, with the aim of increasing awareness about gender-based violence and promoting gender equality through advocating for changes in societal norms, policies, and laws.³³ Although some progress has been made, there is still a long way to go in dismantling patriarchy in Lebanon. In other words, patriarchy is still very much prevalent; this system is still deeply ingrained in traditional family dynamics, socio-cultural norms, state laws and personal status laws. For instance, gender-based violence is still a prevalent issue, with domestic violence and sexual harassment being widespread problems.¹⁰ Moreover, women still experience discrimination and encounter obstacles in various public domains, such as the workplace, thus hindering their advancement.¹⁰

The results of the focus group discussions with men confirmed that men, in this study, held diverse attitudes towards masculinity and gender equality. Some men extremely conformed to the patriarchal masculine identity, others held contradictory beliefs of

being egalitarian to a certain extent while still holding onto patriarchal beliefs, while some were completely egalitarian. The discussions also revealed that the gradual dismantling of patriarchy has left men who strongly identified with the patriarchal masculine identity, as well as those with conflicting beliefs regarding gender equality, in a state of cognitive dissonance and doubt.

Cognitive dissonance was evident in men who strongly confirmed to the patriarchal masculine identity. Those men vehemently defended the only familiar system they know "patriarchy". They acknowledged that "*patriarchy puts unrealistic expectation and burdens on them and hinders their emotional expression,*" but they also claimed that they "*chose to uphold these societal expectations and viewed their emotional silence as a strength.*"² These men also viewed "modern parenting as creating men who are not masculine enough to handle life's challenges."

Cognitive dissonance was also evident, in this study, in men who held contradictory beliefs regarding gender equality. These men embraced some egalitarian values and behaviors, supported gender equality and women's rights, but also felt threatened by this shift, resisted change, and conformed to patriarchal masculine identities. For example, some men strongly opposed feminism while acknowledging that nothing can justify violence against women. These men viewed feminism as a "*western parasite and part of an international agenda to rob men of their*

² All the phrases in this section with italic font are direct quotes from men who participated in the focus group discussions in this study.

identities and corrupt women." They believed that *"feminism empowers women over men and supports women in escaping from their responsibilities and discipline."* However, these same men who opposed feminism, acknowledged that *"nothing justifies violence against women, even in cases of sexual and emotional infidelity."* Another example of holding contradictory beliefs is when some men expressed anger towards discussions of abuse committed by men, claiming that *"men are also victims of abuse by their wives and need protection."* They falsely asserted that *"the reported percentages of male victims are misleading because many men are ashamed to disclose their abuse."* Furthermore, they argued that *"there is a strong tendency to trust the narratives of women survivors (تصديق الناجيات) while ignoring the fact that many reported stories are created by women to falsely accuse innocent men."* These same men who opposed violence committed against men claimed that *"perpetrating violence against women can be justified in cases of sexual and emotional infidelity or if the woman is reluctant to fulfill her traditional role in the family."*

However, it is important to note that this patriarchal view of men only represents one side of the coin. In this study, some men drastically opposed those views and asserted that *"they do not justify any form of violence against women."* They believe that *"all forms of abuse should be completely prohibited and that violence is never justified, even in cases of sexual infidelity or a wife being provocative or not fulfilling her role as a wife/mother."* These men emphasized the importance of communication in solving marital problems

and stated that *"divorce should be considered rather than resorting to any form of violence."* Moreover, these men also acknowledged that they have healthy relationships with their children, unlike their relationships with their parents. They play with their kids, listen to them, protect them from abuse at school, and provide for their needs. Similarly, they have relationships with their wives based on partnership, cooperation, communication, understanding, and mutual support. They even applauded women's empowerment to work and financially support their own families, especially during these times of economic crisis. It is noteworthy that in this study, two-thirds of men, including those who held patriarchal beliefs, asserted that violence is never justified towards women.

IV. FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORMATION OF MALE PERPETRATOR'S IDENTITY

A. Patriarchy: Root Cause of the Formation of Male Perpetrator's Identity

Patriarchy is the root cause of the formation of the male perpetrator's identity. It is a system of gender inequality that places men in positions of dominance, entitlement, and control over women. Patriarchy also imposes unrealistic expectations and burdens on men, including the traditional roles of being the sole provider and protector of the family. These men face enormous challenges having to constantly live up to these roles and expectations; while failing to meet these roles and expectations thus brings enormous amounts of shame, powerlessness, humiliation and other vulnerable emotions. This is especially true when their authority is questioned by their subordinates, such as wives and children.

When experiencing humiliation, a common human experience illustrated by the international advisor in this study is "*to feel sad and weep.*" Patriarchy, however, reinforces its influence by robbing men, who experience powerlessness and humiliation, of their humanistic tendency to express vulnerability. This leaves them with only one outlet: displacing their primary emotions of powerlessness and humiliation into the secondary emotion of anger, which is deemed powerful by the patriarchal masculine identity. It is noteworthy

that emotional vulnerability involves the willingness and ability to express and share one's emotions with others, including feelings of fear, sadness, and insecurity. This requires acknowledging and accepting one's emotions as they are, without suppressing or avoiding them, and being open to connecting with others on an emotional level.³⁴

"Anger", which is also a common human experience, is often exacerbated in men who conform to patriarchal masculine identity. When men are robbed of the ability to express emotional vulnerability, they tend to displace their vulnerability to anger which can also become aggression in a domestic or other settings. On the other hand, patriarchal beliefs normalize abuse as a form of "discipline" entitled to men thus allowing them to impulsively act on their anger and become violent towards their partners and children. In other words, when the power balance between both genders, or men's power over women that patriarchy entitles them to possess, is threatened, men resort to violence to redeem their power and their dominant position within their families. Power imbalance happen when women don't conform to the set of characteristics and behaviors assigned to them by patriarchy. Gender-based violence is thus perpetuated by men not as an expression of power, but rather as an expression of powerlessness. In conclusion, as stated by one of the lawyers in

this study, *"given that patriarchy perpetuates gender inequality, imposes unrealistic burdens, and normalizes abuse as a 'man's right', thank God (كثير خير الله) there exist men out there who are not abusive."*

On another note, normalization of abuse in social settings can result from experiencing or witnessing abusive behavior during childhood and exposure to gender policing that reinforces abusive behavior. Children learn through modeling and imitation, observing the behavior of those around them, such as parents, peers, and characters in the media. Children may witness their fathers being abusive towards their mothers or witness aggressive behavior by their peers or in the media. Children can also be victims of abuse themselves at home, school, or with their peers. It is noteworthy that some parents use physical punishment as a form of discipline, often lacking the understanding of the detrimental impacts of this type of punishment and/or being unaware of modern parenting methods. Normalizing violence can also occur through socializing children to engage in rough play or encouraging aggressive behavior with friends. Moreover, gender policing, exercised by parents, peers, and society can encourage abusive behavior and ostracize men who do not conform to patriarchal masculine identity. This study exemplifies the normalization of violence, as one-third of the men who participated in the focus group discussions, expressed the belief that a husband has an absolute right to discipline his wife in specific situations, including cases of sexual and emotional infidelity, disobedience, disrespect, or neglect of the children.

In this context, a psychologist in the study argued that *"exposure to abuse at home, school, or through media can desensitize children to violence and create a subconscious reference for violence. Thus, when a man is in a state of anger, he may revert to this template and express himself through rage and aggression. Additionally, being abused during childhood can create suppressed anger and grudges in children that may later be displaced onto their partners and children."* However, it is important to note that not all men who experience or witness abuse during childhood become abusive later in life. As one man in the focus group discussion illustrated, *"psychotherapy can be effective in helping individuals heal from their traumas and become healthy adults. In the end, anger is a universal human experience, and while some individuals choose to express it in healthy ways, others may resort to violence."*

It is important to differentiate between violence in a domestic setting and violence in other social settings. When we refer to perpetrator's identity in this study, we mean the man who perpetrates domestic violence (violence against women and children). Normalization of violence in a domestic setting is caused by patriarchal entitlement of power (power over women and children) and the subsequent belief that a man is able to discipline women and children through using violence. However, it's important to mention that violence in other social settings is normalized through the same dynamic of men having power entitlement over other men.

This power entitlement dynamic is encouraged by early male socialization (education,

modelling, suppression of vulnerability, expression of anger, acting upon anger) and gender policing (the threat of exclusion, exile, or violent punishment of men who don't conform to the masculine identity).

