

## Constructions of masculinity in alcohol advertising: Implications for the prevention of domestic violence

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Alcohol advertisements are a potentially potent site for the representations of masculinity and gender relations given alcohol's role as a rite of passage for young men in Western cultures. Concerns about violence against women draw attention to the representations of masculinity that alcohol advertisements privilege and that may have important implications for gender relationships. Traditional masculinities have been associated with domestic violence particularly those that privilege men's dominance, entitlement and control of women. Egalitarian heterosexual relationships or intimacy, which involve compassion, equality and consensual decision-making, protect against domestic violence. In this article, we investigate the literature on alcohol advertising to determine the constructions of masculinity that are portrayed in advertisements particularly those targeting young men. We identify those constructions of masculinity and gender relations that are problematic for healthy, egalitarian, intimate heterosexual relationships and that are therefore problematic for the prevention of domestic violence.

**Keywords:** Alcohol advertising, domestic violence, masculinity, prevention, social constructions

### INTRODUCTION

In this article, we review the research literature on alcohol advertising, masculinities and gender relations, and assess the relevance to domestic violence prevention. We are particularly interested in whether

advertising used to promote alcohol draws from representations of traditional masculinity, which are associated with men's domestic violence towards women.<sup>1</sup> In addition, we are interested in whether alcohol advertising potentially counters domestic violence prevention strategies by reinforcing problematic gendered institutional, social and cultural practices to promote brand identities and lifestyles.

Our primary focus will be on the qualitative research on alcohol advertising, and the intersections with masculinity and gender relationships. We are interested in what the literature can tell us about alcohol advertising and the social constructions of gender identities and lifestyles employed to target young men. Are there intersections with the masculinity that provides the climate for domestic violence? What can the literature tell us about alcohol advertising, masculinity and the gender representations that are harmful for domestic violence? This review has the potential to inform policies on the prevention of domestic violence through attention to alcohol advertising.

We begin by describing the method used for the literature review and the scope of the literature search. We then describe the rationale for scrutinizing alcohol advertising and its potential impact on the prevention of domestic violence. In the next section, we review the literature on alcohol advertising, and the ways in which gender, particularly masculinity, is utilized in alcohol marketing. (1) We broadly track the constructions of masculinity and gender relations in alcohol advertising across time in order to situate representations within their social and marketing context (Cherrington, Chamberlain, & Grixti, 2006). (2) We then more closely attend to the literature relating to the contemporary representations employed in alcohol advertisements that might impact on young people's identity

formation including a 'manual on masculinity', the pub as a male space, regional and national loyalties, and the use of humour. Finally, we detail the criticisms of representations of gender relations in alcohol advertisements with reference to egalitarian practices, which are promoted to prevent domestic violence. In our conclusion, we will discuss the policy implications for the prevention of domestic violence.

## METHOD

We began by collecting articles from the years 2000 to 2010 relating to beer advertising, masculinity and relationships. Keywords used for the searches were *alcohol, advertisements, masculinity, violence, relationship* and *identity*. Literature searches were carried out through Science Direct, JSTOR, Sociological Abstracts, EBSCO, Academic Search Elite, Cinahl, PsychInfo, Global Scholar and Massey University Library Search. Alongside these searches, the authors' own libraries were used, and a search was conducted for relevant New Zealand literature through the Alcohol Advisory Council library. Further literature was followed up through reference list searches. Key articles were read and summarized and the details of these and other related articles were entered into an Endnote library.

The core of our literature search was the 10-year period, however, we have tracked and included key source articles through the more extended searches described above when they addressed significant concepts associated with masculinity, gender relations and identity, and alcohol advertising. Similarly, a key search was for literature on beer print and television advertising, due to the potential targeting of emerging male drinkers because of their preference for beer (Ministry of Health [MOH], 2009; Wenner & Jackson, 2009b) and the current work on preventing domestic violence by targeting young men (Townes, 2009; WHO, 2004; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2010). We included articles from other advertising genres where there were important concepts identified and intersections with the focus of this review on masculinity, identity formation and gender relations. In this literature review, we use the term young people to refer to those aged post-puberty to 25 years. Our primary focus is on the development of gendered identities, which may occur into the thirties,<sup>2</sup> consequently, we have included in our literature search advertising targeting youth or those under-age for alcohol purchase as well as literature relevant to those up to age 35 years. A total of 80 articles form the basis of this literature review.

This literature review is part of a larger project that involved research on alcohol advertisements in Aotearoa/New Zealand and the prevention of domestic violence, but was not limited to articles of national relevance. Alcohol marketing now occurs through the

internet with the placement of advertisements on YouTube and on social networking sites (Griffiths & Casswell, 2010; Hastings et al., 2010; McCreanor, Greenway, Barnes, Borell, & Gregory, 2005), thereby crossing national boundaries and potentially influencing social constructions of identity globally. The findings of this literature review, while intended to inform our larger project, are therefore likely to be of global relevance.

