



How do young people (men and women, 18-24 years)  
understand masculinities and VAW in Ireland?

Research team:

Dr Claire Edwards, Dr Robert Bolton, Professor Máire Leane and Dr Fiachra Ó'Súilleabháin  
University College Cork, Ireland

# Our Qualitative Interviews

## Stakeholders

Number:

14

Profile:

Practitioners/Activists/Advocates

Time-Line:

October 2019 – April 2020

Recruitment Method:

Purposive Sampling

## Young People

Number:

27

Profile:

18-24 years, 15 women, 12 men

Time-line:

January – May 2020

Recruitment Method:

Email and Social Media Adverts; Snowballing



## Socio-Negative Versions of Masculinity

The 'Lad'

The 'Jock'

'The Alpha  
Male'

The 'Top  
Dog'

The 'Macho  
Man'

The 'Hard  
Man'

The 'Strong,  
Silent Type'

Toxic  
Masculinity

# Socio-Negative Versions of Masculinity

## The 'lad'

“That is—like also a sense of kind of like, you know, you don’t talk out against the lads. You go with what the lads are saying or, you know, you can disagree but quietly.”



Carrie

## The 'macho man'

“What they value is strength and aggression and domination in general, a macho person. But a macho person’s also defensive, less inclined to show their emotions.”



Cathal

## The 'top dog'

“Like a guy can lose his virginity when he’s 13 and have fifty sexual partners by the time he leaves school and he is top dog, he is *the* lad.”



Grace

# Socio-Negative Versions of Masculinity

The 'alpha' male  
"There was one boy in this group who if he snapped his fingers and said sit on the floor, they would."



Grace

The 'jock'  
"...what you'd see in the films, films with like the jocks with their sport and their like their trophy wife/partner, like."