B. Other Factors Associated with the Formation of Male Perpetrator's Identity

There are other factors that contribute to the formation of the male perpetrator's identity, including the presence of severe psychological disorder and anger displacement. Men who have severe psychological disorders such as antisocial personality disorder, alcohol and substance dependency, severe PTSD, and psychosis may be more likely to perpetrate violence. Additionally, anger displacement, including job-related stress, have been associated with violent behavior. The key researcher and psychologist in this study noted that *"some men belonging to the low-income class (فئة الشعبوية), who experience daily stressors at work and successive failures, may not be able to express their anger and dissatisfaction at work and instead take out their frustrations on their wives as a way to compensate for their feelings of inferiority."*

V. “CHOICE, A PROGRAM FOR MEN”: A REHABILITATION PROGRAM FOR MALE PERPETRATORS IN LEBANON

Men are the primary perpetrators of gender-based violence, and research has shown that mandatory and voluntary interventions targeting male perpetrators have the potential to reduce the risks of gender-based violence.³⁵ Perpetrator rehabilitation is based on the principle that violent men must take accountability and responsibility for their actions by recognizing the impact of their violent behavior and actively changing their behavior.³⁶ Through rehabilitation programs, men are able to learn psychosocial and cognitive skills such as interpersonal and communication skills, anger management, and appropriate emotional regulation and expression.⁸ Research evidence has shown that “highly equitable gender attitudes were protective against single and repeat episodes of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) perpetration.”³⁷ For this reason, rehabilitation programs also aim to change men’s patriarchal masculine beliefs and attitudes, which are considered the root cause of gender-based violence.³⁸ Rehabilitation programs for perpetrators are becoming widely adopted across both high and low- to middle-income countries.

A. “Choice: A Program for Men”

“Choice, A Program for Men”, is a rehabilitation program for men who have perpetrated violence of any type towards their partners, children, or other family members and who

want to develop non-abusive relationships with them. This program was founded by KAFA in 2019, in response to an article in the Law 293, which mandates the rehabilitation of male perpetrators, as part of the penalty verdict. According to the program manager, the work on developing this program started in 2018. As there is no local expertise on this topic in Lebanon, KAFA, consulted with two international British professionals who have more than 20 years of experience in working with perpetrators and victims of abuse. These professionals came to Lebanon and conducted a desk review, along with in-depth interviews with key informants, including judges, social workers, directors, lawyers, and researchers. After drafting the intervention manual, they returned to Lebanon to train KAFA’s staff on how to implement this program.

“Choice: A Program for Men” comprises four essential components: assessment, intervention, clinical supervision, and progress reports. The assessment phase involves a detailed psychological and risk assessment of the male perpetrator. The assessment focuses on the severity and intensity of violence, the presence of severe psychological disorders, and the history of criminal behavior. Based on this detailed assessment, and on a case-by-case basis, “Choice” determines the eligibility of the male perpetrator to participate in the rehabilitation program. Some male

perpetrators may be deemed ineligible for the program, such as those with severe and untreated psychological disorders including severe OCD, psychosis, paranoia, bipolar disorder, or personality disorders like anti-social personality disorder, narcissism, or borderline personality disorder.

The program intervention is a one-to-one session primarily aiming at a behavioral change work, which can be adjusted to fit each male beneficiary on the basis of ongoing needs assessment, and typically consists of 24 to 52 sessions. The program takes a psycho-educational and integrative therapeutic approach and uses various techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, psychodynamic therapy, anger management, mindfulness, and didactic teaching. Through this program, perpetrator's workers prioritize building positive relationships with clients and addressing their violent behavior and redefining their beliefs around masculinity. The program covers several themes, including the causes and impacts of violence, emotional regulation, safety planning, trigger identification, emotional regulation techniques, fathering skills, redefining patriarchal values, sexual respect, and more.

The program recognizes the importance of providing ongoing support and guidance to the workers who engage with male perpetrators on a weekly basis. Therefore, it includes frequent clinical supervision sessions with a senior clinical psychologist who specializes in working with perpetrators of violence. These sessions are used to review the progress of each client, evaluate the effectiveness of

the intervention, and make any necessary adjustments to the program to better meet their needs. The program can also provide periodic progress reports and a final detailed report at the end of the intervention, to the relevant judges, for male perpetrators who are referred by the court. These reports help to demonstrate the progress made by the perpetrator throughout the program. It is also noteworthy that an ongoing risk assessment of the clients may signal an increase of the risks which would require a closer monitoring and frequent reporting to the relevant judges.

The manager of "Choice, A Program for Men" emphasizes that the program is periodically revised to ensure its ongoing effectiveness. Although the program was initially developed based on a study of the local context, they have observed over the past three years that certain areas of the intervention require more extensive work with Lebanese men. As a result, the intervention manual is currently being amended to address these areas. Additionally, the program's evaluation tools are being enhanced to ensure continuous improvement.

The following two case studies illustrate the effectiveness of "Choice, A Program for Men" as a rehabilitation program for male perpetrators in Lebanon.

1. Case Study One

This case study was drafted by Mr. Karim Khalil, a former male perpetrator worker at Kafa organization, as part of "Choice, A Program for Men".

Understanding Client's Presenting Problem

Adel was referred to me by one of the social workers at KAFA, in September 2020, because he had been physically and verbally violent towards his fiancé. The client is 30 years old, works as a full-time professor at a University in Lebanon. His physical status is normal, he is healthy, with coherent speech. He lives with his fiancé Sara, an older female he met from work. He helps his parents financially, who also reside in Lebanon, since they do not work. Adel didn't mention any history of drug or alcohol abuse related to perpetrating violence.

Adel initially reported that he needs to be better at controlling his anger, as well as not to be physically violent anymore. The violence occurs mainly with his fiancé Sara. There was also one incidence Adel told me about where he pushed his mother, which means that there is risk of violence not only with his fiancé. The client acknowledges that this is a real problem that he needs to fix and change, he is aware that violence is wrong in all its forms, but he tended to give excuses for his actions and blaming others, such as 'this is the only way she listens', or 'she kept pushing me'. The violence tends to be verbal, swear words between both Sara and Adel, shouting and raising his voice, as well as physical. The physical violence is occasional, for example about once every 2-3 months, it is usually pushing, a kick on the leg, a slap, but it reached its full intensity once, only a few days before Adel started this program. During that last incident Adel pushed Sara; she fell on a table causing it to break, which really hurt her back. A few days after the incident, Adel started his sessions with me at 'Choice, A Program for Men'. It is noteworthy that Adel is not violent outside his own house.

For Adel, the benefit of violence is feeling heard, as Sara and him tend to have honest discussions and go through a honeymoon phase, after a major fight. The cost of violence is that he feels guilty about hurting Sara, he is also afraid to physically harm her (and almost did in their last fight when she fell on the table), and this will hurt their relationship in the long term. Adel does feel guilty and expresses remorse about his actions during our one-on-one sessions. He reports being aware of the impact of his actions on the victim.

Adel mentions a very difficult past with his parents. His mother and father were never in good terms, and there was a lot of fighting at home. Adel also witnessed his father physically abusing his mom, and he used to be in the middle of their arguments. Adel mentions that he was physically abused from both his mother and his father when he was young. While the client resents his parents for this past, this could also be a learnt behavior he adopted later during his adulthood. The client understands that there are masculine patriarchal norms in our society; for example, it is usually the 'man's word' that is listened to and most respected at home, but he rejects such ideas as his own values. He does, however, report that he grew up with such values, that he would often hear, especially from his dad, that men should not cry or show emotion, he even remembers instances where he would cry and be shamed from it, as a child. He did adopt some of these values as his own, but started rejecting them with time. It does seem like, he tends to express himself more with anger than any other emotion, especially with his family and fiancé, due to it being the emotion that is mostly accepted for men, rather than sadness/

fear/anxiety. It also seems like he is more submissive outside of his home. For example, if Adel needs to fix his car and it is taking time, it would be Sara that is most assertive with the worker and will get it done faster. It seems that because Sara has a strong personality, he feels more of a man and more in control if he is more dominating inside the home, since he is not able to be so outside.

Adel does admit that violence in all forms is wrong, but he does give some excuses to his father being violent with him, as a cultural norm, so there are some contradictions; he is aware it is wrong but still excuse it. Ultimately, Adel does not want to continue being violent, and he has full intention to stop the violence completely. It is important to note that Adel's past with his parents, as well as his relationship with Sara, is affecting him psychologically, as his mood is deteriorating and he is always stressed and tense. Due to this, he has been undergoing weekly psychoanalysis therapy, for 6 months before joining the program at "Choice". Psychodynamic therapy often operates on the past traumas and how these traumas might lead to current problems. "Choice", however, works on the current problems while exploring the past in some sessions, meaning that Adel could benefit from both interventions in different ways. He can work on healing the past wounds with his psychoanalytic therapist, while working on his behavior and patriarchal beliefs with me. While Adel does display some low mood, there is no formal psychiatric diagnosis given. The impact of his violence is not only affecting his relationship with his fiancé, but also with his family. Although he is not particularly physically violent with his parents, he does lose his temper quickly and

gets easily triggered when they ask him to solve any problem for them. At his job as well, although he loves teaching and his work, he might get easily triggered by his students, but he does not show it and does not lose temper at work. Note that at the time of our sessions, it was still during COVID period, and his work was mainly online through ZOOM, which added to his dissatisfaction as a teacher. The client's goals through this intervention were to better control his anger and cope with his emotions, as well as to stop being violent completely. In general, the client does want to feel happier, improve his relationship, and put boundaries with his parents.