## ALCOHOL ADVERTISING AND PREVENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Getting in early with young people has been identified as a useful site for the prevention of men's domestic violence towards women (Townes, 2009; Townes & Scott, 2008; WHO, 2004), but young people are an attractive focus for alcohol advertising as they represent new consumers who are potentially lucrative to the industry (Casswell, 2004). Young people may be put at risk of domestic violence because, while alcohol should not be considered an excuse for domestic violence (Galvani, 2006),<sup>3</sup> there are associations between alcohol consumption, and alcohol access and domestic violence (Campbell, 2004; Fals-Stewart, 2003; Gil-Gonzalez, Vives-Cases, Álvarez-Dardet, & Latour-Pérez, 2006; Hilton & Harris, 2005; Martin & Pritchard, 2010; McKinney, Caetano, Harris, & Ebama, 2009; WHO, 2005) and advertising seems to increase drinking amongst the young (Anderson, de Bruijn, Angus, Gordon, & Hastings, 2009; Casswell & Zhang, 1998; Jette, Sparks, Pinsky, Castaneda, & Haines, 2009; MOH, 2007; Smith & Foxcroft, 2009). With evidence of a culture of intoxication and binge drinking amongst the young (Griffiths & Casswell, 2010; Jette et al., 2009) attention has turned to alcohol marketing practices (Hastings et al., 2010; Jette et al., 2009).

Of particular interest for this literature review is that alcohol contemporary micro-marketing techniques appear to promote certain consumptive identities and lifestyles to target the young (Casswell, 2004; McCreanor, Barnes, Gregory, Kaiwai, & Borell, 2005; McCreanor, Barnes, Kaiwai, Borell, & Gregory, 2008). For example, researchers have found that alcohol advertising that promoted 'cool' identities and lifestyles and that was entertaining or funny was effective in engaging young people (Jones & Reid, 2010; McCreanor, Greenway, et al., 2005).

The focus of this literature review concerns the impact of alcohol advertising on gendered identity formation and lifestyles – masculinity and gender relations – and the potential for an impact on the prevention of domestic violence. According to developmental theory, young men exposed to consumer marketing are forming their masculine identities and young people are developing their gendered ways of being in heterosexual relationships (Jones & Reid, 2010). Marketing that attends to gendered aspects of

young men's identity, reinforced by repeated exposure may well have consequences for the prevention of domestic violence if it works to consolidate macho or traditional masculinities associated with men's use of such violence. Efforts on the prevention of domestic violence have been to encourage egalitarian relationships and alternative masculinities (Flood & Pease, 2009; WHO, 2004, 2008).

McCreanor, Greenway, et al. (2005) argued that youth identities should be understood as diverse, formed 'through consumptive practices, representation and symbolic meaning' (p. 253) and in relation to the dominant culture. Language, symbolism and representations are critical to the messages employed in advertising to sell consumer items and alcohol is no exception (McCreanor, Barnes, et al., 2005, 2008). Researchers have exposed the way language is employed to maintain gender-based power relations (Adams, Towns, & Gavey, 1995; Bograd, 1988; Butler, 1990; R.E. Dobash & R.P. Dobash, 1988; Gavey, 1990, 2005; Theismeyer, 2003; Towns, Adams, & Gavey, 2003). Language is understood to encompass expressive acts and visual representations, for example, a punch or a dismissive comment of a man to a woman is a statement of how much he values her (Boonzaier, 2008; Butler, 1990; Theismeyer, 2003).

McCreanor, Greenway, et al. (2005) noted the relevance to youth identity formation of a shift in contemporary alcohol marketing from product promotion to the promotion of brand identities. Alcohol advertisements, have been found to target young consumers by selling brand identities, that draw from and reinforce certain existing social beliefs, values, identities and lifestyles to promote a positive emotive response (Casswell, 2004; Griffiths & Casswell, 2010; Jackson, Hastings, Wheeler, Eadie, & MacKintosh, 2000; McCreanor, Barnes, et al., 2005, 2008).

If the representations used in alcohol advertising undermine efforts to prevent domestic violence by reinforcing problematic masculinities and gender relations, strictly regulating alcohol advertisement representations might be expected to provide an opportunity for the prevention of harm. There are, however, questions about the effectiveness of regulating representations in advertisements, through restrictions on overly masculine or gendered themes. Advertisers have found ways around these regulations and may even be inspired by them (Hastings et al., 2010; Jones & Reid, 2010; Law Commission, 2010). For example, complaints about gender representations have been dismissed by advertising self-regulatory committees on the basis that the advertisements are humorous (Horne & Whannell, 2009; Law Commission, 2010). There have been calls for a more sophisticated and global response that addresses the complexities of alcohol marketing and attends to the limitations of industry self-regulation (Casswell, 2004).

### **Preventing domestic violence**

In order to support efforts to prevent domestic violence, we argue that attention must be applied to the messages that alcohol advertisements give to young people about masculinity. Certain forms of masculinity have been associated with domestic violence (Adams et al., 1995; Boonzaier, 2008; Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2005; Leibrich, Paulin, & Ransom, 1995; Mullaney, 2007; Totten, 2003; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2010; Yllo & Bograd, 1988; Yllo & Strauss, 1990). Those men who use more extensive levels of domestic violence towards their women partners have been found to hold more traditional or macho male values and beliefs (Leibrich et al., 1995) and to be controlling of women (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005; Johnson, 2006; Stark, 2007; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2010). A feature of these beliefs is that men are naturally entitled to privileges and to dominance and control of intimate women partners (Adams et al., 1995; Stark, 2007). The messages alcohol advertisements give about masculinity require critical consideration and will be of concern if they employ or promote masculinities to sell alcohol that are harmful to health because of their association with gender privilege and domestic violence (Courtenay, 2000; Mahalik, Burns, & Syzdek, 2007).

