CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Exploring technology-facilitated coercive control in a post-relationship context in Ireland
Authors	Ayodele , Wuraoluwa Soibi
Publication date	2024
Original Citation	Ayodele, W. S. (2024) Exploring technology-facilitated coercive control in a post-relationship context in Ireland. Cork: Community-Academic Research Links, University College Cork.
Type of publication	Report
Link to publisher's version	https://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/rr/
Rights	©2024, Wuraoluwa Soibi Ayodele .
Download date	2026-11-15 02:37:54
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/16646



UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED COERCIVE CONTROL IN A POST-RELATIONSHIP CONTEXT IN IRELAND

Wuraoluwa Soibi Ayodele

CARL Research Project
in collaboration with
YANA North-Cork Domestic Violence Project

Name of student(s):	Wuraoluwa Soibi Ayodele
Name of community group:	YANA North-Cork Domestic Violence Project
Name of community group liaison person:	Patricia Barrett
Academic supervisor(s):	Professor Máire Leane
Name and year of course:	M.A, Women's Studies, 2024
Date completed:	24th September, 2024

What is Community-Academic Research Links?

Community Academic Research Links (CARL) is a community engagement initiative provided by University College Cork to support the research needs of community and voluntary groups/ Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). These groups can be grassroots groups, single-issue temporary groups, but also structured community and voluntary organisations. Research for the CSO is carried out free of financial cost by student researchers.

CARL seeks to:

- provide civil society with knowledge and skills through research and education;
- provide their services on an affordable basis;
- promote and support public access to and influence on science and technology;
- create equitable and supportive partnerships with civil society organisations;
- enhance understanding among policymakers and education and research institutions of the research and education needs of civil society, and
- enhance the transferrable skills and knowledge of students, community representatives and researchers (Living Knowledge Network).

What is a CSO?

We define CSOs as groups who are non-governmental, non-profit, not representing commercial interests, and/or pursuing a common purpose in the public interest. These groups include: trade unions, NGOs, professional associations, charities, grass-roots organisations, organisations that involve citizens in local and municipal life, churches and religious committees, and so on.

Why is this report on the UCC website?

The research agreement between the CSO, student and CARL/University states that the results of the study must be made public through the publication of the final research report on the CARL (UCC) website. CARL is committed to open access, and the free and public dissemination of research results.

How do I reference this report?

Author (year) *Dissertation/Project Title*, [online], Community-Academic Research Links/University College Cork, Ireland, Available from: https://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/rr/ [Accessed: date].

How can I find out more about the Community-Academic Research Links and the Living Knowledge Network?

The UCC CARL website has further information on the background and operation of Community-Academic Research Links at University College Cork, Ireland, http://carl.ucc.ie. You can follow CARL on Twitter at @UCC_CARL. All of our research reports are accessible free online here.

CARL is part of an international network of Science Shops called the Living Knowledge Network – website and on Twitter @ScienceShops. CARL is also a contributor to Campus Engage, which is the Irish Universities Association engagement initiative to promote community-based research, community-based learning and volunteering amongst Higher Education students and staff.

Are you a member of a community project and have an idea for a research project?
We would love to hear from you! Read the background information here and contact us by email at carl@ucc.ie.

Disclaimer
Notwithstanding the contributions by the University and its staff, the University gives no warranty as to the accuracy of the project report or the suitability of any material contained in it for either general or specific purposes. It will be for the Client Group, or users, to ensure that any outcome from the project meets safety and other requirements. The Client Group agrees not to hold the University responsible in respect of any use of the project results. Notwithstanding this disclaimer, it is a matter of record that many student projects have been completed to a very high standard and to the satisfaction of the Client Group.

EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED COERCIVE CONTROL IN A POST-RELATIONSHIP CONTEXT IN IRELAND

123116936

Wuraoluwa Soibi Ayodele

L.L.B, B.L(Bachelor of Laws)

This dissertation is submitted as part of the MA in Women's Studies to University College Cork

Research conducted in the Women's Studies department of UCC

Dissertation submitted September 2024

Coordinator of Women's Studies: Dr. Armida De La Garza

Supervisor of Dissertation: Professor. Máire Leane

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of people who I will appreciate below.

Firstly, I want to specially thank Professor Máire Leane, my supervisor and mentor. Thank you for the resources, deep insights, step by step and constant guidance you gave me. Your support and validation gave me the strength to go through this dissertation. I have learnt so much more from you in the last few months than from anywhere else.

I would like to thank Dr. Armida De La Garza, my Women's Studies coordinator who supported me throughout my time in the Women's Studies class.

I would like to thank my amazing Women's Studies classmates for the engaging year we've had together. I thank most especially my very dear friends – Kunyao, Fiona and Elisa who resonate with my fierce feminist journey and have made my life in Ireland enjoyable. You all are a special gift to me from the Women's Studies class. I thank the teaching staff of Women's Studies for a consciousness-raising year that has opened my mind to challenging invisible biases against women around me.

I thank Safe Ireland National Social Change Agency, YANA North Cork Domestic Violence Project, Jennifer Murphy, Patricia Barrett and all the wonderful agencies that gave me very valuable information to my work. To the 8 amazing frontline workers and respondents whom I spent hours interviewing, who gave me the very valuable data I used for my dissertation, I am extremely grateful to you. Your time, passion and commitment to defending women experiencing violence in Ireland have reignited my fire to fight violence at all costs.

I thank the Ireland Fellows Program (Roger Casement Fellowship) that has funded my masters in Women's Studies without which this research would not have been possible.

I thank my wonderful staff and team in my organization in Nigeria, Women Safe House Sustenance Initiative, who have managed all the numerous parts of my work over the last year, and in my absence

have supported hundreds of women in Nigeria who are experiencing violence. I want to thank George, my amazing husband who has supported me in so many ways throughout the year. I also specially thank my mum, Dr. Otonye Bille-Ayodele, the first feminist I knew who set me on this path, supported my fierce feminist journey and has defended me at all times. I am indebted to you.

I am a better feminist researcher because of you all. Thank you.

Declaration

I confirm that the dissertation submitted is my own work and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere.

Signed: Wuraoluwa Soibi Ayodele **Date: 24/9/2024**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Introduction……..……10
1.1 Background of study ……..…10
1.2 Statement of Problem…….... 11
1.3 Aims and Objectives ……..…12
1.4 Research Questions…….....12
1.5 Scope and Limitation of Study …….. 13
1.6 Significance of the Study and Rationale ……....13
1.7 Definition of Terms …….. .14
1.8 Outline of Thesis…….....14
2 Theoretical framework and Research Methods…….. 15
2.1 Introduction ……...15
2.2 Feminist Research Principles……..15
2.3 Theoretical Framework…….. 16
2.4 Research Methods……...17
2.5 Research Design ……..…… 20
2.6 Method of Data Analysis…… 21
3 Policy and Practice in Addressing Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control…22
3.1 Introduction……..22
3.2 The 2017 Criminal Justice (Offences Relating to Information Systems) Act…… 23
3.3 The 2018 Domestic Violence Act …….……..24
3.4 The 2023 Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act……...… 26
3.5 Ireland's National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based violence…... 28
3.6 Annual Reports from Support Agencies in Ireland……..28
3.7 Conclusion ……..…….30
4 Literature Review on Exploring Technology Facilitated Coercive Control in a Post-Relationship Context in Ireland ……. 32
4.1 Introduction ……32
4.2 Introduction to Technology-Facilitated Abuse…….……...… 32
4.3 Forms of Technology-facilitated Abuse…….…… 34
4.4 From Coercive Control To Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control…….……...……. .36
4.5 Omnipresence……...……..….38
4.6 Technology-facilitated Coercive Control in Ireland…….…….…… 40
4.7 Feminist Discourse on Technology-facilitated Coercive Control…….. 40
4.8 Conclusion…….…….…… 42
5 Analysis of Findings on Technology-facilitated Coercive Control……...43
5.1 Introduction Practical changes for providers…….. 43
5.2 Findings ……..…….. 43
5.3 Discussion……..…….....58
5.4. Conclusion……..…….. .64
6. Conclusion and Recommendation…… 65
6.1. Introduction ……..……..……... 65
6.2 Answers to Research Questions…….…. 65
6.3 Recommendation…… 66
6.4 Reflections…….….. 69
References……..70
Appendix 1…….....77

