# Superior, Violent and Aggressive: Hegemonic Masculinity in Arabic Music Videos

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## Abstract

Free access to music videos on *YouTube* has allowed generations of consumers to be exposed to songs from their favorite artists on a daily basis. Presented in the form of music videos, these songs contain visuals that carry several themes including the glorification of violence and the dominance of men over women (Sherman and Dominick 1986), and the sexual objectification of women (Kozman et al. 2021). The effects of this exposure on people have been shown to affect day to day attitudes and behaviors, especially among the youth (Johnson et al. 1995). Although Western music videos have been the subject of numerous research studies, research on Arabic music videos is nearly non-existent. This study sought to examine the prevalence of the violence and aggression of men in Arabic music videos using Gramsci's theory of hegemonic masculinity. The study performed a qualitative textual analysis on a sample of 10 Arabic music videos that are popular for containing instances of violence and supremacy of men. The analysis returned three themes that reflect basic tenets of hegemonic masculinity: the patriarchal values and superiority of men, female subordination, and violent behavior.

## Introduction

Media have an essential role in mirroring society and emphasizing the prevalent values of its culture. These values can sometimes adhere to patriarchy, hegemony, racism, sexism, and other negative influences and discriminators. Among these, patriarchy and sexism form the basis for Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity denotes a societal pattern wherein stereotypically male traits are idealized as part of the masculine cultural ideal (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). This theory explains how and why men maintain dominant social roles over women and other groups considered to be feminine, such as homosexual men (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Gramsci describes the importance of such dominant roles that hold power in the subsequent formation of social strata through that power. More specifically, male dominance persuades society to conform to its values, among which are autonomy, group

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solidarity, toughness, and forms of aggression through the media and other organizational institutions. This dominance is best described as "toxic masculinity" (Carrigan et al. 2018). Such forms of masculinity that fall under the concept of hegemonic masculinity also involve the objectification of women (Connell 1987). As they live as sexual objects for men, women sexually validate heterosexual men, allowing them to compare themselves to other heterosexual men based on this validation (Connell 1987). The most active agents in highlighting this masculinist sexual ideology are people in journalism, politics, filmmaking, acting, writing, music, and sports, which Gramsci refers to as "weavers of the fabric of hegemony" and "organizing intellectuals" (Connell 1987, 203–215). Through their access to power structures, these individuals control gender systems and create experiences and fantasies that reproduce gender relations.

Recent years have witnessed some positive changes toward decreasing hegemonic masculinity in various parts of the world (Fernandez-Alvarez 2014). Where there are positive indicators in developed countries (Duncanson 2015), the Arab region still lags behind. Since the early 1970s, gender stereotypes and the dominance of men have been challenged to varying degrees in industrialized western societies, while the consequences of this dominance and gender bias have been neglected in Arab countries (Hillstorm 2018). Patriarchy is still quite prevalent in the Arab world whereby the position of men emphasizes their power and their masculine characteristics through forms of aggression and dominance (Abdul-Jabbar 2017). Music videos, for example, still conform to this outdated and discriminatory hegemony as they still portray flagrant forms of patriarchy as a reflection of the present societal norms (St. Lawrence and Joyner 1991). Although the region has incorporated new progressive ideologies that help women in the workforce and advocate gender equity, power structures still do not confront patriarchy or the patterns that support it (Sholkamy 2010). Therefore, the unrecognized patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity present in many Arabic music videos is an avertable contributor to this imbalance and as such needs further research and identification.