Similarly, we argue that the ways in which alcohol advertisements represent gender and heterosexual relationships have implications for the promotion of healthy, egalitarian or ethical relationships. Researchers have argued that egalitarian relationships or intimacy protect against domestic violence (Adams, 2010; Flood & Pease, 2009; WHO, 2004, 2008; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2010). If alcohol advertisements represent gender relationships that are not equitable, or evoke a traditional or macho masculinity in order to sell their products, then they will be employing representations that are potentially harmful. If they use certain representations of intimate relationships that discourage closeness with partners then they will be potentially problematic for the prevention of domestic violence.

The alcohol industry cannot be held responsible for the existence of certain identities and lifestyles associated with sexism, discrimination or inequitable heterosexual relationships. However, it can be held responsible for the promotion of such attitudes, beliefs and values, if they are utilized, alongside social marketing practices, in order to reinforce identities and lifestyles to increase brand consumption. Harms associated with these values, identities and lifestyles may be unintended, but they remain problematic. What is required is knowledge about the potential harm associated with dominating or macho masculinities and domestic violence and a critical reflection through this lens on the gendered social and cultural values, beliefs,

identities and lifestyles employed in alcohol advertising.

## REPRESENTATIONS OF MASCULINITY AND GENDER RELATIONS

In the following sections of this review, we look more closely at the literature on alcohol advertising and what it says in relation to representations of masculinities and gender relationships.

There is strong evidence of the alcohol industry's use of gender identities, particularly representations of masculinity, in the marketing of beer and spirits (Campbell, Law, & Honeyfield, 1999; Duncan & Aycock, 2009; Hall & Crum, 1994; Hill, 2001; Law, 1997; McCreanor, Barnes, et al., 2005; McKay, Emmison, & Mikosza, 2009; Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005; Smith, 2005; Strate, 1992; Wenner & Jackson, 2009a). Representations of masculinity and gender relations in advertising reflect and employ identities evident in communities but they also work to produce them through the practices and meanings associated with alcohol consumption, particularly beer (Campbell et al., 1999; Wenner & Jackson, 2009b). An obvious explanation for the appeal of certain forms of masculinity and gender relations in advertising representations is that men, particularly young men, consume alcohol in much greater quantity than women and are thus the target for profit generation (Hill, 2001; McKay et al., 2009; Smith, 2005).

Beer commercials have been described as promoting the myth that there is one stereotypical form of masculinity (Strate, 1992). The promotion of a single masculinity serves to marginalize others and is potentially problematic for the prevention of domestic violence. Connell (2005a) argued that hegemony, where 'one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted' (p. 77), produces dominance by some groups of men and the subordination of others. This notion of dominance of an idealized or exalted masculinity over others would be problematic in alcohol advertising if that hegemonic masculinity is the macho or traditional masculinity associated with domestic violence. Hegemonic masculinity that privileges patriarchal control has been linked by feminist and pro-feminist researchers to men's domestic violence towards women (Boonzaier, 2008; Flood & Pease, 2009; Yllo & Bograd, 1988).

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argued that masculinities should be understood as complex and intersecting. There are many masculinities, but 'sensitive men, gay men, and househusbands, scholars, poets, and political activists, are noticeably absent from beer advertisements' (Strate, 1992, p. 78). The work of Connell (1995, 2005a, 2005b) and Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) points to the key and plural aspects of masculinity. For example, David Beckham may be understood to belong to the exalted or hegemonic masculinity as the captain of the English

national football team, but he has also been described as a metro sexual fashion icon that is prepared to publicly wear a sarong (McKay et al., 2009). Wetherell and Edley (1999) wrote of 'imagined masculinities' in which hegemonic masculinities may be many and varied depending on the values and beliefs that individual or groups of men aspire to.

In the following, we broadly examine the literature on the representations of masculinity and gender relations in alcohol advertising over time noting the influence of social context on the masculine identities and lifestyles used. We then more closely identify the features of hegemonic masculinity promoted in present day alcohol advertising.

### Representations of masculinity in historical context

Researchers have described noticeable shifts in alcohol advertising over time. Analyses of beer advertising in Western developed countries demonstrated that from the late 1950s to the late 1960s, beer advertisements began to promote 'lifestyle branding' or 'images that construct a plausible and desirable world to consumers' (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005, p. 1880). The bourgeois home was to be the centre of consumer desire and the family unit – with strictly gendered roles – the consuming unit (Walker, Hathcock, & Bellamy, 2009). Within these advertisements, there was to be a 'desiring' consumer 'whose consumption patterns can be massaged in specific directions' (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005, p. 1880). A common image in these beer advertisements was 'young or middle-aged white heterosexual couples happily sharing a cold beer' in their home, backyard, or in a public outdoor space (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005, p. 1880). These advertisements were an attempt to reclaim beer from its 'working class' origins by associating it with the 'prosperous and happy post-war middle class couple' (p. 1880):

[W]hite middle-class, heterosexual masculinity was defined as synonymous with the male breadwinner, in symmetrical relation to a conception of femininity grounded in the image of the suburban housewife. (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005, p. 1880)

These images did not last (Walker et al., 2009) and it is possible that they were ineffective or met with resistance from consumers who associated beer consumption with masculinity and certainly not with women (Avery, 2008).