Appendix 2……..... 84
Appendix 3……..…… 85

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Coercive control generally represents non-physical forms of violence which one person uses to exert control over another (Stark, 2007). These forms of violence are invisible and capture actions such as stalking, monitoring, victim-isolation and so on. As an invisible form of violence, coercive control is constructed mostly in an intimate-partner relationship and occurs in a way that the victim rarely recognizes or understands the situation of violence. While coercive control may not have physical repercussions such as bruises, it advances psychological repercussions such as losing one's identity (Johnson, 2008), post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, suicidal thoughts and so on. Coercive control is further constructed as a structural form of exploitation and deprivation with the use of threats or force to compel a victim to indirectly obey and align to the will of an abuser (Stark 2007).

With developments in research, a spotlight has been shone on coercive control as a form of violence. This has led to a higher recognition of the situation by the public and a development in legislation to protect victims. In Ireland, the Domestic Violence Act (2018) established the offence of coercive control. The development in research and legislation has mostly recognized acts of coercive control in the context of relationships where the partners physically live with one another.

However, in recent times, the advancement of technology and increased virtual communities and relationships, have caused abusers to become more innovative in using technology to commit coercive control. Hence, technology can be an avenue for abusers to exert coercive control over their victims beyond a shared domestic, or physical space and provides them with overwhelming power to do so (Duerkson and Woodin, 2019**).** In light of this, it is crucial to understand the nature of technology-

facilitated coercive control and how this form of violence is perpetrated against victims in a manner that affects them physically, psychologically, sexually and economically. Recent research has explored social media abuse as a form of technology-facilitated coercive control, including cyber-stalking, deep-fake voices or images, hacking of social media pages and so on. The development of SMART technologies has however, generated potential for another form of technology- facilitated coercive control and this provides the focus of this thesis.

1.2. Statement of Problem

The development of SMART technologies within the home, has enabled technology-facilitated coercive control by abusers to entrap victims within a home situation. Technologies such as smart speakers, heating systems, security systems, electricity lights, home voice assistants and so on, exist in such a gendered way that they are easily used to sustain acts of technology-facilitated coercive control remotely and in the physical absence of the abuser. These smart technologies, which are referred to in this study as home technologies, are used within the home but can be controlled by the partner who possesses more power in a relationship. In a post-relationship context, when the abuser may no longer live in the home with their partner, control of these technologies allows them to sustain coercive control and continue to instill fear and create discomfort for the victim. Understanding how technology is exploited in sustaining coercive control in this context represents a gap in existing research.

Additionally, the use of smart financial technologies to control the finances of victims has not been explored in existing research. This study aims to address these gaps.

1.3. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study is to better understand in the Irish context, how technology-facilitated abuse sustains coercive control and post-relationship abuse after victims have left their abusers, and how service providers are responding to it.

The objectives are to:

a. Explore how SMART technologies and financial technologies are used to facilitate coercive control within the home in post-relationship contexts in Ireland.

b. Investigate what supports service providers provide to people experiencing technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland.

c. Critically reflect on how statutory and legislative frameworks for addressing technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland could be enhanced.

1.4. Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the research:

1. What is known about Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC) in terms of the Literature and Policies in Ireland?
2. What awareness and what practices exist around Technology-facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC) among service providers and practitioners in Ireland?
3. What enhancements in statutory and legislative responses are required to address Technology-facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC) in Ireland?

1.5. Scope and Limitations of Study

This study will be limited to exploring how technology-facilitated coercive control is committed by perpetrators using only smart home technologies and financial technologies in Ireland. Social media based coercive- control will not be explored as this has already received research attention (Lauren Reed et al., 2017). I have considered it ethically appropriate to consult with service providers and practitioners who provide support services to victims to avoid the possibility of re-traumatising victims. Therefore, data for this study will not be collected directly from victims of technology-facilitated coercive control.

1.6. Significance of the Study and Rationale

There are no existing studies in Ireland examining technology-facilitated coercive control facilitated by SMART technologies and financial technologies. This study will provide up to date insights into the experiences of victims as understood by service providers, an overview of the services which are available, and critical appraisal of the statutory and legislative framework for addressing this emergent issue.

The data generated will:

1. Inform training practices for professionals and victims in recognizing and responding to technology-facilitated coercive control.
2. Contribute to the codification of this form of coercive control and its inclusion in existing statutes in Ireland.
3. Sensitize key stakeholders including social services, legislators etc. to the issue and stimulate the thought lines of activists, civil society organizations, and community leaders to focus efforts on feminist-led interventions to technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland.
4. Add to the existing literature and be useful for further research in this area.

1.7 Research Approach

Theoretical insights generated by theories of power and intersectionality are employed to provide a framework to explore the power dynamics that exist in coercive control and the intersectional ways coercive control affects victims of varying gender, race, disability and class. The principles of feminist research guide the design of the research methodology and inform the ethical approach taken to the work. Data is collected through a mixed methods approach consisting of critical review of the literature on technology facilitated coercive control, review of relevant policy and legislation in the Irish context and qualitative interviews with 8 frontline service providers who support victims of technology-facilitated coercive control.

1.8 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 2 will address the methodologies, theoretical framework and ethical framework adopted in this study.

Chapter 3 will critically examine the scale of the problem, existing policy and legal responses to technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland.

Chapter 4 will review existing academic literature on technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland, Australia and the United Kingdom.

Chapter 5 will outline the findings generated through thematic analysis of data collected from the respondents in this study.

Chapter 6 will Discuss insights, draw conclusions and make recommendations to better address technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

2.1. Introduction

The theoretical framework and research methods adopted in this study are discussed in this chapter. A feminist approach informs the topic, theoretical framework, data collection methods and ethical considerations which shape this work.

2.2 Feminist research principles

The feminist research principles of empowerment, reflexivity and reciprocity are central to how I approached this work (Kingston, 2020, Nazneen and Sultan, 2014). Feminist research strives to empower women by addressing how women may gain agency to challenge silent patriarchal structures which advance inequalities and marginalize women. It aims to leave the research participant empowered at the end of the research study and most significantly it adheres to an ethics of care-based research. These principles led me to focus on the emergent and largely unexplored experience of technology-facilitated coercive control which constitute a new and insidious form of control over women. They also informed my decision to interview service providers, who have heard firsthand experiences of women who have experienced this form of coercive control, rather than risking the re-traumatisation of women through asking them to recount their experiences again in an interview. Furthermore, I adhered to the UCC's Social Research Ethics Committee guidelines in designing my interview schedule, interview information sheet, consent form and interview questions.