Informed by the theory of hegemonic masculinity, this study applies qualitative textual analysis methods to music videos performed by Arab artists to understand the prevalent patterns of patriarchy and toxic masculinity that could have significant effects on consumers. The sample of music is taken from the online video sharing and social media platform *YouTube*, which streams and hosts music videos as one of its most popular content genres (Park et al. 2017). As a main platform for music video research, *YouTube* plays a significant role in the accessibility of cultural products like music videos (Liikkanen and Salovaara 2015). Moreover, *YouTube's* user engagement is essential in learning how societies are being shaped and how cultural beliefs and values are emphasized for the consumer (Park et al. 2018). With millions of views and interactions on *YouTube*, music videos have a wide reach that tell us much about what consumers are interested in seeing. Through its analysis of a selection of music videos, this study attempts to shed light on the discriminatory and demeaning consequences of the patriarchal patterns the

music industry imposes on women in the Arab context. To do so, it explores the ways hegemonic masculinity manifests itself in Arabic music videos, while examining how masculinity is linked to violence, aggression, and patriarchy.

## Literature Review

Patriarchy allows men to act as superiors in society while depreciating the women around them (Joseph 1996). This manifests in various everyday settings including the music industry, where lyrics and visuals in music videos seem to adopt the patronizing role of men even when they are not the lead artists in the work. The consequences of such content are alarming for consumers and therefore hegemonic masculinity is also transformed from and into the music content.

*Patriarchy and Hegemonic Masculinity*

Patriarchy is defined as "the systematic domination by men of women and of other men" (Scott-Samuel 2009, 159). The concept of hegemonic masculinity was subsequently introduced to elaborate the sex role framework of this patriarchal power. With its various practices and norms of the dominance of men, hegemonic masculinity shadows the abovementioned notions of patriarchy (Demetriou 2001). It is "the form of masculinity which is culturally and politically dominant at a particular time and place" (Scott-Samuel 2009, 159). More importantly, its structural violence results in a loss of power among and discrimination against individuals and gender groups (Scott-Samuel 2009). In the Arab region, women face obstacles and hardships imposed by society, religion, and the economy, which have favored patriarchy over the values of human justice and equity (Knauss 1987). Arab patriarchy adds the notion of the family as a central element in a manner that embeds patriarchy in familial relationships (Tønnessen 2016). Specifically, Knauss (1987) defined it as "a hierarchy of authority that is controlled and dominated by the men originating in the family" (xii). As such women are still considered inferior to men on several levels, not just to the fatherly figures, since dominance of the spouse and brother is also present (Tønnessen 2016). In contrast to the self-ruling individualists in the West, men and women in Arab societies cannot escape the inevitable relationship with the governing others of their families and their often aggressive superiority (Joseph 1996).

Media representations of genders tend "to treat 'men' as a homogeneous group and 'masculinity' as a fixed, ahistorical entity" (Connell 2011, 1-2). The media emphasize the forms of traditional masculinity that adapt to patriarchy and its often violent norms (Fischer and Greitemeyer 2006; Greenson and Williams 1986). Violence is a form of an authoritative penalty that is used to stress the hegemonic power of men (Connell 2011). This hegemonic power persuades the public through appearing in the media as regular and habitual (Donaldson 1993). When it comes to dealing with women, many view the subordination of women as the main concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerchmidt 2005; Carrigan et al. 2018; Lichterman 1989; Rutherford and Chapman 1996), which is predominant specifically in journalism, music, and film (Kareithi 2014).

*Music Videos, YouTube, and Culture*

With their availability on a social networking site like *YouTube*, music videos have further amplified the impact that video content has on society (Park et al. 2018; Holt 2011). Music videos are considered to not only replicate societal norms but also to reinforce them. The main reason behind this is that visual content appeals with greater detail to the audience's attention (Bandura et al. 1977). This form of entertainment has contributed to the building of values in society and in identity formation (Ben Moussa 2019). Audiences, and specifically youth, perceive the content in music videos as pragmatic and, therefore, normalize the violent and patriarchal behavior that they may see (Cranwell et al. 2015). Such content is available for the audience at the click of a button on platforms like *YouTube*. With such high accessibility, dissemination tends to be faster, with greater possibility of wide-reaching effects, especially considering *YouTube* is one of the top music platforms used by consumers (Liikkanen and Salovaara 2015). As consumers use *YouTube* on a daily basis, they are exposed to numerous messages that reinforce masculinity, racism, sexism, and also patriarchal behavior (Karsay et al. 2019; Rebollo-Gil and Moras 2012; Ekanayake and Boyagoda 2019).