By the mid-1970s, women as wives or partners had 'largely disappeared' from beer advertisements, except as accessories in men's drinking places (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005, p. 1880). Instead of showing heterosexual couples drinking in their homes or backyards, advertisements shifted focus to men and men's work. This shift occurred at a time when the major social movements of feminism, as well as civil and gay rights, were in full swing initiating a profound change in traditional domestic arrangements from

women in the home and men out working (Gentry & Harrison, 2010). Researchers have explained the shift in beer advertisements at this time as a response to these changes to the existing social order. They argued that these disruptions created anxieties amongst men that the practices associated with traditional white masculinity, with its strong ties to authority and alcohol consumption would be overturned (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005; Smith, 2005; Walker et al., 2009).

Messner and Montez de Oca (2005, p. 1882) described a 'crisis/resolution narrative' in beer advertisements in this period. The 'crisis' was the potential undermining of the construction of white masculinity in the latter half of the twentieth century, and the resolution was the construction of a symbolic or imagined lifestyle outside, or in resistance to, these immediate threats. These advertisements showed men drinking with other men in pubs, enjoying beer as a reward for a hard day's work. Men were portrayed more in sports activities and women were included much less, and mainly in social activities (Walker et al., 2009). These advertisements represented lifestyles where men's leisure is given primacy above all else, is earned by their hard work and can therefore be justified, is defined by the regular and heavy consumption of alcohol, and is protected from changing social conditions and the demands of women (Strate, 1992).

Where women are represented in these advertisements, they have been depersonalized or objectified and form a peripheral part of the masculine environment (Strate, 1992). Hall and Crum (1994, p. 331) examined a sample of 59 different beer advertisements and found that men in beer advertisements were usually engaged in physical labour, were 'outdoors or in a bar' and remained 'confident, cool, and detached in relationships with women'. Women, on the other hand, were 'more likely to be portrayed as admiring on-lookers' or as objects of sexual desire. Hall and Crum (1994, p. 335) found that women appeared more often in swimwear or in reduced dress, while men were more likely to be fully clothed and to have speaking parts.

The use of sexualized images of women in alcohol advertising appears to have increased over time (Jones & Reid, 2009; Nowosenetz, 2008; Rouner, Slater, & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2003). Hall and Crum (1994) argued that the large number of 'chest, buttocks and crotch shots' of women compared to men in alcohol advertisements is dehumanizing and promotes the construction that women's bodies are for male consumption:

Tying these dehumanised female characters with stereotypical aggressive male images and alcohol may be a volatile combination. Combining beer and sexy female images may be dangerous considering the increasing alcoholism in America, the increasing connections between alcohol and domestic violence, and the promoting of male aggressions. (p. 331)

Of the use of sexualized images of women in these advertisements, Jones and Reid (2010) stated:

In the case of alcohol, criticisms of sexual appeals are inflamed due to concerns that these images imply that certain irresponsible sexual behaviour (or behaviour towards women) is appropriate in the context of drinking. This concern is unfortunately supported by strong evidence of associations between alcohol consumption and unsafe sexual behaviour. The effect of multiple images on youth who are developing their sense of self and understandings of relationships is also likely to be a strong contributor to the social norm of (excessive) drinking as an essential component of sexual interactions. (p. 31)

In analyses of beer advertisements over recent decades researchers have demonstrated the emergence of the white male 'loser' (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005), the 'everyday guy' (Smith, 2005) and the 'loveable larrikin' (McKay et al., 2009) as dominant representations of masculinity in beer advertising, and an associated increase in oppositional or conflicting relations between men and women (Duncan & Aycocok, 2009; Hill, 2001; Law, 1997; McKay et al., 2009; Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005; Smith, 2005). Wenner and Jackson (2009b) noted that in these new representations most of the hallmarks of traditional masculinity remained intact: beer, mates, sport, heterosexuality, disdain of intimacy with women and rejection of non-traditional masculinities. The advertisements maintain the old nostalgic formula of the 1970s and 1980s: 'young, white, heterosexual mates bonding through drinking beer' while women, when present at all, are present as 'accessories' or in traditional roles (McKay et al., 2009, p. 173; Smith, 2005). Smith (2005) stated: 'Being a man, according to these ads, entails disassociation from femininity' (para. 37).

These new representations of masculinity have introduced an element of irony and humour into hegemonic masculinity, and a departure from the trope of 'beer as a reward for a hard day's work' (McKay, et al., 2009). In these representations, there is a much greater focus on the association between alcohol and men's pleasure and recreation particularly sport (Wenner & Jackson, 2009a). Men are frequently presented with crises, which must be overcome to ensure access to their pleasure activities, or more importantly to beer (Duncan & Aycocok, 2009), and will go to extreme lengths to overcome these crises. In resolving these crises, Messner and Montez de Oca, (2005, p. 1887) argued that the 'loser' is always on the verge 'of being publically humiliated, either by his own stupidity', or worse, by women:

He hangs out with his male buddies, is self-mocking and ironic about his loser status, and is always at the ready to engage in voyeurism with sexy fantasy women but holds committed relationships and emotional honesty with real women in disdain. (p. 1882)

For example, Duncan and Aycock (2009, p. 246) described an advertisement where a husband and wife are positioned in opposition: she is interested in intimacy and closeness whereas he is more interested in his beer. He agrees to sex only when she bribes him with his favourite beer. The man gets his 'comeuppance' when he over-reaches for the beer and goes flying out the window, falling to the ground after being stripped of his underwear by the tree outside.