Feminist research encourages transparency in research through researchers practicing reflexivity. In practicing reflexivity, I have been aware of my personal and social identity throughout this study, considering my positionality as a feminist lawyer and activist while relating my research findings to my

previous personal and work experiences. Since my primary data collection was drawn from service providers and frontline workers in Ireland, I interpreted the lived experiences of victims of domestic violence through my Nigerian context. I realized that the challenges of service providers and frontline workers were exactly the same as Nigeria and the women had very similar lived experiences of domestic violence.

I have practiced the principle of reciprocity for my feminist research participants by giving them information on available training resources that I am familiar with such as the new training program in the University College Cork, and shared experiences as a frontline worker which may be helpful to their work. Reciprocity in feminist research encourages giving back to research participants (Nazneen et al, 2014), hence I have decided to undertake this work as a CARL project which will ensure that the findings are shared with YANA North Cork Domestic Violence Project, a community organization in the north of Cork that provides support services to women experiencing domestic violence, to inform their work. I will also provide an electronic copy of my thesis to any of the research participants who wish to read it. Hence, the knowledge production I have engaged in during this study has been mutually beneficial to my research participants.

2.3 Theoretical framework

In seeking to understand the phenomenon of technology-facilitated coercive control, I draw on insights provided by theoretical understandings of power and intersectionality, which provide a framework to explore the power dynamics that exist in coercive control and the intersectional ways coercive control affects victims of varying gender, race, disability and class.

The theory of power as a framework for this study is understood by examining masculinity through a feminist lens and connecting masculine power to coercive control which sustains violence against women (Brubaker, 2021; Durfee, 2011). The existence of patriarchal power continues to reinforce violence against women. These power relations enable perpetrators to sustain coercive control over their victims (Walby and Towers, 2018). Mark Haugaard (2021) has conceptualized power as violence and coercion and explored how perpetrators of violence and coercion can gain domination over their

victims and facilitate their loss of agency. This domination has been described as the concept of "power over" in which a perpetrator consistently gains control over a victim because of the power relations between them (Allen, 2021). The gendered nature of technology places overwhelming power in the hands of perpetrators in a way that they gain domination over their victims. Hence, through technology, perpetrators can exert invisible power to commit violence against their victims.

The theory of intersectionality as propounded by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 (Crenshaw, 1991) has been recognized as "the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made thus far" (McCall, 2015 p. 1771). It draws attention to the fact that technology-facilitated coercive control may affect women differently based on their gender identity, class, disability and race. Intersectionality describes the recognition of multiple interlocking identities that are defined through the lens of sociocultural power, privilege and people's collective identities and lived experiences (Shields 2008).

Examining the intersectional identities of victims is therefore critical to understanding the lived experiences of women experiencing technology-facilitated coercive control and to designing individualized responses. Furthermore, it guards against an intervention for victims of technology-facilitated coercive control created through a 'one size fits all' approach.

2.4 Research Methodology

In this study, a mixed methods approach collecting primary and secondary data was used interviews. Data was collected through an Irish and international literature search, a review of Irish policies and legislation on technology facilitated coercive control, examination of annual reports and websites of support organisations and interviews with service providers who support victims of technology-facilitated coercive control.

1. Secondary Data Collection

I commenced this study by scheduling an appointment with the librarian at University College Cork. Through the librarian's assistance, I undertook a feminist review of 50 journal articles and 5 books on technology-facilitated abuse, coercive control, digital abuse and family violence (see Appendix 1 – Literature Sources). In addition, I reviewed the 2018 Domestic Violence Act, the annual reports of 10 support agencies out of the 37 support agencies in Ireland, and 12 websites of these support services including Safe Ireland and Women's Aid (See Appendix 2- Service Provider Annual Reports and Websites Consulted). I consulted these reports and agencies based on the coverage they had across Ireland and the information that was available online. I also reviewed the 20 hour- training for a digital badge on "Recognizing and Responding to Technology-Facilitated Abuse" from the University College Cork which was recently launched in May 2024. This training was designed and organized by Safe Ireland National Social Change Agency in collaboration with National Cyber-Security Task-force and University College Cork.

2. Primary Data Collection

The collection of my primary data was done through qualitative semi-structured interviews. Interview respondents were staff from agencies providing support services to victims of technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland. I recruited respondents by contacting 15 agencies through 56 emails and 15 phone calls requesting interviews. This led to interviews with 8 respondents from 7 agencies. 6 interviews were held in-person, and 2 interviews were held online through Zoom and Microsoft teams. The interviews were held between the 26th of June 2024 and 15th of July 2024. They took between 30 minutes to 1 hour each and were audio recorded on Microsoft Teams. The audio recordings were transcribed and were thereafter destroyed. Hence, the only copy of these interviews are the transcripts which I have used to lay out my findings and analysis on this research topic.

3. *Interview Respondents*

The interview respondents and the agencies in which they are based are detailed in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Respondent Details

Respondents	**Respondents' agencies**	**Location**	**Gender**	**Place of Interview**	**Date of Interview**
Respondent 1	Safe Ireland National Social Change Agency	Dublin, Mayo and Ireland	Female	Online (Microsoft Teams)	15th July 2024
Respondent 2	Ruhama, Ireland	Dublin, Cork, Kerry regions and Ireland	Female	In-person (Cork City)	8th July, 2024
Respondent 3	West Cork Beacon	West Cork and Cork County	Female	In-person (Bantry, West Cork)	6th July 2024
Respondent 4	Adapt Women's Refuge, Kerry	Kerry and Tippery regions	Female	Online (Zoom)	2nd July 2024
Respondent 5	Eden House, Good Shepard, Cork	Cork County	Female	In-person	11th July, 2024
Respondent 6	Cuanlee Refuge, Cork	Cork City and County	Female	In-person	28th June 2024
Respondent 7	Cuanlee Refuge, Cork	Cork City and County	Female	In-person	28th June, 2024
Respondent 8	One Stop Shop (OSS) for Domestic Violence, Cork	Cork County	Female	In-person	26th June, 2024

4. *Sampling Techniques*

A purposive sampling technique was employed as it was necessary to have knowledgeable informants who were familiar with the phenomenon under investigation. As such, the sample was generated from staff working in front-line services and established support agencies providing support services to victims of technology-facilitated coercive control. Given the nature of the respondents' work, they had the most information about the technologies, the lived experiences of victims, the support services and the existing legislation on technology-facilitated coercive control.

5. *Research Instrument and Data Collection*

A semi-structured interview schedule consisting of 17 questions was devised (see Appendix 3). At the beginning of this study, I prepared 9 interview questions which were to be used to gather data from the respondents. However, after the first interview, I reflected on the process and additional questions had to be included in order for the respondents to describe the lived experiences of women who have faced technology-facilitated coercive control.

2.5. Method of Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was undertaken informed by the model outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) whereby the transcripts were read and re-read to identify key themes. The key themes identified were:

1. Awareness, extent and nature of technology-facilitated coercive control.
2. Awareness and efficacy of policy and legislative framework.
3. Service level responses and practices.
4. Training and education.

2.6. Conclusion

The methods which have been used in this research study were designed to capture the lived experiences of women facing technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland in a way that highlights the problem and provides possible solutions.

CHAPTER 3

POLICY AND PRACTICE IN ADDRESSING TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED COERCIVE CONTROL: A CRITICAL REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will review the current legislation on technology-facilitated coercive control and practice procedures from agencies providing support services to victims in Ireland. Examining the policies and legislation on technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland is critical to understanding the level of awareness that exists about the issue and the range of measures available to address it. Identifying, defining and codifying non-physical forms of coercive control is challenging to policy makers, legislators, justice actors and domestic violence front-line workers responding to victims.