*Violence in Music Videos and Audience Perceptions*

As previously stated, aggression is a form of imposing patriarchal dominance. Different forms of violence are patterns of behavior that are used to institute control over family members, spouses or partners, and others (Ekanayake and Boyagoda 2019). Verbal, sexual, emotional, psychological, and even physical types of harm have been observed in various music videos. One study found that in every group of ten music videos there is at least one form of violence present (Ekanayake and Boyagoda 2019). Another study looked into the difference of the effects of consuming violent and nonviolent rap music on behaviors and attitudes of young African-American men (Frisby and Behm-Morawitz 2019). Findings indicate that groups exposed to violent rap videos showed greater acceptance of the use of violence and are more likely to engage in violence towards a woman. In another study, participants were exposed to a sample of violent videos that included portrayals of gunfire, explosions, fights, and the use of different weapons (Johnson et al. 1995). In these videos, the aggressor was always depicted as the person in power, whereas women appeared to be subordinately attracted to sexually potent and violent men. The results found that subjects who were exposed to violent content showed a greater probability of accepting and engaging in violence against women (Johnson et al. 1995).

Several studies have examined the varying amount and context of physical aggression across music video channels and genres. Examining the percentage and risk of exposure to violence on different music channels and genres, Smith and Boyson (2002) asserted that 15% of the total videos streamed in one week across *MTV, Black Entertainment Television (BET)* and *Video Hits-One* included physical aggression. The significance of these findings lies in the detrimental effects such

content could have on viewers. Numerous meta-analyses have indeed reinforced the assumption that exposure to violent media increases potential aggressive feelings, mindsets, judgments, and behavior (Bender et al. 2018). This homogeneity in the results has pushed public health organizations to proclaim that violent media content directly contributes to increased aggression (Bender et al. 2018). What could exacerbate these effects is whether viewers identify with the violent characters they see in these videos. According to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, when individuals see antagonists similar to their adversaries in real life, the potential violent behaviors displayed will be repeated more than if the video's antagonists are dissimilar.

Violence in music videos can also have an impact through the lyrical content of the songs. Regarding the association between exposure to violent lyrics and its effects on viewers, experimental research has indicated that assertive words bring aggressive perceptions and performances (Bargh and Pietromonaco 1982; Bargh et al. 1996; Anderson et al. 2003a). Kalis and Neuendorf (1989) asserted that in most cases, lyrics dramatized the violent action in the music videos. It is, however, important to note that hostile lyrics in popular music is only evident to attentive listeners, while violent content in videos is explicit and clear (Anderson et al. 2003a). Violence in music videos has also been linked to sex and attitudes viewers have towards such content (Wang and Bailey 2018). One study found more than half of the videos sampled contained violent scenes with the majority of these videos containing sexual imagery (Sherman and Dominick 1986). The study also found that adolescent perceptions of sex deviates from emotional involvement (Sherman and Dominick 1986). Similarly, another study of randomly selected music videos from MTV showed sexual references to be predominant with a portion containing aggressive cues (Greeson and Williams 1986). The impact of violent content on viewers has been corroborated in various studies. An experiment that exposed undergraduate males to different categories of sexual or violent content showed that non-erotic violent rock videos resulted in higher Adversarial Sexual Beliefs negative scores (Peterson and Pfost 1989). This means that stimuli depicting aggression can enable a hostile orientation towards women where high levels of frustration and anger motivate forceful behavior. Such motivation can prompt men to think of women as adversaries (Peterson and Pfost 1989). Yet another study found the sexual content in music videos to be attractive to adolescent audiences, which may echo in real adolescent dating behavior (Baxter et al. 2008).