Intervention

The intervention utilized a handbook called "Working with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence for Individual Sessions (WWP)" as part of "Choice: A Program for Men". Weekly supervision by an international expert was also provided to tailor the tools in the handbook to meet the individual needs of the case. During this intervention, the goal is to allow Adel to understand his anger, learn ways to control his anger and express his emotions, learn communication skills in times of conflict, assertiveness and boundary setting, as well as redefine his patriarchal masculine beliefs. Adel had approximately 30 one-on-one sessions. The first half of the sessions were done at KAFA, Badaro. The second half of the sessions were done online via Zoom. This is due to the difficult state in Lebanon, at the time of the intervention, where the gas stations were closed and it was difficult to get around by car. The sessions were about 50 minutes to an hour long.

The strategies used were mainly taken from the WWP booklet discussed earlier in this case study along with some tailored exercises discussed with my supervisor. The main goal at the start of the program is to build a rapport with Adel, in order for him to come back for other sessions. It was also important to assess his eligibility for this program; some of the exclusion criteria would be if the perpetrator has serious substance abuse problems or mental health problems (psychosis, bipolar disorder, severe OCD, PTSD, suicidality) which would make them more suited for therapy to deal with those issues before joining our program, or simultaneously if the perpetrator is stable. It is also best for the perpetrator to have at least a small sense of motivation to change, and not to be in extreme denial of their violent behavior. Adel is a suitable candidate for the program as he does not have any major mental health concerns, and has the motivation to change and repair his behavior. While building the relationship with Adel, I first started to ask about him, took interest in his life, what he does, etc... I made sure to avoid making any judgement or show any hostility, even if we are talking about instances where he was abusive. I also reinforced him for the fact that he sought help, which many men would find difficult to do. It is important to make sure that Adel and I share the same goals, which is to stop the violence first and foremost, and then to work on communication skills, his relationships, especially with his fiancé and his parents. I also made sure to explain, that while stopping violence is not only for the safety of those around him, but also for his own good; to foster better relationships with those around him, and lead a better life for himself. Also at the beginning stage, I made sure to fill a Risk

Assessment form, called the 'Risk Indicator Checklist'. I kept on scoring this checklist every few sessions to evaluate the progress of Adel.

Throughout the course of our sessions, Adel and I discussed many strategies. First and foremost, we did a safety plan. I always reminded Adel that anger in itself is not the problem, as anger is a natural emotion that all human beings feel, but it is how we react to this anger that is key. The safety plan included things Adel could do in a moment of anger rather than being violent or abusive. The thing Adel agreed to the most during the safety plan is to get out of the room if he starts to feel like things are getting out of control. He agreed that once his anger would dissipate, he would then communicate with his fiancé. It is highly important for Adel to understand his triggers, so I would always tell him to monitor his triggers in between sessions. His main trigger was when he felt like his fiancé was making him feel like a child or if she would mention his parents in a negative light. He said that she would make him feel like he is too attached to his parents and that she is trying to drive a wedge between him and his mother. After uncovering the triggers, Adel would then monitor his physical reactions while the anger is building up. One technique we would use for Adel to calm himself down, is the 4-7-8 breathing technique: You breathe in for 4 seconds through your nose, pause for 7 seconds, then breathe out for 8 seconds through your mouth, and then repeat it for a few times. Adel really liked this technique after we did it in session, and would later tell me that he is doing it almost every day. We also did a communication technique called I-statements: The point would be to start a sentence by 'I feel',

rather than 'You are', especially in an argument or discussion. This technique allows a person to express himself without automatically putting the blame on others, and thus creating a fight. With I-statements, the other person will get less defensive.

Adel and I discussed his triggers a little bit more, which are mainly related to his parents, so we spoke about his past. Adel reports that his parents used to fight a lot at home, and he witnessed his father being verbally and physically abusive to his mother, while he would play a protective role to his mom. Growing up, his father was also emotionally distant and would not let Adel express emotions, or would tell him to 'man up' and 'don't cry' if he saw him crying. Although he was closer to his mother, but she was also physically abusive towards him if he misbehaved, it was a normal form of punishment at home. Adel even normalizes some of the abuse, because it is sometimes normal in our culture to use physical punishments, but he realizes that it was wrong and even expresses anger in session when talking about the past with his parents. He does seem more upset with his mother though, because he believes she relies too much on him for emotional and (currently) financial support. He says 'She manipulates me.' He does not want to come in between her and his father, but he believes that she always puts him in the middle. He has developed some resentment towards her, and this may have generalized to how he views other women in general, as emotionally manipulative or trying to control him. I could clearly see when he says there exist some similarities between his fiancé and his mother, that they sometimes both make him feel worthless when he is not

able to do what they want. Adel was able to see that he sees his fiancé Sara as his mother at times, and displaces the anger he has towards his mother onto Sara. I stressed to Adel, that it is important not to continue the cycle of abuse, because when he was a child, he was also a victim and could not control what his parents did, but now, he is an adult who can differentiate between right and wrong, and has control over his actions.

After Adel discovered more of his triggers, and would try to control his anger by leaving the situation and coming back when he felt calmer, he had a relapse. There was a moment where he and Sara got into an argument, and he pushed her. It was not the same intensity of violence as previously, but it was still physical aggression and a setback for Adel. As usual, the trigger of the argument was Sara bringing up Adel's parents into the conversation; he says he tried some of the techniques discussed but then lost his temper. I had to normalize setbacks for Adel but also had to be assertive that no matter what Sara did, any form of physical abuse is wrong and he is responsible for his actions. I sent Adel a form that we give in "Choice", which is a contract, or an agreement, mandating that he will not lay his hands on Sara again. This contract was discussed between Adel and I, along with its importance to ensure that he fully understands that this contract is for him to take more responsibility, and he accepted it.

Moving forward with our work, whenever Adel would get upset at his partner, he was able to reflect why he is truly upset, is it his partner or is it a trigger within him? Adel was also introduced to the fact that as men, we are taught to show the powerful emotions

(anger), but not the vulnerable ones (sadness, fear, loneliness, and hurt), and that anger specifically, is typically a secondary emotion to another vulnerable emotion that we cannot express. I worked with Adel on accepting that showing these vulnerable emotions does not make him any less of a man. During the process of our work together, Adel and his fiancé eventually broke up. Although the physical violence had stopped, but the disagreements were ongoing, and they both wanted different things in life. It seems she wanted to get married as soon as possible, but Adel was still figuring his life out, and decided that he cannot commit to the relationship any longer. He moved out and got an apartment for himself. Adel still had some anger episodes so our work was not done. His parents were separating and he was financially taking care of them, and felt like they were still trying to put him in the middle which always ended up in arguments. He was very easily triggered and irritable with his mother. We spoke about Adel's inner child, the child that never felt good enough in his own home when he was younger, and how a lot of his expressions of anger would be his inner child speaking out. We did some role-playing exercise, where I would play the role of his mother, and Adel would play himself. I would ask Adel about a situation that angered him and we would recreate it in sessions. At first, I would say something that possibly his mother would say, and I would ask him to respond as the wounded or angry inner child. Then, I would say the same thing, but I would ask him to answer as the mature and controlled older Adel. This exercise would be to teach Adel to differentiate between both reactions, and to be able to better reflect before reacting impulsively in the future.

Outcome of the Intervention

In our process, Adel truly did improve a lot, he went from an 8 to a 5 in the Risk Assessment form, only because for some questions he would have to answer if he had been violent in the past year, the answer would be 'yes', but he actually hasn't been violent in the last recent months after the sessions. I can safely say that the outcome of the sessions was quite successful. Since starting with us, Adel only had one relapse which was earlier on in the program, while the fights did not stop, the intensity was never as severe as before the sessions started. It was also clear that there was unhealthy attachment between Adel and Sara, as well as between him and his mother. After exploring his relationship with his own mother, Adel was able to see that he was taking his frustrations out on Sara, as well as having the need to detach. Besides the physical violence subsiding, Adel was also able to place boundaries with his family as well. He is better able to understand his emotions, control them, and express himself in a healthier manner. In the last few sessions when I asked Adel for his feedback, he expressed how much this program helped and changed him. He is also looking forward to move on with his life without hanging on to the difficult past, and he is more aware that he is in control of his actions, and that there is no excuse for violence or mistreatment of others.

2. Case Study Two

This case study was drafted by Mr. Tony Abou Zeidan, a former male perpetrator worker at KAFA organization, as part of "Choice, A Program for Men".