Recent policy developments have codified coercive control as both a civil and criminal offence and there are three provisions in Irish legislation that describe coercive control and technology. In 2017 the Criminal Justice (Offences Relating to Information Systems) Act criminalized offences relating to the misuse of data from one information system to another. Information systems as referred to in this law include devices that can be used in an online mode. In 2018 the Domestic Violence Act criminalized the offence of coercive control. Coercive control is defined in this Act as any behaviour that is controlling in a way that it has a serious effect on a person. Similarly, in November 2023, the Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2023 came into effect which addressed controlling behaviours that result in harassment and stalking in Ireland.

This chapter will begin with a critical review of the current legislation outlined above and will then move on to consider the practice experiences of service providers who support women who have experienced technology-facilitated coercive control.

3.2 The 2017 Criminal Justice (Offences Relating to Information Systems) Act

This Act came into effect in May 2017 and expanded the Criminal Justice Act by criminalizing an act of interference with a device or computer programme which may be an electric one or in an online mode. The law criminalizes any act of alteration or damage of such devices. In sections 2, 3, 4 and 5, the law explicitly describes that such an act must be intentional from the perpetrator and not an accidental act. In other words, the *actus reus* (criminal action) must be proved alongside the *mens rea* (criminal intention) for a perpetrator to be convicted under this Act. The Act prescribes only a maximum sentence of 5-years imprisonment for convicted perpetrators. The full text of sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 is provided below as it is instructive in understanding the nature of the act being criminalised.

> 2. A person who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, intentionally accesses an information system by infringing a security measure shall be guilty of an offence. Interference with information system without lawful authority
> 3. A person who, without lawful authority, intentionally hinders or interrupts the functioning of an information system by— (a) inputting data on the system, (b) transmitting, damaging, deleting, altering or suppressing, or causing the deterioration of, data on the system, or (c) rendering data on the system inaccessible, shall be guilty of an offence.
> 4. A person who, without lawful authority, intentionally deletes, damages, alters or suppresses, or renders inaccessible, or causes the deterioration of, data on an information system shall be guilty of an offence.
> 5. A person who, without lawful authority, intentionally intercepts any transmission (other than a public transmission) of data to, from or within an information system (including any electromagnetic emission from such an information system carrying such data), shall be guilty of an offence.
> 6. A person who, without lawful authority, intentionally produces, sells, procures for use, imports, distributes, or otherwise makes available, for the purpose of the commission of an offence under section 2, 3, 4 or 5— (a) any computer programme that is primarily designed or adapted for use in connection with the commission of such an offence, or (b) any device, computer password, unencryption key or code, or access code, or similar data, by which an information system is capable of being accessed, shall be guilty of an offence.(Criminal Justice, Offences Relating to Information Systems Act, 2017)

The Criminal Justice (Offences relating to Information Systems) Act does not expressly describe abuse that can be perpetrated through technology. The intention of the Act was to address the attack on information systems in line with the 2013 directive from the European Parliament (Criminal Justice,

Offences Relating to Information Systems Act, 2017). Information systems have expanded since 2013 to include smart devices that can be used in a home. It is necessary to note that the word "technology" is not reflected throughout the Act and hence excludes offences that are committed outside the use of a computer programme or information system or device. The absence of a clearcut definition of technology and SMART devices has created a gap in the implementation of this legislation with relation to technology-facilitated coercive control especially where a home device does not fall under any of the provided categories. This Act therefore requires a review to include smart home devices that are now being enabled by IoT in order to ensure a more effective tackling of technology-facilitated coercive control.

3.3 The 2018 Domestic Violence Act

The offence of coercive control was criminalized in the Domestic Violence Act. The provisions of this act define controlling behaviour as any act that causes a victim to live an uncomfortable life or fear the possibility of further violence being committed against them. Section 39 of the Act describes the offence of coercive control and prescribes the punishment for perpetrators.

> (1) A person commits an offence where he or she knowingly and persistently engages in behaviour that— (a) is controlling or coercive, (b) has a serious effect on a relevant person, and (c) a reasonable person would consider likely to have a serious effect on a relevant person.
> (2) For the purposes of *subsection (1)*, a person's behaviour has a serious effect on a relevant person if the behaviour causes the relevant person— (a) to fear that violence will be used against him or her, or (b) serious alarm or distress that has a substantial adverse impact on his or her usual day-to-day activities.
> (3) A person who commits an offence under *subsection (1)* is liable— (a) on summary conviction, to a class A fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or both, and (b) on conviction on indictment, to a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years, or both.
> (4) In this section, a person is a "relevant person" in respect of another person if he or she— (a) is the spouse or civil partner of that other person, or (b) is not the spouse or civil partner of that other person and is not related to that other person within a prohibited degree of relationship but is or was in an intimate relationship with that other person (Domestic Violence Act, 2018, Section 39)

The legislative provision for coercive control has been a progressive step for criminalizing controlling and violent behaviours in Ireland. The definition of coercive control in this Act captures a wide range of behaviours that represent non-physical forms of violence against a person. However, such behaviours are not clearly defined in a descriptive manner that addresses the types of behaviours that this section refers to. The motivations and means through which coercive control is executed by perpetrators is not referred to in the Act (Powell et al., 2019). This poses a real challenge in interpreting the ambiguity in the legislation's provisions. The forms of coercive control such as financial abuse, emotional abuse and sexual violence are not clearly described in this section (Section 39 above). The exclusion of specific named behaviours poses a critical challenge for victims who may intend to test the capacity of the law to get justice for themselves and convict perpetrators through the court system. In describing the implication of excluding these behaviours, I will make reference to the Australian case law. In the Australian case of Attorney-General (Tas) v CL, 2018, the Supreme Court of Tasmania, decided that victims of economic and emotional abuse were ineligible for compensation since the Family Violence Act 2004 excluded these forms of abuse in its interpretation (O'Brien and Maras, 2024). Therefore, the exclusion of forms of non-physical violence presents coercive control as a form of physical violence in the Irish Domestic Violence Act. Similarly, the threshold and burden of proof of coercive control becomes problematic as coercive control is treated as physical violence- where physical resistance from the victim amounts to refusing to condone the abuse. The Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) in their 2023 report in Ireland highlighted the problems of the provisions in the 2018 Domestic Violence Act on coercive control:

> GREVIO observes, however, that caution should be observed in ensuring that the conditions set under section 39, paragraph 2, (indents a and b) for the conduct to reach the threshold of criminality are not interpreted as being cumulative. Indeed, if these conditions were to be considered as cumulative, GREVIO deems that it would problematically shift the focus onto the victim's behaviour rather than onto the perpetrator, placing an undue burden on the victim. Moreover, requiring proof that the course of conduct has had a substantial adverse effect on the victim's day-to-day life does not reflect a correct understanding of coercive control, as studies show that victims'

> reactions to coercive control can be very different, with some victims adopting a behaviour that may wrongly be seen as compliant or in agreement with the perpetrator's controlling behaviour (GREVIO, 2023, paragraphs 196-198)

Conclusively, there have been few convictions of coercive control under the Domestic Violence Act. In the 5-year period between 2023 and the passing of the Act in 2018, of the 54 reported cases of coercive control, only one perpetrator was convicted receiving a sentence of 10 years. No convictions have been made on technology-facilitated coercive control (GREVIO, 2023, paragraphs 198-200)

3.4. The 2023 Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act

The offence of harassment and stalking which constitutes coercive control behaviours is criminalized in section 23 of the newly passed Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous) Act of 2023 in Ireland. This section amends the earlier provision in the 1997 Criminal Law Act on Non-Fatal Offences Against a Person. This provision implies that acts of general coercive control such as the breach of peace and privacy are criminalized, it also explicitly refers to behaviours which may be regarded as harassment and stalking. These behaviours include acts of technology-facilitated coercive control such as following, watching, monitoring, tracking or spying on a person, impersonation, loitering, or interference with a person's property including their electronic systems. However, it is important to look into the provision as quoted below which also focuses on harassment and stalking as acts which may result into "violence". This implies that the language of the Act is ambiguous in that it refers to violence as a physical act while excluding non-physical acts of violence such as harassment and stalking.