The relationship among sexual behaviors, aggression, and hegemonic masculinity manifests itself in interpersonal violence (IPV). This type of violence involves not only blatant physical violence, but also subtle psychologically abusive actions (Marshall 1999). Examples of these emotionally abusive behaviors include name-calling, isolation of one's partner, and undermining a partner's self-esteem (Marshall 1999). Regarding music videos, exposure to partner violence can shift opinions to the faultlessness of violence within relationships (Rhodes et al. 2018). The media in general tends to emotionalize the representation of IPV and devalue its alarming

outcomes (Rhodes et al. 2018). Media portrayals of IPV can determine viewers' perceptions of IPV since consumers make meaning out of their media experiences. Specifically, seeing IPV portrayed as an enjoyment, through music videos or television, could alter individuals' behaviors who not only accept what they see but could also replicate it (Rhodes et al. 2018). When youth see the celebrities they admire accept and romanticize IPV, their perception could shift towards normalizing these actions (Rich et al. 1998). Songs with ambivalent or explicit depictions of IPV have been found to reinforce misogynous attitudes toward significant others, while exposure to anti-IPV songs has positive effects on participant's beliefs about a hostile relationship (Franiuk et al. 2017). Aggressive music content could also have long lasting effects. Aggressive lyrics in music were found to be related to more aggression and less prosocial behavior one year after exposure, regardless of the participants' initial scores on aggression and prosocial behavior (Coyne and Padilla-Walker 2015).

The effects of violent music on emphasizing hostile and aggressive characteristics of adolescence can be explained through the General Aggression Model (Anderson and Bushman 2002). A number of studies have shown consumption of aggressive lyrics can accentuate violent behavior and lessen prosocial attitudes (Anderson et al. 2003a; Fischer and Greitemeyer 2006; Millet and Dewitte 2007; Mast and McAndrew 2011). Violent content in hip-hop and rap music videos, among other genres, is considered a substantial contributor to anti-social behaviors (Selfhout et al. 2008; Ter Bogt et al. 2013). Hence, adolescents who consume more rap music videos were shown to be more aggressive at school and to more likely be arrested (Wingood et al. 2003; Clark et al. 2016). This effect could be due to the portrayal of violence and weaponry in a positive light in music videos (DuRant et al. 1997). A content analysis of the portrayals of violence and weaponry in music videos from various genres revealed even the smallest exposure to violence glamorized by the artists caused a shift in attitudes towards such anti-social behavior (DuRant et al. 1997). Sexually violent music could also influence young males with regards to their acceptance of violence against women (St. Lawrence and Joyner 1991). A study on undergraduates revealed exposure to heavy-metal rock music boosted men's stereotypes of sex roles and added to their negative attitudes towards women (St. Lawrence and Joyner 1991).

*Violence and Patriarchy in the Arab World*

Similar to their peers around the world, young Arab consumers are prone to idolize and imitate what they see in artists and celebrities. Accordingly, the music videos of celebrity artists, whether they contain violence and support patriarchy or not, will have its effects on Arab consumers (Elouardaoui 2013). A recent study by Kozman et al. (2021) that examined gender display and sexual objectification in Arabic music videos revealed that women's role in Arabic music videos reinforce stereotypes and put women as subordinates. The female artists in this study were also sexually objectified with a regular use of sexual imagery. Reinforcing such norms through music videos could have a negative outcome on Arabic consumers (Choucair et al.

2004; Aidi 2014). A systematic review of violence against women in the Arab region found that reported prevalence of physical harm reached more than half, with an almost 90% prevalence of reported emotional harm against women (Elghossain et al. 2019). This continuous behavior was also examined and found to be relatively attributed to media exposure (Anderson et al. 2003b). Arab men were found to not only suppress their emotions to show signs of masculinity, but also use violence to better highlight these traits (Hamieh and Usta 2011). This, then, reflects the patriarchal nature of the Arab world. Several case studies have indeed found that the prevalent patriarchy in everyday life has directed the way young Arab girls have been raised and how they perceive themselves and their place in society (Said-Foqahaa and Maziad 2011). Based on the literature, this study will address the prevailing hegemonic masculinity and male dominance in Arabic music videos.