Understanding Client's Presenting Problem

Badr was referred to KAFA's "Choice, A Program for Men" by a social worker in October 2021. This program is designed for male perpetrators of abuse, and KAFA typically informs women survivors who benefit from the services of the Support Center about it. Badr, 32 years old and employed in administrative work in Lebanon, had no severe or chronic medical conditions or diagnosed psychiatric disorders. He had never sought the help of a mental health professional. Badr was married and lived with his wife and daughter. He stated that his family had no history of violence, mental health issues, or substance abuse, but later revealed during sessions that his siblings had bullied and physically abused him in the past.

During his initial session, the client was asked why he joined "Choice, A Program for Men." He explained that he and his wife had been experiencing conflicts and violence, and he wanted to work on his anger issues to fix their relationship and avoid separation. He described himself as generally kind but uses violence when 'he feels out of control.' When asked about the violence in his relationship, he explained that it was mainly verbal, including yelling, swearing, and blaming, with minimal physical violence. He referred to his abusive behavior as a 'simple use of violence' that is less severe than other men who abuse their partners. He provided an example of hitting his wife on the leg during an argument when she claimed to be the primary breadwinner. He described it as 'a very small hit that doesn't even hurt.' He also mentioned that he mostly yells and uses swear words during conflicts. It appears that Badr downplayed the severity of his abusive behavior. While his case may not

be as severe as some others seen at KAFA, it seemed that Badr still attempted to minimize the impact of his violence on his wife.

According to Badr, he has been engaging in violent behavior towards his wife since the economic crisis in Lebanon started in late 2019. The Risk Indicator Checklist (RIC) qualitatively evaluated Badr's risk of perpetrating violence as low, given his minimal use of force while physically abusing his wife and daughter, on a limited number of occasions, with no attempts at death threats, marital rape, substance use disorder, or previous arrests and imprisonment. However, outside of his family, Badr has a history of picking fights with his friends and exhibiting violent reactions and anger outbursts when faced with offensive humor and opposition from others. For example, he hit a family member with an ashtray after a fight over politics and hit a man with a shovel on his head for sexually harassing his friend's wife.

Badr acknowledged that the costs of his violent behavior far outweighed the benefits. He reported that his wife was left feeling sad, scared, disappointed, exhausted, and humiliated by his violence, which caused psychological and physical harm. He also admitted that his daughter learned violent and dysfunctional behaviors from him, including being aggressive towards her mother and friends, breaking toys, and being stubborn and verbally aggressive. Furthermore, he revealed that his anger outbursts and violent behavior put him at risk of getting into fights with others, damaging his interpersonal relationships and reputation, and possibly leading to his arrest in the future. Despite this, the client

reported that he felt relief after expressing his anger, disciplining his daughter, and proving his point. He also admitted to feeling guilty and sad after the incidents of violence and acknowledged that his actions were creating damage within his family. However, he placed blame on his wife for his behavior.

After working with Badr, we discovered that his violent behavior towards his wife and daughter was rooted in patriarchal masculine beliefs. He disclosed that he lived in a society that reinforced hiding "weak" emotions and exhibiting "strong" ones. He was taught that he should be the head of the family and in charge of finances, so when the economic crisis hit and he was barely making any income from the public sector, he felt powerless. His wife's income from the private sector, which was higher than his own, only added to this feeling of powerlessness. He expressed attitudes and beliefs that reflected these patriarchal norms, including: 'I am no longer the person responsible for the house,' 'if the wife makes more money, then she will be dominant and the man has to be submissive,' and 'what I say has to be respected no matter what, she [his wife] shouldn't argue with me over how money should be spent.' Badr's identification with these beliefs and values led him to constantly seek to prove himself as the "strong man" in charge of the family, and failure to meet these unrealistic expectations made him feel inferior. Consequently, his feelings of humiliation and powerlessness were expressed through rage and aggression. Badr also disclosed that he was bullied and physically abused by his siblings during childhood and had peers during his teenage years who perpetrated verbal and physical violence. Spending time with these

peers taught him this behavior and pushed him to behave like them.

It is important to note that Badr doesn't believe that violence is a norm or a personal right. He condemns violence and considers it an issue that should be treated. He has the intention to change his violent behavior, but he explains that he is unable to control his anger once he gets into a given situation. The client stated that his primary goal in this program is to change his behavior and put an end to his violent actions. He desires to gain better control over his anger and improve his relationships with his wife and daughter. His long-term aspirations are to establish a happy and stable family, have more children with his wife, and achieve financial security. Additionally, he expressed his hopes of advancing his career and living a more prosperous life with his family.

Intervention

For this intervention, we used CHOICE's manual for individual sessions. The intervention was tailored to Badr's needs by selecting appropriate exercises from the manual and adding other exercises in collaboration with my supervisor according to Badr's needs. The goals of the intervention were to stop his violent behavior (both verbal and physical), learn anger management skills, become a better parent, and understand and redefine his patriarchal beliefs. Because of the economic crisis in Lebanon and the resulting increase in transportation expenses, we conducted the intervention over WhatsApp video calls. We had a total of 44 individual sessions, each lasting between 45 and 60 minutes.

During the first sessions, we had an open

discussion about Badr's history of violent behavior, his motivation to change, the costs and benefits of violence, the impact of violence on him, his family, and his interpersonal relationships, factors associated with the development of violent behavior, and goals of the intervention. We also administered the Risk Indicator Checklist (RIC) to assess the client's risk of committing violence, which we readministered at multiple times during the intervention to evaluate Badr's progress. Badr was very open to all questions, friendly, calm, and motivated to engage in the discussions. We developed a good rapport, which is an essential ingredient in our therapeutic relationship and helps to prevent client dropout. Based on Badr's needs, we decided to work first on his relationship with his wife. Badr identified the negative aspects (getting angry, shouting, losing temper, etc.) and positive aspects (listening, appreciating my partner, talking calmly, etc.) of his relationship with his wife. He also uncovered the causes of the negative aspects of his relationship and learned coping skills to cut down on those negative aspects, such as breathing techniques, as an emotional regulation tool. This technique helped Badr to be calm in moments of stress, regulate his anger, and restrain from engaging in anger outbursts. Following the emotional regulation exercises, we worked together to uncover the triggers of Badr's violent behavior. One of the most imminent triggers revolved around the financial issues, his feelings of powerlessness regarding this topic as well as how this topic was being dealt with in the discussions between his wife and himself. After fully understanding the triggers, we created a safety plan which included strategies that Badr could resort to after being exposed to these triggers in order

not to engage in a violent behavior. He could thus be aware of the dangerous territory he gets himself in when the trigger arises, and using emotional regulating techniques rather than engaging in violent behavior. The safety plan also included resuming the discussions with his wife about the triggering topic once the anger dissipates using learnt communication skills.

Badr was also receiving psychoeducation about the negative effects of physical punishment on children's development, well-being and future CHOICES when he expressed concern around the difficulties he's facing with his daughter aggressive and explosive behavior. Physical punishment can in fact teach children to resolve conflicts through violence, normalize bullying and aggression, and have a negative impact on their self-esteem and self-confidence. It may also lead children to choose violent partners in the future. Badr also worked on his fathering skills through working towards achieving the qualities he wanted his daughter to see in him, such as loving, caring, and supportive. He was introduced to various positive parenting strategies, including modeling, giving clear instructions, praising good behavior, confronting problematic behavior, and giving warnings. We also used role-play as a technique that would help him integrate these strategies thus facilitating their implementation outside the clinical setting.

Later in the intervention, Badr reported that these techniques were successful in improving his daughter's behavior.

As previously mentioned, Badr's violent behavior stems from his identification with

patriarchal beliefs. Badr thus learned that patriarchal beliefs place unrealistic burdens on men, preventing them from expressing their own emotions, and negatively impacting their relationships. I encouraged Badr to uncover the negative impacts of patriarchy on him and normalize that he and his wife are equally responsible for their family. Through detailed discussions and exercises on masculinity, Badr was able to identify the traits of a 'good man' and understand how patriarchy can turn these traits into oppressive ones. Badr was highly engaged in these discussions and exercises, showing a keen interest in redefining masculinity. Throughout our work on redefining masculinity, Badr was able to regulate his loud voice tone, a habit that caused him many problems with his family, friends, colleagues and even strangers who often assumed that he was yelling or being aggressive. Through role-playing exercises, Badr practiced speaking with a lower and calmer voice, which helped him feel less stressed and more comfortable. In later sessions, he mentioned that this was a life-changing experience for him, as he had long struggled with interpersonal problems.

During sessions 25 and 26, Badr expressed concern about the tension between him and his wife, although it had decreased in intensity and verbal abuse was less frequent. I reminded Badr that change is a gradual process and that setbacks are to be expected. However, it is essential for him to take responsibility for his actions and to continue to practice the techniques he had learned to avoid any kind of violence. I encouraged him to identify his triggers and to use the exercises we had practiced together to regain his momentum. Towards the end of our sessions, Badr faced a

new challenge when he lost his job. This left him feeling sad, stressed, and angry. To help him cope, we created a daily planner that included self-care exercises to avoid routine, boredom, and conflicts. I reminded Badr that he is not defined by his job and that he has the opportunity to use this time to reflect on his goals and aspirations. We worked on setting achievable short-term goals that would help him feel productive and empowered. Overall, Badr showed a great deal of progress throughout our intervention and demonstrated a strong commitment to change.