> **Harassment or stalking**
> **23.** The Act of 1997 is amended by the substitution of the following section for section 10:
> **"10.** (1) A person shall be guilty of the offence of harassment where—(a) the person, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, persistently, by his or her acts, intentionally or recklessly, at the time when the acts occur or when the other becomes aware of them— (i) seriously interferes with another's peace and privacy, or (ii) causes alarm, distress or harm to the other, and (b) the person's acts are such that a reasonable person would realise that the acts would seriously interfere with the other's peace and

> privacy or cause alarm, distress or harm to the other, at the time when the acts occurred or when the other becomes aware of them.
> (2) A person shall be guilty of the offence of stalking where---(a) the person, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, by his or her acts, intentionally or recklessly causes another, at the time when the acts occur or when the other becomes aware of them— (i) to fear that violence will be used against him or her or another person connected to him or her, or (ii) serious alarm or distress that has a substantial adverse impact on his or her usual day-to-day activities, and (b) the person's acts are such that a reasonable person would realise that the acts
> would
> cause the other, at the time when the acts occur or when the other becomes aware of them, to fear that violence will be used against him or her or another person connected to him or her, or serious alarm or distress that has a substantial adverse impact on his or her usual day-to-day activities. (Criminal Justice Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 2023, Section 23)

Following this ambiguity in the definition, it is critical to understand that violence is still being interpreted as only physical, hence the provision in the Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Act) does not criminalize the non-physical forms of violence. The 2017 Criminal Justice (Offences Relating to Information Systems) Act reference to acts of harassment or stalking through technology as acts of abuse through "information systems" rather than technology systems, further contributes to this ambiguity Therefore, acts of technology-facilitated coercive control are not expressly captured in the 2023 Act as the word "technology" is completely excluded from the language of the Act. There are no provisions of the law that describe smart technologies as being used to perpetrate violence. Furthermore, home technologies, wearable technologies, artificial intelligence and emerging technologies are not explicitly captured in the law as possible ways through which perpetrators can sustain coercive control or violence against their victims. This creates an ambiguity in the law and leaves the court to *suo moto* interpret the law as it deems fit. Where there is an ambiguity in the definition of an offence and prescribed punishment, the miscarriage of justice may become inevitable (Stannard, 2023).

3.5. Ireland's National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based violence

In June 2022, the Irish department of justice published a Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence ((Third National Strategy on DSGBV, 2022).

The third national strategy which is set to operate from year 2022 to 2026 has advanced the two previous strategies to address violence through an intersectional lens cutting across race, class, gender and geographical divides in Ireland. The national strategy is in line with Ireland's ratification of the Istanbul Convention's international standards for combatting domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. and is built around the Istanbul framework of prevention, protection, prosecution and policy coordination.

The Third National Strategy recognizes that, women and girls are mostly affected by violence, hence, the particular emphasis in the strategy on meeting the needs of women and girls and creating a society where there is zero tolerance for the culture and conditions that foster violence against women. Although the national strategy highlights the need to protect victims from technology-facilitated abuse, it does not capture coercive controlling behaviors which can be committed by perpetrators through technology. Hence, no specific strategy focuses on addressing technology-facilitated coercive control (Third national strategy on DSGBV, 2022)

3.6. Annual Reports from Support Agencies in Ireland

Consideration of annual reports of agencies providing support services to victims of violence in Ireland (Safe Ireland, 2023) is instructive in building a picture of the extent to which there is awareness and reporting of technology-facilitated coercive control and practice procedures for providing support to address the needs of victims in such situations. 37 agencies provide support victims and these services are regulated and evaluated by Safe Ireland National Social Change Agency. The annual reports of 10 of

these support agencies have been examined in this study to ascertain insights into reported cases of technology-facilitated coercive control and related practice procedures.

Examining these annual reports has revealed that the naming and recognition of coercive control became prominent after the year 2020. Technology-facilitated abuse more specifically, became more recognized during the year 2020. This has been closely linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdown which resulted in advancement of SMART home technologies and innovation of perpetrators in finding newer ways to sustain violence against their victims. For example, the report from Mná Feasa reveals that of the 186 reported cases in 2020, 106 victims experienced technology abuse and economic abuse (Mná Feasa, 2021). The annual report from West Cork Women Against Violence (now known as West Cork Beacon) in 2021 reveals that there were 22 specific cases of coercive control and 223 mixed cases of coercive control and emotional abuse. No specific cases of technology-facilitated coercive control are captured in this report (West Cork Women Against Violence, 2021). Safe Ireland Social Change Agency, a national body working to eradicate domestic, sex, gender and sexuality-based violence in Ireland, recorded close to 5,000 cases of coercive control and emotional abuse as prominent forms of violence in its annual reports in 2021 and 2022 as opposed to less than 2,000 cases from other years (Safe Ireland, 2022). In the same vein, Women's Aid, which is a national agency providing support services to victims of coercive control in Dublin, recorded a 16 percent increase in reported cases of coercive control and emotional abuse in 2023 compared to 2022 (Women's Aid, 2024). Other agencies that have reported coercive abuse cases include: Saoirse Domestic Violence Service based in Dublin where about 85 percent of reported cases in the year 2021were of coercive control and emotional abuse (Saoirse, 2022), Domestic Violence Response in Galway, recorded 163 new cases on coercive control and emotional abuse in 2022 (Domestic Violence Response, 2021), Amber Women's Refuge in Dublin received 68 new cases of coercive control and psychological abuse in the year 2022 (Amber Women's Refuge, 2023). Notably,

though the annual reports of these agencies capture the occurrence of cases from service-users of coercive control, they do not reflect a description of specific cases of technology-facilitated control excluding Mna Feasa. There is also a gap in the consistency of reporting as these agencies do not have published reports for every year. While agencies' reports do not reflect specific experiences of victims of technology-facilitated coercive control, my interviews with the agencies revealed that there are response practices and support services being provided to victims experiencing technology-facilitated control but these which are not captured in the reports. There is therefore a lag between reporting practices and response practices of agencies.

From the reports of agencies which I reviewed, it is evident that in practice, the support services which are provided for victims of violence are specifically counselling support, court accompaniment, financial support, general accompaniment, advocacy services and training. As technology is ever evolving, agencies in Ireland are updating their knowledge on practice directions to address cases of technology-facilitated coercive control despite the lag in reporting the experiences of victims. In line with this, a number of training events have been recently organized for frontline workers from support agencies to learn about technology-facilitated coercive control (Safe Ireland, 2023). One of such trainings is the recent Digital Badge in Technology-Facilitated Abuse launched in May 2024 by Safe Ireland in collaboration with University College Cork which is open to frontline workers at 25 euro for the course and free for students (University College Cork, 2024 - https://www.ucc.ie/en/recognising-responding-to-tfa.). This course is distinct and expands previous trainings on addressing cases of coercive control from Women's Aid in 2021, Amber Women's Refuge in 2022, the toolkit from National Women's Council in 2022 and the toolkit from Safe Ireland in 2023.