Researchers have argued that the relationships amongst groups of men who drink together are the emotional centre of these advertisements (McKay et al., 2009; Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005; Smith, 2005). Life with the boys is fun, exciting, 'emotionally comfortable' and undemanding, with clear, but largely unspoken, boundaries that 'limit emotional expression' between men and that legitimate deception between mates (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005, p. 1889; McKay et al., 2009; Wenner, 2009). Beer, on the other hand, is always safe, truthful and constant (Wenner, 2009).

Smith (2005) argued that these advertisements of the 1990s and 2000s that figure men as 'everyday guys' or as 'challenging the prevailing gentlemanly script' (Smith, 2005, para. 54) succeed in reaching young men by working on young men's anxieties about what it is to be a man (Smith, 2005). Brands are promoted using concepts of 'uncool-equals-cool' (Klein, 2000, p. 21, as cited in Smith, 2005, para. 18). For example, in his analysis of advertisements in a global campaign promoting Jim Beam, Smith (2005) argued that male supremacy was maintained by suggesting that men could be real men by 'slouching on couches, ogling women at strip bars, and dismissing women's wishes by asking for their hand in matrimony only after checking with the guys'. (para. 54). Citing Connell (2001), he argued that such campaigns worked because they recognized that not many men could reach the standard of what is portrayed as the norm for a 'real man':

Instead there is a tacit wink to the viewer that this is assuredly not about the strapping hunk who effortlessly scores women, but about the everyday guy who sits around the house watching TV, gawks at women in strip clubs, and hangs out in the local bar with his buddies. (para. 66)

Women have a greater presence in these advertisements than in the 1970s and 1980s, but not as wives who are partners in building the good domestic life, as they were in the 1950s and 1960s. Messner and Montez de Oca (2005) stated that women appear as either 'hotties' or 'bitches', or as Jones and Reid (2010) described: the objectified sex kittens or the aggressive girl in charge. 'Hotties' or sexualized beautiful women serve as potential prizes for men's victories and proper consumption choices, with the power to either validate or sometimes humiliate their masculinity (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005). Women to whom 'losers' are emotionally committed – their wives or women

partners – are represented as 'bitches', who threaten to undermine men's freedom to enjoy their mates and beer. In these representations, 'gender opposition' and 'selfish consumption' are strong themes (Duncan & Aycock, 2009, p. 248).

These analyses of advertisements across time suggest that there have been shifts in the representations of masculinity in response to the social context and through greater use of brand lifestyles and identities. These representations are designed to encourage a profile that will be attractive to the emerging male drinker (McCreanor, Greenway, et al., 2005). The problem with them is that they invite 'an updated gender script for young heterosexual males' (Smith, 2005, para. 68): a privileging of a hegemonic masculinity that is disdainful of women, of other men and of others of difference, which may be potentially dangerous for women (Gough & Edwards, 1998; Smith, 2005). As Gentry and Harrison (2010, p. 88) noted:

The ridiculing and hegemonic (regulation) images seen by men serve to maintain traditional perspectives that fail to provide any encouragement for men to perform traditionally atypical roles associated with alternative definitions of masculinity.

As such they are problematic for intimacy and ethical and healthy relationships with women, and for men who do not fit this profile.

### Recent representations of masculinity

In the following, we describe the findings from the literature on the advertising representations designed to reinforce these portrayals of hegemonic masculinity: the 'manuals of masculinity' (Strate, 1992, p. 78); the space; the place or the use of region and nation; and the use of humour.

#### *'Manuals on masculinity' or how to be a man*

Strate (1992) argued that alcohol advertising may serve as a guide for what it is to be a man – a 'manual on masculinity' (p. 78). That is, the ways in which certain types of hegemonic masculinity and gender relations are used as a strategy to advertise beer and spirits across brands suggests that alcohol advertising may have effects beyond brand loyalty and patterns of consumption. Drinking alcohol has been described as a rite of passage for young men: a high tolerance of alcohol or drinking large quantities is proof of manliness or toughness (Hastings et al., 2010; Wenner & Jackson, 2009a) and men who consume large amounts of alcohol are 'lionized and considered more virile than their peers' (Smith, 2005, para. 25).

Instruction on what it is to be a man was actively the strategy employed to market Guinness to African men (Amis, Mower, & Silk, 2009). Saatchi and Saatchi developed a heroic man, Michael Power, as a full feature film character, who did good deeds and consumed beer with men – in an environment in which women were peripheral – in order to

(successfully) increase sales of Guinness to African men. This character was developed to provide a representation to African men of an iconic model of a man – maintaining much of the traditional and stereotypical hegemonic male characteristics of white Western culture – while also seeking to encourage men to buy a more expensive brand of beer (Amis et al., 2009).

Other alcohol marketing campaigns highlight the ways in which representations of the practices of men were employed, and maintain and reinforce a hegemonic masculinity. The campaigns sought to produce rules of men's behaviour, men's policing of other men and 'othering' of women and other masculinities (Hastings et al., 2010; Meân, 2009). For example, a project to develop 'Man Laws' that detailed what it is to be a man was used to market Miller Lite in the USA (Meân, 2009). A council of men, the 'Men of the Square Table', made up largely of male sports icons identified as 'macho' men, assessed potential 'Man Laws' – submitted by the public to an interactive website – for their credibility. One law that emerged was 'You poke it you own it', which made reference to a man owning a bottle of beer if he put his fingers in the neck of the bottle while carrying it, but also referenced men's ownership of women, and men's intolerance of intimate contact with other men (Meân, 2009). Another rule was 'the line is the line', which made reference to the male domain and the encroachment of women into men's traditional territories: the garage fridge was for beer storage (Meân, 2009).