Outcome of the Intervention

I can confidently say that the outcome of the intervention was very successful on many levels. First and foremost, Badr was able to completely stop perpetrating physical violence towards his wife, which was a significant achievement. Furthermore, as we progressed through our sessions, the intensity and frequency of verbal violence towards his wife became minimal. Badr was also able to identify his triggers and learn anger management skills that allowed him to manage his relationship with his wife in a healthy way, ultimately fostering a better and more respectful relationship. Throughout the sessions, Badr became more expressive and was able to easily discuss his challenges and concerns, draw links between his thoughts and emotions, and make healthy decisions. Initially, Badr was resistant to taking responsibility for his violent behavior towards his wife, but after participating in the rehabilitation program, he learned to take accountability for his actions and identify the underlying issues that had contributed to his behavior. As a result, he stopped blaming his wife for the violence in their relationship and began to actively work

towards repairing the damage caused by his past behavior. The program gave him the tools and support needed to build a healthier, more respectful relationship with his wife, leading to a positive change in their lives. Badr also became a better father to his daughter by implementing the positive parenting skills he learned in the sessions.

In addition to improving his family relationships, Badr was able to understand the negative impacts of patriarchy on him, challenge patriarchal beliefs, redefine his masculine beliefs, and learn the healthy ingredients of a 'good man'. He was also able to establish healthy interpersonal relationships with people outside the context of his family. Finally, Badr was able to implement self-care practices and respond to daily stressors in a healthy way, without reverting to the old pattern of perpetrating violence. During our last session, when I asked Badr about his experience with the intervention, he expressed his gratitude, saying that the rehabilitation program changed his life on so many levels. He now feels confident and armed with the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfill his role as a husband and a father inside the house, and as an integral part of society.

B. Key Factors for Ensuring the Success of "Choice: A Program for Men"

The success stories of Adel and Badr are just two examples of how "Choice, a program for men" can be an effective rehabilitation program for male perpetrators. These case studies demonstrate the positive impact the program can have on individuals who have

engaged in abusive behavior towards their partners or family members. The program is designed to help men understand the root causes of their abusive behavior and learn healthy ways to manage their emotions and relationships. By providing tools and support, the program empowers men to take accountability for their actions and make positive changes in their lives. The success of these two case studies shows that the program can be a valuable resource for men who are committed to ending their abusive behavior and building healthy relationships with their partners and families. The program's focus on challenging patriarchal beliefs and redefining masculinity also helps participants develop a more holistic understanding of healthy relationships and promotes gender equality. Overall, the effectiveness of "Choice, a Program for Men" makes it a valuable resource for communities and individuals seeking to end domestic violence and promote healthy relationships.

Research has shown that the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs for male perpetrators is influenced by several factors. One such factor is the support of the legal system. When the legal system mandates rehabilitation programs, offenders are more likely to participate in them and follow through with treatment.³⁹ Another key factor in the effectiveness of male perpetrator rehabilitation programs is level of patriarchy in a given society. A patriarchal society, where men hold more power and control than women, is more likely to perpetuate the attitudes and beliefs that contribute to violence.⁴⁰ This can make it harder for rehabilitation programs to address the underlying issues that lead to



violent behavior and promote positive changes in offenders. Conversely, a more egalitarian society, where gender roles and expectations are more balanced, can support rehabilitation efforts by providing a more conducive environment for addressing the underlying factors that contribute to sexual violence. In conclusion, the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs for male perpetrators of violence is influenced by a range of factors, including the support of the legal system and the level of gender equality in society. When the legal system supports rehabilitation programs and society is more egalitarian, male perpetrators are more likely to engage in treatment and make positive changes in their behavior. Therefore, a comprehensive approach to ensure the success of “Choice, A Program for Men” includes legislating the mandatory rehabilitation of male perpetrators as well as promoting less patriarchal society in Lebanon. The following sections will describe specific recommendations related to these issues in detail.

VI. LEGISLATING THE MANDATORY REHABILITATION OF MALE PERPETRATORS IN LEBANON

A. Importance of Legislating the Mandatory Rehabilitation of Male Perpetrators in Lebanon

This section addresses the question of why rehabilitation of male perpetrators should be mandated by law in Lebanon. There are many

reasons for this, as evidenced by the review of international studies, as well as the data collected from the focus group discussions and key informant interviews in this study. The following reasons are presented to support this claim (Figure 3):

Figure 3: Importance of Legislating the Mandatory Rehabilitation of Male Perpetrators



1. Increasing the Enrollment of Male Perpetrators in the Rehabilitation Program

In general, many men are hesitant to admit their mistakes, weaknesses, and the need for help and support due to their conformity to patriarchal masculine norms. As confirmed by one of the psychologists in this study, "*when it comes to marital problems, women are more likely to seek help, while men are often reluctant to do so, due to the social stigma and shame associated with seeking help*". Seeking help is often perceived as emasculating and belittling, and men may worry about being bullied or humiliated by peers. This reluctance is even more pronounced in perpetrators of violence, who often normalize violence to such an extent that they do not consider the need for rehabilitation. Enrolling in a rehabilitation program is a first step towards achieving gender equality, primarily by breaking the pattern of using violence to resolve conflicts and putting men in a position where they ought to relinquish their power. Therefore, it is very difficult to expect male perpetrators to voluntarily seek rehabilitation. In most cases, on an international level, male perpetrators who participate in rehabilitation programs are either encouraged by their partner, society, or mandated by the legal system. Sadly, many women in Lebanon lack the necessary support from their families and communities to persuade their partners to seek help. Survivors are unable to say to their abusers, "you cannot come home until you complete rehabilitation", as explained by the international advisor in this study. In the same context, one of the psychologists in this study, who has extensive experience working in the juvenile court, confirmed that "*abusive fathers rarely seek*

therapy unless they are mandated to do so by a judge's order."

In Lebanon, very few male perpetrators of violence voluntarily seek rehabilitation programs. KAFA's "Choice, A Program for Men," for example, has received only 20 cases since its installation in 2019, and only some of them completed the program. In the UK, however, as confirmed by the international advisor in this study, "*the rehabilitation program, which is backed up by the legal system, receives around 5000 referrals per year.*" Therefore, mandating rehabilitation for male perpetrators by law would likely result in more referrals to rehabilitation programs such as 'Choice', particularly among men who conform to the patriarchal masculine identity. This would provide additional protection for women who may not have the ability or resources to persuade their partners to seek help.

2. Increasing Accountability, Ensuring Compliance, and Limiting Dropout

Mandating rehabilitation for male perpetrators of violence can increase their accountability and compliance with the rehabilitation program. As one psychologist noted in this study, "*when perpetrators are referred by the court to complete a rehabilitation program, they tend to understand the seriousness of their violent actions and the importance of change through completing this rehabilitation program.*"

On another hand, rehabilitation programs are characterized by high dropout rates among male perpetrators, which can undermine the effectiveness of such programs.⁴¹ As such, legislating the mandatory rehabilitation for

male perpetrators can reduce dropout rates through imposing legal consequences on absenteeism, such as fines, imprisonment, or other consequences.

3. Rehabilitation Programs Reduce Recidivism

As one of the psychologists in this study noted, *"violence is not a one-time event, but rather a pattern of behavior that tends to worsen over time, much like addiction to substances. It can begin with seemingly small acts of aggression, such as a slap, but may escalate into more severe forms of violence in moments of extreme anger or frustration."* This escalation can lead to irreversible crimes, resulting in severe legal consequences for the perpetrator and tragic loss of life for the victim. Therefore, male perpetrators of domestic violence are at a higher risk of reoffending.

Research studies indicate that rehabilitation programs for male perpetrators of violence can be effective in reducing reoffending (recidivism) rates. A meta-analysis of studies conducted in the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and other countries found that domestic violence treatment programs were associated with lower recidivism rates.⁴² Additionally, a Canadian study found that male perpetrators who completed a specialized rehabilitation program had a 10% lower recidivism rate than those who did not receive any treatment.⁴³ Another study conducted in the United States found that participation in rehabilitation programs was associated with a 45% reduction in the odds of reoffending.⁴⁴

4. Empowering Women to Report Abuse and Minimizing their Risk of Further Exposure to Abuse after Reporting

In our focus group discussions, some women reported that although they experienced intense abuse, they were reluctant to report the abuse because they were isolated, lacked resources, and feared their husbands' violent reaction or the loss of financial support. One survivor in this study reported that her husband threatened her, saying "if you disclose the abuse, I will kill your parents." In addition, some women reported that their parents, friends, and community encouraged them to stay in their houses for the sake of their children, despite the intense abuse. Society might also blame a survivor for disclosing abuse, claiming that she is the one breaking the family ties rather than her husband's abuse.