3.7 Conclusion

Policy and legislation on technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland are evolving. However, current legal provisions do not expressly address the new ways in which perpetrators are sustaining acts

of coercive control against their victims. The ambiguities in the law as discussed in this chapter, make it difficult to secure prosecutions for coercive control through the courts. Against this background recognition and prosecution of technology-facilitated coercive control is particularly challenging. Additionally, there is a low reporting and data collection of lived experiences of technology-facilitated coercive control by support agencies and this poses a difficulty in tracking the prevalence of this form of abuse which would contribute to the advancement of legislation. The limitations of the existing legislation in terms of failure to explicitly articulate Furthermore, the low SMART technology as a tool that advances coercive control means that recognizing, responding to and prosecuting this crime is an ongoing challenge for practitioners, policy makers, police and the judiciary.

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE REVIEW ON EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED COERCIVE CONTROL IN A POST-RELATIONSHIP CONTEXT IN IRELAND

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will review the existing body of academic literature on technology-facilitated coercive control, examine the concept of technology-facilitated abuse and the diverse terminologies that scholars have used to describe it, including its forms, and the extent to which perpetrators use technology to sustain abuse against their victims. How coercive power is sustained in domestic violent relationships through technology-facilitated coercive control will also be examined.

4.2 Introduction to Technology-Facilitated Abuse

Technological advancements are being exploited by perpetrators of violence to explore different ways to commit acts of violence against women. Recent advancements in technology have enabled perpetrators to commit acts of violence against women in a way that supersedes physical interaction. Technology has provided avenues for perpetrators to sustain their power over victims by exerting abusive and coercive controlling behaviors over them (Duerkson and Woodin, 2019). Coercive control encompasses non-physical abusive and violent acts, which a perpetrator exerts on a person especially in an intimate-partner relationship. A growing body of scholarship has called for a heightened focus on how this form of coercive control is enabled by technology (O'Brien and Maras, 2024).

The term "technology-facilitated abuse" is a complex one and has been described by several scholars using a plethora of terms. There is no unified definition that describes technology-facilitated abuse. As Dragiewicz et al (2018) put it:

> … there is no scholarly consensus about which term(s) to use; different terms point to different contexts of violence and abuse and therefore different phenomena; and no term is perfect, each having advantages and limitations. Accordingly, scholars use different terms depending on the type of violence and abuse they are studying and the contexts they wish to foreground. (Dragiewicz et al, 2018, page 2)

Due to this fact, I struggled to find resources that directly addressed the topic of technology-facilitated abuse at the beginning of this review. My review, has surfaced eight terms which have all been used to describe acts of abuse enabled by technology :"Digital Dating Abuse" (Lauren Reed et al., 2017), "Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control" (Dragiewicz et al, 2018; O'Brien and Maras, 2024),), **"**Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence" (Henry and Powell, 2018), "Technology-Facilitated Domestic and Sexual Violence" (Nichola Henry et al., 2020), "Technology-Facilitated Domestic Violence" (Yardley, 2021), Technology facilitated domestic and family violence (Douglas et al, 2019), and "Technology-Facilitated Gender-based Violence" (Vaiddehi Bansal et al, 2023). The articles I reviewed were drawn mostly from Australia and the United Kingdom as these countries have the most academic publications on technology-facilitated coercive control.

Technology-facilitated abuse has been described as a repeated pattern of separate coercive behaviors which cumulate into acts of violence and are enabled through technology that perpetrators exert over their victims (Douglas et al, 2019; Fiolet et al, 2021). These acts of violence are described as controlling and coercive behaviors such as psychological abuse, economic abuse, sexual abuse and physical abuse (Henry and Powell, 2018). The controlling behaviors referred to include online sexual harassment, threats, multiple texting, sexting, intimidation, impersonation, deep-fake voice, stalking and omnipresence, image-based abuse, tracking, photoshopped pictures and so on (Dragiewicz et al, 2019). Data from the lived experiences of women who have faced domestic violence, indicate that acts of technology-facilitated abuse are understood as one of the dominant forms of abuse, which above all other, limits the freedom of a victim (Yardley, 2021).

4.3 Forms of Technology-Facilitated Abuse:

The emergence of the internet over 33 years ago introduced an online community and web that aided interaction, discussions and information sharing. As with many other human advancements, this online community was constructed in a way that was androcentric and gendered, resulting in increased discrimination against women (Henry et al, 2020). The gendered nature of the internet positioned masculine figures as being assumed to interpret and control the underlining technology above women (Henry et al, 2020).

1. Social Media Abuse

Many scholars in their bid to describe abusive acts carried out online have repeatedly adopted the term "technology-facilitated abuse". This term has consistently been used to refer to abuse through social media and hence has excluded other forms of abuse that a victim can experience through technology. The emergence of social-media abuse coincided with the emergence of smart phones which have allowed for global connectivity to the internet and easy communication. With the early social platforms such as Friendster (launched in 2001), LinkedIn (launched in 2002), Facebook (launched in 2004) and X (formerly known as Twitter and launched in 2006), social-media has led to the reconstruction of previously static web pages into more user-driven platforms which incorporated gendered algorithms that aim at influencing users (Rui Wang, 2015; Bhandari & Bimo, 2022). With technological advancements, perpetrators have become aware of how to manipulate social media algorithms and software in exerting control over their victims (Kullolli et al, 2023). Manipulative and controlling behaviors through social media are characterized by the use of identity theft, hijacking of social media accounts, deep-fake images and so on. Cyber-stalking, cyber-bullying, revenge pornography, sexting and monitoring of internet activities are also acts of social-media abuse that perpetrators commit against their victims (Douglas et al, 2019; Douglas, Harris & Dragiewicz, 2019). Acts of social media abuse are

intended to shame the victim in the face of the public, including their family and friends, thereby making them vulnerable to stigmatization in the society.

2. Smart-Home and Financial Technologies Abuse

It is critical in this review to draw a distinction between social-media abuse and smart-home technologies, so as to effectively explore how technology-facilitated abuse and coercive control is sustained against persons within a home situation. Home technologies refer to physical devices within a home which have previously been in an offline mode but have been transformed into internet-compatible devices through the Internet of things (IoT). These technologies which now have some network-compatibility and are used in a home are uniquely referred to as "Smart-Home Technologies" (Brown et al, 2024). These smart-home technologies include refrigerators, electrical bulbs, smart speakers such as an Alexa, smart cleaning devices, smart doorbells and security systems, smart televisions, smart ovens, heating or cooling thermostats and many other devices. Although home technologies have existed since the evolution of the internet, perpetrators of technology-facilitated abuse had not explored them ways to sustain abuse until recently. Significantly, the abuse of smart-home technologies by perpetrators is usually unrecognizable by the victims' family and friends and transcends social-media abuse.

The gendered nature of these smart-home technologies positions the perpetrator to exert control against their victims. Line Aagaard (2023) emphasizes that while more men are expected to understand and control smart home-technologies, women are expected to use these technologies with the most minimal possible knowledge. Digitalized housekeeping roles such as installations of smart-devices, monitoring internet connectivity and passwords of smart devices are often taken-up by masculine figure in the home as opposed to physical roles such as cleaning, cooking and washing (Kennedy et al., 2015). Managing smart speakers within the home, such as home assistants like Alexa, is often considered a masculine role. Face recognition and finger-print passwords are sometimes used to control these devices effectively; hence it becomes easy for the perpetrator to control these smart systems in the family home either

physically or remotely (Katuk et al., 2018). It is not unusual for installation companies to communicate with the masculine figure in the home on how to manage smart home devices, including setting-up passwords. (Chambers, 2020). Similarly, technologies relating to financial savings, bonds, mortgages and so on are often managed by the masculine figure in the family home. This provides an avenue for the perpetrator to control the victim's finances through generating false payment receipts, cloning banking applications on smart phone devices, making unauthorized cash transfers and so on. Understanding the lived experiences of victims who have faced coercive control through smart home technologies and financial technologies is a primary gap in literature which will be examined in this research.