## Methodology

This study performs a qualitative textual analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the prevalent violent content in Arabic music videos. The content was approached through the lens of hegemonic masculinity, which included the superiority of men and subordination of women, and the violent acts of men. Various themes emerged through open axial coding. The videos were examined by the lead author, a native Arabic speaker, for imagery and lyrics related to patriarchy. Instances of violence, aggression, superiority of men, and inferiority of women were recorded and categorized under the emergent themes of hegemonic masculinity. The videos were analyzed one by one, with a pause at every 30 seconds in order to add the apparent instances of physical or lyrical violence to the analysis. The sample included ten Arabic music videos that were chosen from *YouTube* to exemplify the prominence of violence in Arabic music videos. The videos chosen were between the years 2009 and 2017, a booming period of Arabic music videos (Elouardaoui 2013).

The sampling process started by searching for journalistic articles that tapped into the issue of violence, sexism, and patriarchy in Arabic music (Shawky 2017; Saeed 2017; Khalifeh 2015; Hussein 2017) and choosing the video examples they critiqued. The second step was performing a series of keyword searches on *YouTube*, using words with a negative or violent connotation, and which are found in lyrics of Arabic songs. The keywords used were: *Ma badi* [I don't want to], *shedni* [Attract me], *Tethadda* [Challenge], *Bi7ro2 2alb* [Burning a heart], Fardé [My gun], *Bmout* [I die], *Be2tol* [I kill], *Ghadr* [Betrayal], *Kebrani* [Stubborn], *Kezabi* [she is a liar], *Dammi/Dam* [My blood/blood], *Yendam/Tendam/Nadam* [He regrets/You regret/Regret], *Nar* [fire], and *Nhayti* [My end]. From the list that the keywords returned, the author chose ten videos that included the most violent and patriarchal content, conforming with the idea of selecting information-rich samples for meaningful qualitative research (Coyne 1997).

The sample of songs consisted of: *Kebrani Brasa* [She is so Stubborn] by the Lebanese singer Naji Osta, *Meshkelgy* [Troublemaker] by the Lebanese singer Bashir

Sassine, *Shedni Ghmorni* [Attracted and Captivated me] by the Palestinian singer Adham Nabulsi, *Atr EL-Hayah* [Train of Life] by the Egyptian artist Ahmed Mekky, *Ya Mrayti* [My Mirror] and *Aaks el Shayfenha* [The opposite of what they see] by the Lebanese singer Elissa, *Ouly Byhebny* [Tell me she loves me  and *Joumhoriyit Albe* [The Republic of My Heart] by the Lebanese Singer Mohamad Skandar, and *Hayda Mesh Ana* [This is Not Me] and *Tla'y Menny* [Get Away from Me] by the Lebanese singer Fady Andrawos.

An important point to mention about the terminologies in the analysis, the terms 'man' and 'woman' will be used in all cases, except when used as an adjective in 'lead male/female artist' and 'male dominance' as these are the known terminologies and in no way reflect individuals' sexual preference.

## Analysis

Patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity were manifest in various patterns that appeared frequently and consistently in the music videos in this study. These patterns highlight the prevalent patriarchal role that Arab artists revert to when portraying the relationship between men and women. The textual analysis revealed three main themes: the superiority of men as rich grooms or authoritative father figures, who control subordinate housewives or mothers and perform violent acts on women and/or other less masculine-appearing men.