Unfortunately, women who find their way to report abuse don't experience full security and protection. During our focus group discussions, most survivors asserted that upon reporting abuse, the violence escalated. One survivor reported that her husband threatened her at the court's door, saying *"if you ask for divorce, you will be worth a bullet (حقك رصاصاً)"*. It is a common experience that when a survivor says "no to abuse", the perpetrator turns into an explosive bomb (قنبلة موقوتة), which may explode at any time. Some women in our study reported that even after divorce, they are still threatened and abused by their ex-husbands every time "he wants to see the kids or even in a public place". Recently, a divorced woman was killed by her ex-husband in front of her own kids. Enrolling a male perpetrator in a rehabilitation program as soon as the court

order is issued provides a safe space where the perpetrator's anger can be contained and addressed, and where he can be informed of the legal consequences of any violent behavior towards his partners and/or children. As such, mandating rehabilitation can empower the survivor to disclose the abuse, protecting her from the perpetrator's reactions, and preventing him from committing further abuse post reporting or divorce.

5. Positive Impacts of Rehabilitation on Male Perpetrators, Women Survivors, and their Children

Violence has devastating and long-term consequences on male perpetrators, women survivors, and their children. Male perpetrators destroy all family bonds through violence, instead of building loving and peaceful relationships with their families. Moreover, as one psychologist in this study confirmed *"perpetrating violence can lead perpetrators to experience heightened psychological distress on the long run, such as guilt, sadness, and depression, making it difficult to maintain healthy relationships outside of their homes and succeed in their careers."* Similarly, women survivors often experience psychological damage, including anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, avoidance, and insomnia, and may be isolated from their support networks, making it challenging to escape the abuse. Children who witness or experience abuse are also at risk of developing psychological disorders, such as PTSD, depression, and behavioral problems, and may even engage in self-injurious behavior or suicide.

Given the significant and far-reaching impact

of domestic violence on the perpetrator, survivor, and their children, rehabilitation programs for male perpetrators are essential. Such programs can reduce the incidence and frequency of abusive behavior while providing emotional intelligence, problem-solving skills, anger management techniques, and self-care practices for male perpetrators. Rehabilitation programs can also have a positive impact on the relationships between male perpetrators of domestic violence, their partners, and children. These programs can restore trust and safety, improve communication and emotional regulation, and reduce violence and aggression. Additionally, these programs help fathers understand the negative impacts of physical punishment on their children and equip them with modern methods of parenting, resulting in better family relationships. Moreover, male perpetrators are usually men who endorse patriarchal masculine beliefs, and therefore, are more likely to experience the negative impacts of these beliefs. Rehabilitation programs can thus help alleviate these impacts on their well-being. Furthermore, these programs can provide a safe space for perpetrators to build a rapport with male perpetrator workers and normalize seeking help whenever needed in the future.

For women survivors of domestic violence, rehabilitation programs can provide a sense of protection, safety, and security. As mentioned earlier, survivors feel supported, as rehabilitation empowers them to disclose, report, and reject any form of abuse without fear of their partner's reaction. One survivor in this study reported that *"if my ex-husband completes a rehabilitation program, I will be sure that he won't call me anymore and*

threatens me that he will burn me and my kids." Survivors may also feel relieved from guilt, as they were often accused of ruining their families by disclosing the abuse. On the other hand, women, during the focus group discussions, expressed that rehabilitation fulfills their need for restorative justice *"through rehabilitation, I think that the truth would finally come out. I won't be left feeling like I'm hallucinating, and my ex-husband would come to realize that he did something wrong to me."* Rehabilitation thus provides restorative justice by acknowledging the perpetrator's behavior as the problem, validating the survivor's experiences, and helping them overcome their own self-doubts.

Women during the focus group discussions, reported that while rehabilitation, might not give them total justice (انا راح عمري بالعنف), it would definitely have great impacts on their children. Some of them asserted that they are still bounded to their perpetrators, despite divorce, through the responsibility of their own kids. Children would benefit from seeing their fathers change and learn new skills, ultimately leading to a stronger bond between them. As a result, children might be able to lead better lives at school and in society. Rehabilitation may also ensure that children are growing up in a healthy environment, with a healthy father and a healthy relationship between their parents. It also prevents the transmission of violence to the next generation, thereby reducing the likelihood of children becoming abusive themselves later during adulthood.

6. Preserving Family Bonds for those Who Wish to Maintain Them

The Urgent Matters Civil Judge, in this study, has asserted that *"some survivors who seek protection do not intend to separate from their husbands. They usually want to stay in their marriages while being protected from abuse."* It is apparent that family ties are very important to this judge, as she reported that she encourages *"any action that can help restore a healthy family dynamic (if the couple is willing to work on this)."* One of the lawyers in this study confirmed the above, while reporting that *"some women don't intend to leave their families; rather, they only seek ways to end the abuse."* During the focus group discussions, survivors asserted that they *"didn't marry to divorce"* while they only sought divorce after years of failed trials and after experiencing severe, ongoing, and unbearable levels of abuse. In the same context, one of the psychologists in this study confirmed that *"when a man and a woman decide to marry, they intend to build a family, and not to divorce. Divorce is a decision that usually comes after the impossibility of living together (استحالة العيش), and years of abuse. Some women may be willing to restore their family bonds if their husbands undergo rehabilitation, while others may not be willing to do so."* As such, rehabilitation can serve as an effective measure to reestablish family bonds and decrease the incidence of divorce, depending on the willingness of the couple.

7. Creating a Shift in Social Norms towards Gender Equality

Rehabilitation of male perpetrators has the potential to create a positive impact not only on families, but also on society as a whole. When a father and mother are healthy, it positively

affects the entire family, and as society is a union of families, this impact extends to the larger community. Furthermore, rehabilitation has a domino effect. A healthy father raises a healthy son, who then becomes a role model for his peers, and in turn, raises his children to be healthy lovers, partners and fathers in the future. Additionally, a rehabilitated male perpetrator can serve as a healthy role model to other perpetrators of violence. One of our psychologists recalled the following phone call from a male perpetrator: *“I met my friend who was a monster with his family, and he advised me that if I want to save my family, then I should go to therapy, so please I need to take an appointment with you”*. The power of persuasion that reformed perpetrators have over current perpetrators is immense, as they can demonstrate the detrimental impacts of abusive behavior and serve as a real-life example of the benefits of rehabilitation. Finally, men who complete rehabilitation programs may also become advocates for women’s rights, and their example can inspire other men to follow in their footsteps. In conclusion, rehabilitation programs not only foster personal healing, but also create a shift in societal norms towards refusing abuse, holding men accountable for perpetrating violence, fostering gender equality, and reducing social stigma around mental health for men.

B. Proper Legislation of the Mandatory Rehabilitation of Male Perpetrators in Lebanon

1. Enforcing Mandatory Rehabilitation for Male Perpetrators at the Level of the Protection Order

As required by the law 293, a woman who has suffered from abuse has the option of obtaining a protection order from the Urgent Matters Civil Judge within 48 hours of disclosing the abuse. The order may include various measures to protect the survivor, such as prohibiting the male perpetrator from committing further violence, evicting him from the house, and requiring him to provide alimony to the survivor. Alternatively, the survivor may choose to report the male perpetrator at a police station or file a lawsuit against him. If a lawsuit is filed, it typically proceeds through the Public Prosecution and is ultimately heard by the Penalty Judge, who is responsible for issuing a verdict that may involve punishment measures such as a fine or imprisonment, and/or rehabilitation of the male perpetrator depending on the level of abuse. Law 293 is a significant achievement for women’s rights and the protection of abuse survivors on a national level, and it is regularly updated with the majority of judges committed to enforcing it to the best of their ability; however, there are some shortcomings, including incomplete protection for women, as the rehabilitation of male perpetrators is not included in the protection order and is only considered as part of the penalty verdict.

During focus group discussions, both men and women recommended that male perpetrators of violence should be legally required to participate in a rehabilitation program, including the one-third of men who believed that violence is acceptable in certain situations. Additionally, all key informants in the study confirmed that male perpetrators should be mandated by law to complete a rehabilitation program. Participants suggested

that rehabilitation should be mandated as part of the protection order immediately after the survivor reports the violence because the protection order is free, available for all women, and can be issued within 48 hours, while lawsuits are expensive, accessible only to financially capable women, and may take years to reach a verdict. As highlighted by a lawyer in the study *“the time gap between filing a lawsuit and issuing a penalty verdict is estimated to be between 1 and 5 years, and the verdict may be subject to resumption of the lawsuit.”*

Requiring the inclusion of rehabilitation as part of the protection order is crucial to provide immediate protection for women, as perpetrators may escalate abuse upon disclosure and the lengthy penalty verdict process can allow further escalation of violence. By mandating rehabilitation in the protection order, the reactions of the perpetrator can be contained upon receipt of the order, thereby preventing further abuse. A psychologist in the study emphasized that *“many survivors have been killed by their husbands even after a protection order expels the perpetrator from the house and after a divorce. An immediate psychological intervention for the perpetrator as a protection measure is needed when a survivor discloses abuse, whereas waiting for rehabilitation to be mandated by the penalty verdict might put the survivor at risk.”* Finally, mandating the rehabilitation of male perpetrators at the level of the protection order would lead to more men being mandated to the program, which might encourage more women to report abuse.

