



Waterford Institute of Technology

Masculinities, Alcohol and Sexual Violence
1st Rape and Justice in Ireland Conference
7th December 2009

Fergus Hogan



*“No point [reporting the rape].
His word against mine and
I had been drinking”*

Rape and Justice in Ireland, participant 80.

*So how can we as men find a place within ourselves
from which to speak in the face of rape?*

Here is my attempt.

Are all Men Rapists?

No

Are all Men Capable of Rape?

I don't believe so

Are those men who choose to
sexually abuse and rape born a
rapist?

No they are not



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The Social Construction of Masculinities



four key rules

- **No Sissy Stuff**
- **Be a Big Wheel**
- **Be a Sturdy Oak**
- **Give them Hell!**



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Dangerous Practices in Masculinities



- **Alcohol**
- **Sex**
- **Violence**



Alcohol in Ireland

four in 10 women

seven in 10 men, drinking excessively

(RCSI, 2009)

One-third increase in the incidence of drunkenness, assaults and public order offences

More than 13,000 of these Gardaí-registered offences involved minors

Typical offender young male aged 24 years or under

(HRB, 2009)



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Sex and Alcohol in Ireland



the Crisis Pregnancy Agency has commissioned a range of research studies

Recent studies into *Understanding Irish women's sexuality* found that while Irish women were taking greater control and agency over their sexuality and contraception, they also admitted to taking more risks sexually when alcohol is involved.



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Men and Sex

“I would be a very placid person when I am sober. I would be very set in my ways, I would know what I want and I would know what I shouldn't do. I would be defined by the morals that I have but when it comes to drinking, you just loosen up and things go wrong, well I wouldn't say that things go wrong but you do things that you normally wouldn't do and you would have sex where you wouldn't wear condoms where normally you would be 100% where you would wear condoms you know. Or the situations would arise where you are there and you are ready and the condoms are over in a drawer and you are entangled...but you don't use them.”
(20 year old father)





Hedonistic Sexuality

“You know the way girls go on anyway. They come back from the pub and they’re locked, and you’re locked yourself anyway, you don’t give a shit if you’re wearing a johnny [condom] or not because. Well, you should, but back three or four years ago when you were in college, you didn’t give a shit because ‘oh, I’ll shag this one’ and that’s it, kick her out of the bed later...

...That was your attitude in college. Lads, ‘oh what did you get last night’ or ‘what was she like’ like, you know. But, to be honest with you, not being vain now, but it’s over two hundred [sexual partners/one night stands], seriously.”



A fifth of the men in our study fitted what we called a 'hedonistic pattern' of sexuality, characterised as being:



1. very sexually active taking no responsibility for preventing pregnancies
2. narcissistic pleasure- seekers
3. misogynistic, showing little respect for women or women's welfare
4. egocentric, seeing their sexuality as testosterone driven, out of control and
5. tend to be in denial about any pregnancies they have caused, or when that does happen and they find out, they generally fail to change their irresponsible behaviour.



Growing risks and danger of sexual violence:



- A Global World
- Communication Technology
- Prostitution
- Pornography
- The Objectification / Commodification and the Sexualised Classification of Women
- The separation for boys and men of Sex from Relationship



What can men do in speaking out about men's sexual violence and rape?

- **Firstly**, beginning with ourselves and taking a deep look inside & reflect and address the misogynistic practices we engage in our own lives.
- **Secondly**, we need to join with other men in speaking out against rape, sexual violence and the sexual objectification of women.
 - The White Ribbon Campaign
 - Men Can Stop Rape



Media Campaigns that speak with boys and men



‘Our strength is NOT for hurting. Men can stop rape’

‘So when she said NO, I said OK. Men can stop rape’

‘So when men disrespect women, we say that’s NOT RIGHT. ‘

‘So when she was drunk, I backed off. Men can stop rape’

‘So when she was too high to decide, I decided to back off.’

So when I wasn’t sure how she felt, I ASKED. Men can stop rape’



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And...

...Finally

Men must be involved in this critical work of personal change and social transformation. However, the key to engaging with boys and men in this work is that we approach them with a loving and respectful disposition.

The challenge set today with this milestone launch is to invite men into a dialogue with women to end sexual violence and rape to redefine relations between the Sexes AND to redefine what it means to be a man.



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