*Superior Men*

The men in the music videos, whether they are the main artist or supporting leads of the main female artist, play the dominant commanding role in the relationship. In one music video, the main artist is seen constantly controlling others, giving out orders with demeaning behavior such as shouting for his workers to fulfill his needs. The woman is portrayed as highly dependent on him through many scenes of her asking for his permission to go out and in making him coffee and preparing his food. In another video, the lead male artist is seen in a dominant position as he is always sitting on a luxurious sofa with the lead woman giving him a shoulder massage from behind. The dominant role is also played by the men in supporting acts. This was specifically clear in one of the videos where a supporting character used his superiority to attract his friend's woman. In another video, the lead woman is seen sitting beside the lead male artist in a salon party as he engages in conversations with other men while neglecting her presence. In the same scene, the woman is seen being asked to give up her own seat when more men join the group and have nowhere to sit. In yet another video, the lead woman is seen about to commit suicide by jumping onto railroad tracks if it were not for the lead male singer, who—portrayed as masculine in an overly assertive manner wearing an open shirt that shows off his chest muscles—rushes to her in his convertible car to pull her away. In two other videos by the same female artist, the lead male is seen as acting in an aggressive and authoritative manner by shouting and exhibiting demanding body language. Contrary to most songs, the artist in this case revokes

such acts through the lyrics, shedding light on negative male dominance through explicitly showing and describing her partner's violent acts and building up the courage to denounce this behavior in order to carry on with a very successful life later. These two videos indicate a rare shift in the reaction to male dominance, with women artists using their fame and art to fight patriarchy and violence.

The sample in this study also included music videos that romanticize male dominance and show that a woman without a ruling significant other is helpless. In one of the music videos, the lead male artist is seen doing the impossible, even deploying a SWAT team, to rescue his beloved from kidnappers. The woman is shown living a very luxurious life in his villa before being tortured by her male kidnappers.

The superiority of men is illustrated in the music videos not only through love interests but also through fathers, a facet of hegemonic masculinity that exudes patriarchal power. Two of the examined videos show dominant fathers imposing arranged grooms on their daughters against their will. The fathers are seen shouting at their daughters and determined to decide their futures. In one of these songs a part of the lyrics translates to "meet me tonight even if your brothers or uncles refuse." Hence, we see the patriarchal power also being enforced by other male members of the family. In the other music video, the authoritative father is seen forbidding his daughter, a fresh graduate, from working, justifying his actions as a form of protection from womanizing men in the work field. The patriarch convinces his daughter to let go of her career aspirations by buying her a brand-new car and giving her money and credit cards.

In addition to imagery in examining the predominant aggressive cues in Arabic music videos, the superior arrogance of men is also implied through the lyrics of many of the songs. In one song, the title alone (*Kebrani Brasa* [She is so Stubborn]) is a representation of hegemonic masculinity, as it refers to the woman as hard-headed and full of herself. Throughout the song, the lyrics continuously belittle the woman and her mother, accusing the mother of manipulating her daughter's thoughts and referring to the woman with pity that she does not know what he is about to bring upon her; insinuating he will break her heart and humiliate her. Part of the lyrics also talks about how the woman cannot be tamed, as such equating her to an animal. The artist additionally threatens the woman, saying he is going to let her beg for his forgiveness, and that her mother will have to pick her up off the ground when she gets slapped and falls. In another song, the male artist speaks in a very dominant tone with his lover, saying he will never allow her to be alone and that she should never even answer her phone unless she is in his presence. In yet another video, the singer considers his daughter to be the "president of his heart" and, as such, he tells her she is not allowed to do anything else. The father even questions whether or not he should allow her to work because she is beautiful, indirectly objectifying his own daughter as a person whose appearance is considered more important than her intellectual abilities.

*Violent Behavior of Men*

Aggression is another key component of hegemonic masculinity that is highlighted in all the videos in the sample. Violent acts are always seen imposed by men on women or even other men. Not only do music videos impact the consumer's reaction of hostility towards women but they also often illustrate general and personal forms of harm, like purposive fights and reckless driving. The violent cues are seen in three of the music videos, whereby the male singers or actors use verbal or physical abuse on the lead women. In one such video, the lead male singer is seen aggressively pushing the woman to the floor in several scenes and hitting her hard across the face. In another video, the husband is seen catching the lead singer by her throat and dragging her to the floor causing her to sustain several bloody bruises and scars.