In conclusion, the recommendation to mandate rehabilitation immediately after a survivor

reports violence as part of the protection order is crucial to provide immediate protection for women. It prevents the escalation of abuse and ensures the containment of the abuser's reaction upon disclosure of abuse. Mandating rehabilitation as part of the protection order saves time, limits further abuse, and may encourage more women to report abuse. Therefore, rehabilitation should be part of the protection order and not at the level of the penalty verdict.

2. Rehabilitation of Male Perpetrators: A Detailed Action Plan

This action plan outlines how the judicial system can mandate rehabilitation as part of a protection order for survivors of abuse. When a survivor reports abuse and seeks protection, the Urgent Matters Civil judge can include in the protection order the mandatory rehabilitation of the male perpetrator at “Choice, A Program of Men” for at least 10 sessions.

As mentioned earlier, at “Choice”, the referred male perpetrator will undergo a detailed psychological and risk assessment. The assessment will evaluate the severity and intensity of violence, presence of psychological disorders, and criminal history. After completion of this assessment, “Choice” will send a detailed assessment report to the judge indicating whether the perpetrator is eligible for the rehabilitation program. If the perpetrator is ineligible, the judge will receive a list of available services that can cater to the perpetrator's needs. If the perpetrator is eligible, the psychological assessment report will include a detailed intervention plan along with the required number of sessions.



Based on the judge's recommendation, "Choice" can provide periodic progress reports to the judge indicating the perpetrator's compliance with the program and their progress. However, "Choice" reserves the right to break confidentiality at any time and inform the judge if the perpetrator displays a risk of committing a crime, engages in severe physical or sexual abuse against his family members, or shows no valid reason for abstaining or dropping out of the program. If such situations arise, the judge can take the appropriate measures including imposing sanctions and other consequences.

The length of the program can vary between 24 and 52 sessions, depending on the individual needs of the perpetrator. After the perpetrator completes the program, "Choice" will send a final report to the judge outlining the outcomes of the intervention and identifying any further needs that the perpetrator may have.

VII. FOSTERING A LESS PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY IN LEBANON

As mentioned earlier, one way to ensure the success of "Choice, A Program for Men" in Lebanon is to establish an environment that supports the proper implementation of such a rehabilitation program. This can be achieved by addressing the underlying factors that contribute to gender-based violence; shifting societal norms towards less patriarchy and greater gender equality. In this context, the discussions with men, women, and key informants in this study have yielded interesting recommendations concerning changing public opinion on patriarchal masculine stereotypes and working closely with key stakeholders who are responsible for implementing state laws.

A. Changing Public Opinion on Patriarchal Masculine Stereotypes

1. It is recommended that schools and universities include a civic curriculum that covers topics related to gender equality. One of our psychologists recommended that *"schools and universities provide courses to redefine patriarchal masculine beliefs and foster gender equality."*
2. Public awareness campaigns should be reinforced both in-house and in the mass media (TV, radio, and social media), targeting both women and men. To address SGBV and achieve gender equality, it is essential to engage both genders in a dialogue about

patriarchal beliefs around masculinity and femininity. Men should be the primary target of such campaigns to deconstruct patriarchal masculine beliefs, help them understand the negative impacts of patriarchal beliefs on their well-being, and educate them about the detrimental impacts of violence on their own welfare and their families. Former perpetrators and male activists can also participate in these campaigns to reduce social stigma around seeking help and normalize help-seeking behavior for men in general, and to encourage perpetrators to join rehabilitation programs in particular. Women, like men, may have been socialized to conform to certain gender norms and stereotypes. As such, it is important to create awareness among women about how these patriarchal beliefs can reinforce gender inequality and contribute to SGBV. These campaigns should also target parents, introducing them to parenting styles that prioritize gender equality, so that they can model and transmit these values to their children.

B. Working Closely with Key Stakeholders who are in Charge of Implementing the State Laws

1. In order to effectively implement Law 293 and combat domestic violence in Lebanon, it is essential to work closely with key

stakeholders such as police officers, lawyers, and judges as allies. It is thus important that they're equipped with knowledge and skills focusing on a range of topics, including the impact of patriarchal beliefs and masculine identity, challenging stereotypes and beliefs that contribute to gender inequality, strategies to address SGBV effectively within the context of Lebanese laws, and methods for responding to cases of domestic violence in a sensitive and effective manner. In particular, it is recommended to have a group of judges who are specialized in domestic violence and gender-based violence. As stated by our Judge of Urgent Matters "*having judges who are specialized in and fully dedicated to domestic violence would enable them to acquire the adequate expertise and have enough time to work on the cases effectively*". It is also recommended to establish a Civil Personal Status Law, which is a civil code that regulates personal status matters, such as marriage, inheritance, child custody, among other matters in a unified and gender-sensitive way. It is an alternative to the separate personal religious-based status laws that treat individuals differently based on their gender and religious affiliation.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is widespread in Lebanon, yet there are no official statistics on its incidence and prevalence. However, numerous local and international organizations, as well as academic studies, have documented the phenomenon of GBV in the country. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a significant surge in GBV cases, resulting in a shadow pandemic throughout Lebanon. Additionally, the economic crisis has also led to an increase in the frequency and intensity of violence against

women and girls. As a result, preventing and addressing GBV has become an urgent priority in Lebanon, requiring immediate attention.

This research study aimed to explore the adverse effects of patriarchal beliefs and patriarchal masculine identity on men's overall wellbeing, as well as their influence on the development of the male perpetrator's identity. Additionally, it sought to examine the significance of requiring male perpetrators to undergo rehabilitation and legalizing the process. This study utilized a qualitative research design and employed four primary methods for data collection: a literature review, two case studies of male perpetrators who underwent "Choice, A Program for Men," six focus group discussions with both men and women, and twelve in-depth interviews with key informants, including senior psychologists, legal advisors, judges, experts on domestic violence cases, and male perpetrator's workers.

VIII. CONCLUSION: RECAP OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Recap of Findings

The concept of patriarchy refers to a social system where men hold power and dominance over women in different spheres of society, including politics, economics, religion, law, and family. Patriarchy is perpetuated through the process of early male socialization, which involves learning and internalizing social values, norms, and expectations associated with masculinity and male gender roles. This process is reinforced by various socializing agents, such as parents, peers, media, and society, who encourage aggressive and dominant behavior while discouraging emotional expressiveness and vulnerability. In Lebanon, patriarchal culture marginalizes women, and gender inequality is deeply ingrained in state and personal status laws that govern marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance, which reinforce male dominance in society.

Patriarchal masculine identity refers to a set of beliefs, values, and behaviors that are associated with being male in a given society, which includes physical strength, emotional stoicism, assertiveness, competitiveness, and the downplaying of vulnerability, emotionality, and empathy. This study reveals that patriarchal masculine identity in Lebanon is manifested in beliefs and behaviors that emphasize preserving family's honor, being the sole financial provider, dominance and entitlement,

emotional restraint and aggression, physical strength and being the sole protector, masculine sexual expectations, and men's reluctance to express needs and seek help. The patriarchal masculine identity dismisses traits associated with femininity and regards them as weak, but these traits are actually humanistic and essential for good psychological well-being and healthy relationships. Similarly, there are positive traits associated with masculinity, such as self-reliance and being a provider, but when taken to an extreme, these traits can be harmful. For example, over-emphasizing on self-reliance can lead to emotional disconnection and reluctance to seek help, being the sole protector can lead to control and violence, and being the sole provider can lead to stress and lack of involvement in family life. As such, it is important to recognize the value of all traits and work towards a more inclusive and equitable understanding of what it means to be a healthy individual.

The patriarchal beliefs and patriarchal masculine identity impose a rigid prototype of masculinity upon men, demanding dominance, aggression, and impulsivity. Men who do not conform to this prototype, such as those with different sexual orientations or those who prioritize nurturing, understanding, and love over dominance and aggression, are marginalized and socially ostracized. Even men who conform to this patriarchal masculine

identity are burdened by its narrow constraints, such as the burden of being the sole financial provider. In essence, patriarchy has detrimental impacts on men's general health, psychological wellbeing, and suicide rates. Conformity to the patriarchal masculine identity leads to dangerous health behaviors, influences men's medical seeking behavior, and is correlated with lower emotional intelligence, poor mental health outcomes, and decreased mental health service seeking behaviors. Moreover, unrealistic financial responsibilities, emotional expression restraint, social ostracism, and reluctance to seek help contribute to heightened levels of suicide in men, particularly in the context of the economic crisis in Lebanon.