Such constructions of a hegemonic masculine identity and its associated lifestyle has ramifications for the broader questions being addressed. They potentially create a dynamic of hostility towards others particularly women, that runs counter to egalitarian relationships, which protect from domestic violence.

### *Masculinity, space and sport*

Beer advertisements employ space and work to position beer as a man's drink, and the pub, with its televised sport, is depicted in alcohol advertisements as a man's space (Rowe & Gilmour, 2009). Globally, the pub or saloon has, over time, been represented in alcohol advertisements as a 'bastion of maleness' (Rostoff, 2002, as cited by Smith, 2005), or 'a place where men gathered free from the constraints and demands of wives and mothers' (Smith, 2005, para. 23). Smith (2005, para. 25) argued that this space is portrayed as allowing men to forge relationships with men bonded by their drinking together and 'uninhibited by the burdens of life'.

Researchers have argued that, the activities that men engage in within pubs – beer drinking, televised sports watching and bonding with the mates – have further served to differentiate pubs as a man's space in alcohol advertisements, as the beer industry has moved more to sports sponsorship to capture the difficult young male target (Horne & Whannell, 2009; Rowe &

Gilmour, 2009). Jackson, Gee, and Scherer (2009) described an advertising campaign for Speights – the 'Great Beer Delivery' – that involved the use of the pub to promote a New Zealand brand internationally. A freighter was turned into a pub in order to carry the brand across the ocean to the UK in response to a request from a young male fan. The catch phrase was, 'If you can't take your mate to the pub, take the pub to your mate'. Jackson et al. (2009) described this campaign as 'potentially exclusionary, sexist, and misogynist' (p. 183) and challenging of more flexible ways of being a man.

This male drinking space, in alcohol advertisements, has been defined as much by who is excluded from it as who it includes. Women, non-masculine men, homosexual men and men who perform non-traditional labour are excluded, while 'real men' who comply with traditional versions of masculinity or 'hyper masculinity' are included (Jackson et al., 2009, p. 182). Although alcohol consumption is occurring less in pubs than previously and more at home (Horne & Whannell, 2009), the portrayal of the pub as a defined site for alcohol consumption and for young men remains highly relevant in alcohol advertisements. The association of sports television watching in pubs with alcohol consumption has allowed sports viewing to become symbolically associated with beer drinking in alcohol advertisements and an attractive site for targeting young men (Wenner, 2009).

The representation of the pub as an exclusive space for a man to consume alcohol with his mates away from the stresses of home arguably operates to differentiate men from women and from men who do not adhere to this representation of manhood, mateship and its association with televised sport. The positioning of the pub as a man's space works to reinforce gender stereotypes of men and women occupying separate domains, and of men and women differing in their pursuits of pleasure (Rowe & Gilmour, 2009). The peripheral presence of women arguably reinforces a construction of women as insignificant to the lives of men.

### *Masculinity and place*

National or regional identities are widely utilized, alongside the masculinity promoted in beer advertising, and the alcohol industry's sponsorship of sports globally, to promote identities and lifestyle messages to young men and to encourage fan loyalties to the brand (Hastings et al., 2010; Hill & Casswell, 2004; Wenner & Jackson, 2009a). Hill (2001) described the use of national or regional masculinity in a range of New Zealand beer advertisements:

A bloke having a good time with his mates, the 'Blood Brothers', the DB tribe, or 'Brad and his flatties'; an acolyte, as player or spectator, in the Kiwi religion, rugby – or one of the other main male sports codes – all now with a Lion or DB Totem; 'Southern Man', in a half-hearted, half-pissed search

for the perfect woman; a Man Alone, the strong silent bushwacker of 'Taranaki gothic' novels, drinking an 'ice-brewed', 'extreme brewed' beer while out in Ponsonby. (p. 149)

This means that drinking is not just the marker of being a man, but being a 'New Zealand man' or an 'Otago man', 'Southern man' or 'Waikato man'. The national or regional masculine identity in these representations is defined by the idealization of rural (men's) lifestyles rather than the urban (women's) lifestyle, the valuing of hard physical labour over other kinds of work, an emphasis on the bonds of mateship above all other relationships, the imperative of heterosexuality, and the primacy of sport or physical outdoor activities as recreation (Jackson et al., 2009).

These national and regional identities represented in beer advertisements have been described with reference to their mono-cultural whiteness and nostalgia for the frontier or pioneering man (Jackson et al., 2009). For example, in the iconic 'Southern Man' Speights beer advertisements, the main protagonists occupy a rugged New Zealand landscape, devoid of 'the other' – indigenous inhabitants and women – except those in the service of these rugged strong men:

They show single Pakeha<sup>4</sup> men affirming the importance of male mateship, heterosexuality (in the abstract), hard physical outdoor work, the wisdom of older men being passed on to younger ones, and an unselfconscious authority over the animal world. (Law, 1997, p. 25)

Similar constructions of national masculine identity have been described in Australian analyses of beer advertisements. McKay et al. (2009, p. 167) argued that beer advertisements have been prominent 'in both reinforcing and reproducing a highly masculine-inflected version of Australian nationalism, especially via sporting themes'. Connell (2003, as cited in McKay et al., 2009) described this masculinization of Australian national identity:

... notions of Australian identity have been almost entirely constructed around images of men – the convict shaking his shackled fist; the heroic explorer facing inland; the bushman plodding down a dusty track; the digger scrambling up the slopes at Gallipoli;... front bars, shearing sheds, the Glenrowan Hotel. There are not many women in this world... But there are very definite ideas about masculinity, and ideas about relations between men and women, real or imagined. (p. 167)

Such advertisements, while obviously exclusive of indigenous people, women and other men, have been described as globally relevant to the beer industry in that they resonate across national boundaries while remaining locally relevant (Jackson et al., 2009). They work to attract the male audience who might be drawn to representations of identities associated with a rugged hegemonic masculinity. However, these nostalgic representations of regional and national masculine identities draw from and consolidate

traditional or macho masculinities which we have described as problematic for the prevention of domestic violence.