The kidnapping of girls is yet another form of aggression shown in one of the videos examined in this study, where the girl is tortured with water and needs her "super-hero" male partner to save her. Furthermore, scenes showing men breaking glass and destroying belongings and furniture are prevalent in most of the videos in the sample. Likewise, violence is abundant in the lyrics of one song where the lead male singer flaunts the harm he has imposed on his lover. He admits to being harsh, making her cry and never getting tired of hurting her. Another video shows a supporting male character slapping the lead woman across the face when she refuses a kiss from him. In two other videos by a female artist, we see the male lead being argumentative with his spouse. She is portrayed as being afraid of him and of his authoritative manner, especially when he is pulling her by the hand, rushing her into the room, or shouting at her.

Violence by men towards other men through starting fights and shooting is prevalent in the majority of the videos this study examined. In one of the videos, we see the main male artist in a boxing match with an opponent while neglecting the presence of a woman lover in his life. In another, the lead male singer is seen fighting against four other men that are bodyguards for his lover's family. In two other videos, lead male artists violently beat up a man who was flirting, cat-calling, or even proposing to the women they love. These men are later shown knocked out and kidnapped in the trunks of cars. Additionally, guns are pointed at other men and shootings happen in some videos as well.

Male-on-male violence in visuals is also matched by the songs' lyrics. One song literally translates into the singer wanting to burn the heart of the man who upsets his lover and that he is willing to drink his blood. Likewise, the lyrics of another video claim the man will pull the trigger on any person who even throws a rose at his lover. He then adds he will kill anyone who glances or flirts with her saying that he does not care if he has children that may become orphans. These violent scenes and words positively depict the idea of being violent for male viewers. They express masculinity as being directly related to aggression and that violence is the only way to harness their patriarchal power.

*Subordinate Women*

Another aspect that emphasizes patriarchy is the portrayal of women in the role of subordinate housewives or mothers in music videos. The women are seen as obedient as they only abide by the rules set forth by the men in their lives. They are also shown to be busy doing housework and chores. In one video, the lead female artist's mother is shown to be resentful towards her daughter's partner (the lead male singer), trying to manipulate her daughter to choose a richer man. This also portrays women as materialistic and inferior to men no matter their age, whereby wealth is always associated with men and materialism is a characteristic associated with women. Consequently, three of the videos showed how men own large villas, luxurious cars and how they proposed with diamonds and money. Moreover, the mothers in these videos are shown to conform to the will of their husbands as they do not question them in deciding their children's future. In these three examples, the mothers play a role in convincing their daughters to go with the arranged marriage their fathers want. In one of the videos, the mother even convinces her daughter to leave her education and career behind in order to get married. In another video, the lead female artist is seen as the mother who puts up with her husband's aggression for the sake of her children. She is also seen working in the kitchen to prepare food. In a similar video, the mother accepts her husband's demeaning attitude towards their son for being unemployed while she is shown to be only concerned with household chores and always busy preparing food to put on the dining table.

**Discussion**

This study aimed to examine the concepts of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity in the portrayal of men and women in Arabic music videos. The study found that physical aggression performed by men is frequently portrayed in Arabic music videos. Aggressive behavior and violence are often shown to be inflicted on women as well as other men. Violence in music videos was also associated with the superiority of men and was used as an unparalleled form of power. Whereas this dominance is generally given to men, women on the other hand were consistently portrayed in the subordinate and inferior role. While most videos seemed to romanticize the notion of the man coming to the rescue of the woman, the videos examined come out as awkwardly unromantic. Previous research suggests that such depictions of hegemonic masculinity are likely to be translated into real life behavior (Anderson et al. 2003a; 2003b; Bender et al. 2018). Consequently, consumers, whether men or women, could be sufficiently impacted to accept and normalize the dominant role of men depicted in the music videos they consume.