CONFORMING TO PATRIARCHAL MASCULINE IDENTITY CAN EXACERBATE FEELINGS OF POWERLESSNESS AND HUMILIATION IN MEN, PARTICULARLY WHEN THEIR AUTHORITY IS CHALLENGED OR THEY CANNOT MEET SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS.

Women's rights organizations and activists in Lebanon have been working to challenge and dismantle patriarchy through advocacy, activism, and legal reforms. Despite some progress, patriarchy is still deeply ingrained in traditional family dynamics, socio-cultural norms, state laws, and personal status laws. Gender-based violence, discrimination, and obstacles to women's advancement still persist. The study found that men hold diverse attitudes towards masculinity and gender

equality, with some being strongly patriarchal, other holding contradictory beliefs, and some being completely egalitarian. The gradual dismantling of patriarchy has resulted in cognitive dissonance and doubt in men who strongly identify with patriarchal masculinity and those who hold conflicting beliefs regarding gender equality. For instance, some men who strongly conform to patriarchal beliefs, staunchly defended patriarchy, despite acknowledging that it placed unrealistic expectations on them and stifled their emotional expression. Other men who held contradictory beliefs towards gender equality also displayed evidence of cognitive dissonance; some of them opposed feminism and held onto patriarchal masculine identities while also simultaneously supporting gender equality and women's rights. These men viewed feminism as a threat to men's identities and believed that it corrupted women, yet they acknowledged that violence against women was never justified. In the same context, some other men, who held contradictory beliefs, expressed anger towards our discussions on the abuse committed by men, claiming that men were also victims of abuse by their wives and needed protection. These men believed that many reported stories of abuse were fabricated by women to falsely accuse innocent men. Paradoxically, they also believed that perpetrating violence against women could be justified in certain cases. However, other men in this study, who were completely egalitarian, believed that all forms of abuse should be completely prohibited and that violence is never justified, even in cases of sexual infidelity or if the wife didn't conform to her gender role as wife/mother.

Patriarchy is the root cause of the formation

of male perpetrators' identity, placing men in dominant positions of control over women while also creating unrealistic expectations and burdens for men, such as being the sole provider and protector of the family. Conforming to patriarchal masculine identity can exacerbate feelings of powerlessness and humiliation in men, particularly when their authority is challenged or they cannot meet societal expectations. Moreover, patriarchy prevents men from handling vulnerability when experiencing humiliation, causing them to displace these emotions into anger, which is considered powerful in patriarchal masculine identity. In addition, patriarchal beliefs legitimize violence as a means of "discipline", which can lead men to express their anger through violent behavior. The normalization of abuse can result from childhood experiences of witnessing or experiencing abusive behavior and being exposed to gender policing that reinforces violent behavior. Other factors that may contribute to the formation of a male perpetrator's identity include the presence of a severe psychological disorder and anger displacement.

"Choice, A Program for Men," founded by KAFA in 2019, is a rehabilitation program for male perpetrators of gender-based violence in Lebanon. The program comprises four essential components: assessment, intervention, clinical supervision, and progress reports. The intervention toolkit comprises one-to-one behavior change work, tailored to each client's specific needs, and typically consists of 24 to 52 sessions that use various techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, psychodynamic therapy, anger management, mindfulness, and didactic

teaching. The program also aims to change men's patriarchal masculine beliefs and attitudes, which are considered the root cause of gender-based violence. Moreover, it recognizes the significance of providing ongoing supervision, support, and guidance to the workers who engage with male perpetrators on a weekly basis.

The two case studies, presented in this study, illustrated the effectiveness of "Choice, A Program for Men" as a valuable resource for male perpetrators seeking to address domestic violence and have healthy relationships. They demonstrated how this program can be a useful rehabilitation program for male perpetrators in Lebanon. The success of Adel and Badr's cases shows how the program can positively impact individuals who have engaged in abusive behavior towards their partners or family members. The program is tailored to assist men in comprehending the underlying reasons for their abusive behavior, while also teaching them healthy approaches to manage their emotions and relationships. The program supplies men with tools and encouragement to take responsibility for their actions and make constructive changes in their lives. The success of these two instances indicates that the program can be an advantageous resource for men who are dedicated to stopping their abusive conduct and cultivating positive relationships with their loved ones. The program's emphasis on questioning and redefining patriarchal beliefs and masculinity also helps participants develop a more comprehensive understanding of healthy relationships and promotes gender equality.

The effectiveness of rehabilitation programs

such as "Choice, A Program for Men" for male perpetrators depends on the support of the legal system and the level of patriarchy in a given society. A more egalitarian society and a legal system that mandates rehabilitation can create a more conducive environment for addressing the underlying factors that contribute to violent behavior and promote positive changes in offenders. As such, a comprehensive approach to ensuring the success of "Choice, A Program for Men" in Lebanon includes legislating the mandatory rehabilitation of male perpetrators and promoting less patriarchal society.

Legislating the mandatory rehabilitation of male perpetrators is essential as it is associated with increasing the enrollment of male perpetrators in rehabilitation programs, increasing perpetrators' accountability, limiting dropout, ensuring compliance, and reducing recidivism. Legislating the mandatory rehabilitation of male perpetrators also empower women to report abuse, which would significantly contribute to limiting domestic and gender-based violence in the Lebanese society, by breaking abusive patterns within families. Legislating mandatory rehabilitation can also reap the positive impacts of such programs on male perpetrators, women survivors, and their children. It can also lead to preserving family bonds, based on the couple's intentions, and shifting social norms toward gender equality.

Law 293 provides significant protection for survivors by allowing them to obtain a protection order within 48 hours of disclosing abuse, and by providing various measures to protect the survivor, such as prohibiting further

violence, eviction of the perpetrator, and providing alimony to the survivor. However, there are some limitations to the law, including the incomplete protection for women, as the rehabilitation of male perpetrators is not included in the protection order and is only considered as part of the penalty verdict.

B. Study Recommendations

This study concludes with the following key recommendations:

1. It is recommended to mandate the rehabilitation of male perpetrators of violence as part of the protection order, immediately after a survivor reports abuse. This would provide immediate protection for women and prevent further abuse, as the lengthy process of a penalty verdict can lead to further escalation of violence.
2. This study provided the following action plan for the proper legislation of the mandatory rehabilitation of male perpetrators. Upon survivor's disclosure of abuse and reporting, it is recommended that the Urgent Matters Civil Judge mandates the rehabilitation of the male perpetrator, as part of the protection order, at "Choice, A Program for Men" for at least 10 sessions. At "Choice", the referred perpetrator will undergo a detailed psychological and risk assessment. Based on this assessment outcome, "Choice" will determine a tailored action plan for eligible male beneficiary and send a report to the judge. The assessment report will also include, the required number of sessions, which can vary from 24 to 52 depending on the individual

needs of the perpetrator. In case the male beneficiary is not eligible for the program, the report will include the reasons why he cannot be taken in charge as well as specific recommendations for referrals. Based on the judge's recommendation, "Choice" can provide periodic progress reports to the judge. "Choice" will also provide a final report upon the perpetrator's completion of the program outlining his overall progress and eventual areas of improvement. "Choice" will also report any risk of crime or severe physical or sexual abuse against family members displayed by the perpetrator.

3. It is recommended to implement a comprehensive approach to changing public opinion on patriarchal masculine stereotypes. This approach should include incorporating topics related to gender equality into civic curriculum in schools and universities. Reinforcing public awareness campaigns targeting both women and men through in-house and mass media platforms is also essential. Engaging both genders in a dialogue about patriarchal beliefs surrounding masculinity and femininity, and educating men and women about how these beliefs contribute to gender inequality and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is crucial. Additionally, promoting parenting styles that prioritize gender equality can help break down traditional gender norms. It is also recommended to involve former male perpetrators and male activists in these campaigns to reduce social stigma, encourage men to seek help, and join rehabilitation programs.

4. It is recommended to collaborate with key stakeholders, including lawyers, judges, and police officers. It is important to equip these stakeholder with knowledge and skills covering the following topics: understanding the impact of patriarchal beliefs, challenging beliefs and stereotypes that reinforce gender inequality, and developing strategies to effectively address gender-based violence within the Lebanese laws in a sensitive manner. Additionally, it is important to have a dedicated group of judges who are specialized in handling domestic violence cases. Finally, it is recommended to legislate a unified Civil Personal Status Law for all sects in Lebanon, to ensure the equal treatment for all Lebanese citizens with regards to personal matters such as marriage, inheritance, and child custody, regardless of their gender and religious affiliation.

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