### *Humour, irony and representations of masculinity*

Alongside space and place, alcohol advertisements designed to communicate these 'contemporary' masculinities and the associated 'oppositional' gender relations, have been found to use humour, irony, hyperbole and fantasy (Duncan & Aycock, 2009). As noted above, researchers have found that men in recent advertisements are represented as focused on recreational drinking time and place, mates, and are subject to 'bitches' or indifferent to wives, or women partners. These representations of masculinity are couched in ironic humour that resonates with the local vernacular (McCreanor, Greenway, et al., 2005), with the inference that the type of behaviour depicted is hyper-performed and thus all a bit of a joke (Smith, 2005). McKay et al. (2009) described this lack of seriousness in relation to advertisements for an Australian brand:

... these advertisements celebrate leisure and consumption in an almost carnivalesque inversion of the established order. They are not to be taken seriously – except for the hard-headed business of capturing and maintaining their share of the beer market. (p. 170)

Researchers have concluded that the intention of the use of irony, humour and fantasy appears to be to negate criticisms, or to mask the recognition that the advertisements are sexist or offensive (Duncan & Aycock, 2009; Jones & Reid, 2010; Law, 1997; McKay et al., 2009; Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005; Smith, 2005). Law (1997, p. 24), describing the Speight's 'Southern Man' advertising campaign, argued that the use of ironic humour was 'crucial' in these advertisements:

... since it allows the advertisements to be enjoyed by male (and perhaps female) readers on two levels: they can identify with the heroic image of the Southern Man, but can protect themselves from ridicule and feminist challenges by implying that it is all a performance.

Smith (2005) drew a similar conclusion from his analysis of a set of print advertisements for Jim Beam spirits, which made strong appeals to the 'everyday guy' masculinity. He argued that the message that emerges from these advertisements is that if you do not appreciate the humour, or worse, if you find them offensive, then you either 'don't get it' or you just need to 'lighten up' (Smith, 2005, para. 53). The impact of this message is to silence criticism and to create an advertising environment in which responsibility for the social and cultural messages contained in advertising, no matter how offensive, can be avoided with a shrug and a 'just kidding' (Meân, 2009, p. 147).

In his analysis, Smith (2005) argued that ironic humour and fantasy is used to consolidate dominant



representations of gender in beer advertisements and that 'joking is a special kind of social relationship that suspends the norms of everyday life in order to uphold them' (para. 53). For example, Meân (2009) stated that rather than poke fun at traditional masculinity, the humour present in the Man Laws campaign 'worked more to police categories and violations of gender expectations' (p. 159). Citing Steveson et al., Smith (2005, para. 53) stated:

Irony is used as an ideological defense against external attack (only the most humourless do not get the joke) and an internal defence (against more ambivalent feelings that render masculine experience less omnipotent and less certain than it is represented).

According to Smith (2005, para. 68), while anxieties about contemporary understandings of what it 'means to be a man' exist, '[t]his ironic style of advertising is likely to remain a dominant theme in marketing that targets younger male consumers'.

### Representations of egalitarian relationships

According to Messner and Montez de Orca (2005), wives and other intimate women in men's lives are portrayed in contemporary Western advertisements primarily as 'bitches' (p. 1887). They were portrayed as 'emotional or sexual blackmailers who threaten to undermine individual men's freedom to enjoy the erotic pleasure at the centre of the male group' (p. 1887). They make demands that mates do not, they want men to talk about feelings when mates do not, they are physically flawed and they interrupt life with the boys and the booze (Horne & Whannell, 2009; Messner & Montez de Orca, 2005). Messner and Montez de Orca (2005) noted that the alcohol industry does not want men to think of their women partners as Madonnas, or to treat them as adored:

After all, wives and girlfriends to whom men are committed, whom they respect and love, often do place limits on men's time spent out with the boys, as well as limits on men's consumption of alcohol. The industry seems to know this: as long as men remain distrustful of women, seeing them either as bitches who are trying to ensnare them and take away their freedom or as whores with whom they can party and have sex with no emotional commitment attached, then men remain more open to the marketing strategies of the industry. (Messner & Montez de Orca, 2005, p. 1892)

Smith (2005) argued that a strong theme in the advertisements designed for a global audience that he analysed concerning men's relationships with women partners is that of *being asked for something*:

Men keep on being asked something. They are being asked to examine themselves and their relationships, and they are being asked to change. In essence, the 'nagging bitch' is nagging these men, but they can avoid this only by retreating to the homosocial sphere of a bar with their buddies and Jim Beam. Neither Jim Beam, nor your friends, would ask such things of you. You can count on Jim Beam to remain constant, to be there for you. (Smith, 2005, para. 34)

Associated with the theme of being asked something is the theme of how to respond to such demands. Women are constituted as 'the other' (Wenner & Jackson, 2009b, p. 4), and intimate relationships with women emerge as something to be avoided at all costs. If they cannot be avoided, then the demands of wives or women partners should be managed with lies and deception under the veil of humour (Smith, 2005; Wenner, 2009). Messner and Montez de Oca (2005) argued that ultimately these representations are designed to avoid intimate relationships and to produce a selfish male consumer. This consumer will prioritize his own needs over others and has the 'personal and emotional freedom' (p. 1904) to purchase a 'hip lifestyle' (p. 1904) complete with all the consumer goods he wants, including alcohol.