Michael



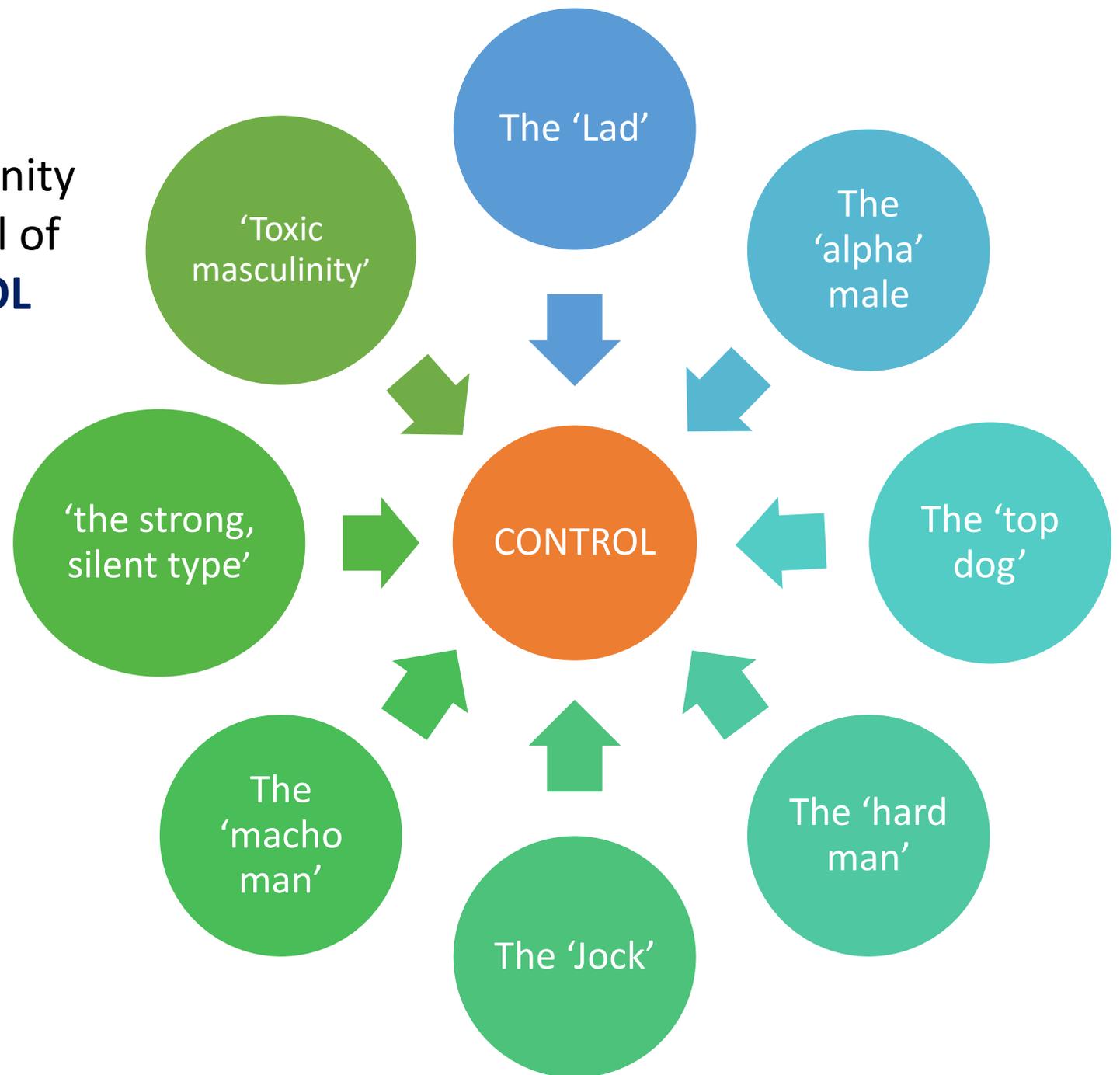
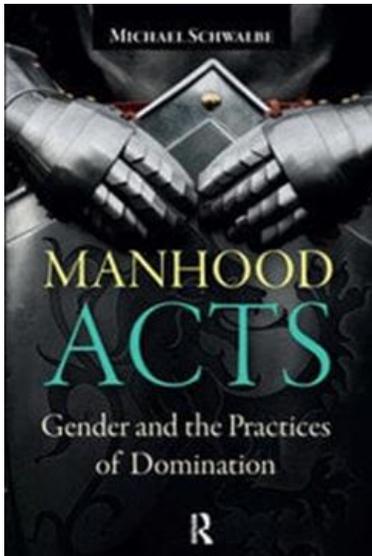
# Other Versions of Masculinity



Only 'positive' model cited  
=  
'Softie'

These normative forms of masculinity are based on several practices, all of which coalesce around **CONTROL**

- Emotional repression
- Heterosexual status
- Strong peer group sanctioning
- Men as initiators of sexual interaction



These idealised forms of masculinity underpin and support norms and practices conducive to violence against women

## Normalisation of Sexual Harassment and Assault



“I think this has happened to every woman in Ireland. Like it’s happened to me. It’s happened—I’d say it’s actually happened to every one of my friends.”

House Party/Sexual assault Vignette

Aoife (age 24)

These idealised forms of masculinity underpin and support norms and practices conducive to violence against women

## **Masculine Sexual Dominance**

**Interviewer:** And is there an expectation on, let's say, boys of that age to sort of initiate the kissing or-

**Phillip:** Oh, a hundred percent... they'd **always ask** you after the night like how many have you shifted [kissed]? Like they'd actually have kind of almost **competition** to see like who can do the best and stuff... For guys it's much more about the **quantity**...

## Conclusion

- Young people named models of masculinity associated with socio-negative practices, a key characteristic of which is express the capacity to exert control and resist being controlled.
- For Irish young people, sexual access to and engagement with women's bodies continues to play a key role in the organization of masculine subjectivities.
- What does this suggest? – provide young men with alternative models of being and alternative 'lines of action' for navigating interaction.

Tack Míle Buíochas  
Thank you Gracias  
شكرا لك תודה

Robert Bolton, Claire Edwards, Máire Leane & Fiachra Ó Súilleabháin  
School of Applied Social Studies and ISS21  
University College Cork, Ireland