4.4 From Coercive Control to Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control

Evan Stark (2007) first used the term coercive control in his book describing how women become entrapped in their private lives by perpetrators of violence. Existing feminist discourse on the invisible forms of violence that women experience became prominent with many other scholars carrying out research on coercive control. Coercive controlling behaviors remain at the center of all the abusive situations as described above in this review. In sexual or domestic violent relationships, coercive control constitutes a main way through which technology facilitated abuse is sustained by perpetrators (Freed et.al., 2018). Stark (2007) emphasized that in an intimate-partner relationship, coercive controlling behaviors from the perpetrator, can cause a victim to lose their freedom through continued experiences of intimidation, isolation from friends and family, lack of control of finances and fear. Coercive control attacks a person's autonomy and safety without physical acts of violence.

Traditional cultures, language, religion and social context influence how perpetrators use coercive controlling behaviors on their victims across the world (Henry et al, 2022). Hence, it is necessary to understand the contextual interpretation of words or actions against a victim that amount to coercive control. Coercive control describes a pattern of separate behaviors that are aimed at depriving a victim

of their freedom. As Stark (2007) put it, when these separate tactics all occur together within a defined period of time, the result is a deprivation of the liberty, or state of "unfreedom" reflecting heterosexual women's disproportionate risk of being entrapped in abusive relationships (Stark 2007, page 205).

Dragiewicz et al (2018) coined the term Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control to effectively capture how the previous terminologies used to describe forms of abuse in an intimate relationship are enforced through technology. Current or previous partners in an intimate relationship can experience technology-facilitated coercive control, as this form of abuse can be sustained in a virtual place and without the physical presence of the perpetrator. The emergence of smart home technologies enables a new form of technology-facilitated coercive control other than social media abuse which has been effectively covered by many scholars (Rogers et al, 2023, Dragiewicz et al, 2020, Douglas et al, 2019; Douglas, Harris & Dragiewicz, 2019, Beck et al, 2009).

Through the use of smart technologies within the home, perpetrators are empowered to remotely instill fear and domination over their victims and entrap and control them (Dragiewicz et al, 2018; Hamberger et al, 2017; Woodlock (2017); Woodlock, 2013; Dutton and Goodman, 2005).
These can affect a victim's economic resources, sexuality and domestic life within the family home.
The complex nature of technology-facilitated coercive control makes it difficult for it to be understood by institutions providing support to victims (Woodlock et al, 2023). This is because perpetrators commit technology-facilitated coercive control through IoT smart technologies as well as social media platforms such as TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter) and as Dragiewicz et al (2018) put it:

> TFCC refers to violence and abuse by current or former intimate partners, facilitated by digital media. It includes such behaviors as harassment on social media, stalking using GPS data, clandestine and conspicuous audio and visual recording, threats via SMS, monitoring email, accessing accounts without

> permission, impersonating a partner, and publishing private information (doxxing) or sexualized content without consent (Dragiewicz et al., 2018 Page 610)

4.5 Omnipresence

Masculine figures in an intimate-partner relationship are assumed to understand smart home IoT technologies much more than feminine figures (Duerkson and Woodin, 2019). This hegemonic masculinity in intimate-partner relationships establishes a perpetrator's dominance over a victim in a way that entraps them through acts of monitoring and control (Stark, 2007; Stark, 2012). This entrapment has been referred to as a hostage-like situation where the perpetrator in a relationship uses controlling behaviors to act as an omnipresent entity in the life of a victim both during the after the relationship (Dragiewicz et al., 2022; Afrouz, 2021). A perpetrator schemes to deliberately keep a victim under their control by constantly monitoring them with the aim to dominate their lives completely. This act has been defined as the "omnipresence" form of technology-facilitated coercive control (Yardley, 2021). The concept of omnipresence is multifaceted and implies that the perpetrator is kept informed of every action of the victim, constantly hovering over and monitoring them both in their public and private life. Yardley (2021) rightly defined the concept of the omnipresence below:

> Omnipresence is multidimensional, involving a range of separate but related behaviors, which depend first on the abuser establishing it within the abuse. In this preparatory phase, an abuser identifies and gains access to entry points that unlock further information about a survivor. Abusers gain privileged access to survivors' accounts and devices, legitimated by traditional models of androcentric authority within family life. They are often the account holders for family phone plans and purchase devices
> for survivors, conferring authority to set up passwords and security information (Yardley, 2021, page 1481).

In considering the concept of omnipresence in this review, I have seen the close parallel to a popular slogan used by a telecommunication company in Nigeria which reads "everywhere you go" (https://allafrica.com/stories/200504250862.html). This term succinctly describes how a perpetrator may monitor a victim around the clock. The establishment of omnipresence by the perpetrator enables them

to create a false entitlement over the victim. This entitlement manifests in the perpetrator's unauthorized access to the victim's phone, bank accounts, smart home devices, work devices and so on. The gendered nature of technology establishes patriarchal attitudes in a way that security information in the family home, passwords to phones and home devices, banking applications and so on, frequently rests with the male perpetrator to the exclusion of the female victim. The perpetrator may commit technology-facilitated coercive control in diverse ways including mirroring the victim's phone to monitor their phone activities, obtain passwords to home devices and banking information, install CCTVs within the family home, installing smart speakers in toys of the victim's children, turning off the internet connection in the victim's home or turning on the lights and heating in the absence of the victim to raise their electricity bill (Freed et al, 2018; Douglas et al., 2019; Eterovic-Soric et al., 2017; Yardley, 2021).

The concept of omnipresence has been described as overt, covert and retributive (Yardley, 2021). The overt omnipresence is characterized by the perpetrator flagrantly manipulating the victim by controlling their access to food, clothes, housing, internet and money, in addition to multiple texting, phone calls, unreasonable demands for video calls and pictures to confirm the victim's location. (Dragiewicz et al., 2018; Stark, 2007). With overt omnipresence, the victim is aware of the controlling acts of the perpetrator but either does not recognize these as manipulative or does not have the ability to subdue the perpetrator (Yardley, 2021).

Covert omnipresence is characterized by the perpetrator secretly gaining access to the victim's passwords, call-logs, messages, linking WhatsApp messages to another phone, accessing emails and location through the Google maps, phone conversations and so on through IoT technologies (Yardley, 2021; Chatterjee et al, 2018). The victim is not aware of these manipulative acts of control and hence is not able to prevent this dilemma.

In a post relationship situation, perpetrators often establish retributive omnipresence with the goal of punishing the victim for ending the relationship. Examples of retributive omnipresence include; creating multiple fake profiles on dating sites in the name of the victim, demanding sex or money from the victim's contacts through the phone or on social media, incessantly turning on the heating remotely, running up a bill in the family-home or sending suicide notes in the name of the victim to family and friends (Dragiewicz et al., 2019; Yardley, 2021).