Messner and Montez de Oca (2005) argued that the problem with these representations is that in the construction of wives and girlfriends as 'bitches' (and white men as 'losers'), men are ultimately cast as victims. Such constructions draw on the notion of women disrupting the natural social order (male authority in the home or bonding with mates), and such constructions have been described as 'tethered to men's anger at and desire for revenge against women' (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005, p. 1906). Messner and Montez de Oca (2005) argued that in drawing on men's insecurities about gender relations, and in positioning women as bitches and men as victims, these advertisements set up women as likely scapegoats and are therefore potentially dangerous for women. They called for more research on the link between the social constructions of identities and intimate relationships in alcohol advertising and the potential for domestic violence.

### CONCLUSIONS

This literature review lays out the research on the alcohol industry's representations of masculinity and gender relations employed to promote consumption to men and shows how portrayals of gender identities and lifestyles in alcohol marketing are socially situated and constructed. This review found that representations in alcohol advertisements designed to reach young men articulate a 'manual of masculinity', or what it is to be a man, by drawing from Western societies' acceptance of the consumption of alcohol as a 'rite of passage' for young men. Such alcohol advertisements associate drinking alcohol with practices of masculine identity in which women are peripheral and 'other' than men if present at all. The literature suggests that being a man is often portrayed within a framework of a nostalgic traditional masculinity that plays on young men's uncertainties and anxieties about being a man.

The identities portrayed for young men in some of the more recent advertisements were that of 'losers', the 'everyday guy', or the 'loveable larrikin' who engaged in 'laddish' behaviours that involved

consuming excess alcohol, watching televised sports and doing loutish things. Women remained peripheral or in subservient roles in these advertisements, or in opposition to men. Research with young people suggests that 'laddish' practices are lauded by young men who associate with the 'binge-drinking culture' and who show similar gender values to those men who engage in domestic violence towards women (Townes, 2009). These representations are problematic for the prevention of domestic violence because they draw from the same patriarchal masculine beliefs and values that have been associated with men's domestic violence (Flood & Pease, 2009).

Encouraging intimacy in close relationships with others and encouraging egalitarian relationships has been described as protective from domestic violence, but this review found that representations of egalitarian relationships were also problematic. When young women were present in alcohol advertisements they were constructed as either 'hotties', or 'bitches' who potentially interfered with men's alcohol consumption and men's relief from work, emotional concerns, and the freedom to be with the mates. Women and other men in these advertisements were to be treated as oppositional to what it is to be a man. Humour was used to consolidate hegemonic masculinity and to appeal to the emerging male market while masking the sexism of these advertisements. Researchers described some alcohol advertisements as playing on the anxieties of young men about successful intimate relationships with women, and appearing to encourage young men to privilege selfish consumption over intimate relationships. There are concerning indications that contemporary marketing techniques are being employed to embed problematic masculinities in social practices through the use of humour, fun events and through the internet using social networking sites.

This literature review has implications for policies relating to the regulation of alcohol advertisements in a global market. Messages about masculine identity that are attractive to the emerging young male consumer and that associate masculinity with laddish behaviour were identified in the literature and raise issues about how to regulate such alcohol advertising in order to prevent harm. Messages that promote a hegemonic masculinity associated with traditional or macho male values that marginalize or objectify women and others are problematic for the prevention of domestic violence. These messages appear to resonate across national boundaries and call for a global response. There will clearly be difficulties in regulating against problematic gendered or masculine representations when humour and other creative approaches can be employed to circumvent any critical response. Such difficulties have led others to seek comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising as a solution (e.g. Law Commission, 2010).

In view of the research on the association between traditional macho masculinities and domestic violence, care needs to be taken over the privileging of hegemonic masculinities in alcohol advertising. More research is required to detail these problematic representations if they are to be addressed. For example, there is room for more research on the way intimacy is portrayed in alcohol advertisements as such work has not featured in much alcohol advertisement research. There is also room for more work on the various constructions of masculinity portrayed in and through alcohol marketing, particularly in relation to problematic representations of male dominance and entitlement in relation to women and the sexual objectification of women. In addition, there is more room for investigating the portrayals of gender relations, and the messages that such advertisements give to young men and young women about heterosexual relationships and what it is to be a man or a young woman in contemporary society. These further investigations will potentially assist in determining future directions for domestic violence prevention in relation to alcohol marketing.

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## NOTES

1. This article is concerned with men's domestic violence towards women. The term 'domestic violence' will be used as a shortened version.
2. The WHO (2002) used the term young people to refer to those aged 10–29 years of age.
3. Among women's advocates and some feminists, alcohol and domestic violence is a contentious issue. Galvani (2006) provides a full discussion.
4. The term Pākehā refers to New Zealanders of European origin.

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