More importantly, constant depictions in music videos of physical aggression and crime-related gender-based violence poses a substantial problem for society. This is a very important issue to address since it was previously found to be associated with adverse behaviors among consumers (Baxter et al. 2008). This association is due to the fact that exposure to such violent content has been shown to increase the potential for hostile attitudes and behaviors and eventually lead to having more

violent men in society (Bender et al. 2018). The frequent exposure to scenes including the use of weapons in particular, as found in many of the videos examined in this study, normalizes such practices and in turn allows adolescents to tolerate, accept, or even adopt such activities (DuRant et al. 1997). Additionally, assertive lyrics can impact the mindsets of youth. One study found that when the nature of the lyrics is violent and accompanied with clear aggressive imagery, it will likely lead to an increase in the audiences' violent conduct (Anderson et al. 2003a; 2003b).

Since the media have been found to be a causal indicator of aggression (Nathanson 1999), it is important to look deeper into the implications as well as the risks of the content consumed by adolescents in the Arab region. Moreover, since youth are prone to idolizing entertainment stars as role models, their increasing association with violent content offered by these artists is highly alarming. Many artists accept and normalize violence in their music and videos in addition to resorting to physical aggression to solve problems. As a result, young consumers may be negatively influenced by these behaviors (Greeson and Williams 1986; Rich et al. 1998). The omnipresence of violent scenes in music videos and their increasing associations with gender roles give prominence to the masculine characteristics of the superiority of men (Kalis and Neuendorf 1989). Furthermore, men are almost always shown as the aggressors or the ones in power, whereas the women appear to be subordinates, inferior, and attracted to the mighty and violent man. The repetitious depiction of these tropes may result in an increase in undesirable attitudes towards women and an increased emphasis on the male's sex-role stereotype (St. Lawrence and Joyner 1991; Johnson et al. 1995). Viewed from a broader angle, increasing negative attitudes and behaviors could lead to an increase in gender inequality and sexism in society at large (Conrad et al. 2009). In turn, the resulting reinforcement of structural violence may also result in more power-dynamic discriminations between men and women (Conrad et al. 2009). This further accentuates Gramsci's theory of hegemonic masculinity, where men will continue to be superior and authoritative in daily life, in parallel to being portrayed and glorified as such in music videos.

Based on the findings of this study and the previously established associations with consumer behavior, and due to the sensitivity and importance of this issue, it is crucial for future research to further identify these alarming cues and to delve deeper into ways to mitigate and manage their influence. Furthermore, more research is required to corroborate the findings of this study through quantitative data analysis of Arabic music videos, due to the scarcity of such research in the Arab region. It is also necessary for future research to identify the consequences of the prevalent patriarchal and hegemonic cues discussed in this study on Arab consumers. The limitations of this study include the concentration of our sample to mostly Lebanese artists and to only ten music videos; as the results may not be generalizable to other Arab countries, particularly Gulf Cooperation Council countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United

Arab Emirates. Furthermore, the study does not differentiate between the sex role portrayals between videos that have female versus male main artists. Despite these limitations, this study provides a first attempt at performing an in-depth analysis of music videos using qualitative research methods, which is absent in research from the Arab region. Although the sample is small, it nevertheless highlights the extent to which violence, aggression, and men's superiority are dominant among a portion of Arabic music videos that include the portrayal of these characteristics. Together, they underline the interconnectedness between the superior man and his use of aggression to reflect the prevailing facets of hegemonic masculinity in the Arab man.

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**Appendix**

List of songs:

1. Naji Osta-Kebrani Brasa
   (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tu394zqBQwo )

2. Fady Andraws-Hayda Mesh Ana
   (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEzRfJVAL44 )

3. Fady Andraws-Tla'y Meny
   (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSwBuEmM5WQ )

4. Bashir Sassine-Meshkelgy
   (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oqFt08Qv0g )

5. Elissa-Ya Mrayti (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zKcfonLldU )

6. Elissa-Aaks El Shayfenha (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCUbp-BCWR0 )

7. Mhamad Skandar-Ouly Byhebny (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jX7-YPMIWWE )

8. Mhamad Skandar- Joumhoriyit Albe
   (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZ9NgJQD1uo)

9. Adham Nabulsi- Shedni Ghmorni
   (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzFzpDdezhg)

10. Ahmed Mekky-Atr Al
    Hayah (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxCYlG-OyU0)