4.6 Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control in Ireland

While coercive control was criminalized in Ireland in 2018 by the Domestic Violence Act, technology-facilitated coercive control is still an emerging concept and feminist discourse around it is still evolving. The discourse has been limited to consideration of digital or social media abuse as a form of violence against women in Ireland (McMahon, 2021). Although special training and toolkits to raise awareness of technology-facilitated control have been created by support agencies in Ireland, the existing academic literature provides no research findings on technology-facilitated coercive control (Safe Ireland, 2022). Additionally, research has not captured any data on smart home technologies which can be used for coercive control by a perpetrator in a post-relationship situation (Safe Ireland, 2022).

4.7 Feminist Discourse on Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control

Feminist discourses examine the lived experiences of victims through existing patriarchal structures in the society that undermine women. Technology can provide another mechanism through which hegemonic masculinity is manifested and used as a form of coercive control in intimate-partner relationships.

1. Patriarchal Power Dynamics

The conceptualization of power presents a clear understanding to how perpetrators of technology-facilitated coercive control gain dominance over a victim. A perpetrator gains power-over a victim and sustains coercive control by exerting manipulative and controlling behaviors (Mark Haugaard, 2021; Grose et al, 2014). Patriarchal structures in society reinforce these manifestations of power and dominance.

2. *Intersecting Identities*

The feminist discourse on intersectionality highlights the diverse identities that can manifest in a woman's life in such a way that she might experience multiple forms of violence within the same period of time. These identities may intersect and be shaped by gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age, class, sexuality and so on (Crenshaw, 1991). Hence, the experiences of domination under technology-facilitated coercive control may vary from one victim to another. A black, disabled, poor, uneducated lesbian woman may experience technology-facilitated coercive control in a different way from a white, educated, heterosexual woman. Similarly, one victim may experience multiple forms of controlling behaviors while another victim may not. The privilege and power that a perpetrator manifests over a victim is typically drawn from androcentric and patriarchal structures within the society (Hackworth, 2018; Harris and Vitis, 2020). The privilege of class and education may cause a perpetrator to have more income to purchase smart home technologies or understand these technologies above a victim (Kuo et al, 2023). Similarly, a victim with a disability may experience technology-facilitated coercive control from a perpetrator who takes over a caring role for them. In this situation, smart home technologies may not be explained to victims in a way for them to understand how they work. Information on passwords and connectivity of smart home devices may be left to the perpetrator as the sole carer for the victim. Feminist insights around intersectionality highlight the need to be vigilant in considering the diverse lived experiences of victims of technology-facilitated coercive control.

4.8 Conclusion

Technology-facilitated coercive control represents invisible and unseen forms of violence that a person may experience in their homes or in public life. Perpetrators of technology-facilitated coercive control gain dominance over their victims through manipulative and controlling behaviors which are reinforced by patriarchal attitudes within society. Emerging technologies are frequently gendered in a way that male perpetrators are able to gain access to technologies by assuming the role of a masculine figure in an intimate-partner relationship (Stark, 2007). Technology-facilitated coercive control can be committed remotely by perpetrators, and this makes it possible for them to control their victims even in a post-relationship situation. Emerging smart home technologies have presented a way for perpetrators to entrap and frustrate their victims beyond the walls of the family home. The feminist discourse around technology-facilitated coercive control highlights power dynamics, intersectionality and multidimensional lived experiences of victims. These experiences will be examined in this research study.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS ON TECHNOLOGY-FACIITATED COERCIVE CONTROL

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will present, discuss and analyze data collected from interviews with 8 respondents across Dublin, Cork and Kerry working in support services for women experiencing violence and coercive control, either as frontline workers or policy makers. Victims of technology-facilitated coercive control are referred to as "Victims-survivors" in policy making and implementation. Analysis of the data generated four main themes:

1. Awareness, extent and nature of technology-facilitated coercive control.
2. Awareness and efficacy of policy and legislative framework.
3. Service level responses and practices.
4. Training and education.

5.2 Findings

1. **Awareness, extent and nature of technology-facilitated coercive control** –My findings revealed that following the COVID pandemic in 2020, agencies providing support services began to notice that perpetrators were increasingly deploying technology-facilitated approaches to exert violence against their victims. Technology-enabled devices that allowed for working remotely and smart-home technologies that enhanced comfort, entertainment and security during lockdown were emerging as ways through which perpetrators were being coercive. Tools such as video conferencing on Zoom, smart home devices such as smart switches, smart speakers and recording devices, smart ring door-bells, smart cameras and smart centralized heating systems began to feature in the experiences of control being recounted by women. Additional devices such as

location trackers, fitness trackers, banking-cloned applications, smart watches and google maps were also implicated in experiences of coercion women were experiencing.

a. Victim-survivor awareness of technology-facilitated abuse

A common thread in the respondents' accounts of the different types of technology-facilitated coercive control experienced by victims-survivors is that victim-survivors frequently are unaware of how these technologies were used to manipulate them:

> I know I've spoken to many women who to this day are still not sure how they have been monitored because their understanding of the technology is so limited. (Respondent 2)

> They were living together in the family home and as a means to improve her life she started to do a course. This was just off the back of the COVID lockdowns as well, so it was all online and it was perfect for her so she could do it in the evening time when her child was gone to bed. But of course, a woman improving herself … he's losing control. That was like a red flag for him that he was losing some control and so, he would turn off the Internet. He would allow her to begin her course and she was present on the on the forum on zoom or Microsoft teams, then suddenly he would turn off her Internet access. She told me it took her a couple of weeks to realize that he was doing that. They lived rurally and so she thought the internet was just dropping out of signal so it took her a while to figure out what he was doing. (Respondent 7)

The accounts which Respondents hear from Victim-survivors highlight the covert and insidious type of coercion that is facilitated by technology and the challenges which this creates for Victim-survivors in recognizing and naming the coercion. The challenges in identifying and understanding the technology by which this coercion is operationalized are significant.

> Things like **ring doorbells** are, installed by perpetrators under that guise that it's great idea to have it there. This is the coercion, isn't it? To keep telling somebody it's to keep the house safe, but actually it's used as a monitoring device. And then my experience would be that slowly there's creepingly **cameras** put in around the house, and so she might know that they're there and again the perpetrator would say "it's for the safety of the children so that we can keep an eye on things". But actually, he's monitoring her movement. Then in other cases, it's just these cameras are installed and she has to live

> with it, for example, I suppose at the beginning she doesn't necessarily recognize it for what it is. It is very hard to put your finger on it and this makes it very hard to give details about technology-facilitated coercive control. This is reflected when we speak to women about their experience because they're constantly saying they are not sure if this is the case or they don't really understand or want to make him out to be a bad person. (Respondent 6)

In many cases, Victim-survivors became aware of technology-facilitated coercive control by reporting perpetrators to the agencies providing support services. The agencies have been able to raise the awareness of victims-survivors about the existence of technology-facilitated coercive control as an emerging form of violence. Respondent 4 highlighted this:

> So, there's always the video surveillance that comes up. So, there is video surveillance in the rooms. I've had women who I've spoken to who have said, "Oh I can't do this, because he's watching me" and when we explore that a bit further, we see that the perpetrator has got cameras in every room which is connected to his iPhone. He can go to work, but he's still controlling the victim in the home. I had one lady disclose to me that she had finished cleaning the house and she went to go sit down on the couch and she got a phone call from her husband saying "get up off the couch! You need to keep cleaning. I can see everything that you're doing" (Respondent 4).

b. Prevalence and types technology-facilitated abuse

My findings indicate that technology-facilitated control is increasing and that agencies providing support services to victims have played a key role in raising awareness of the issue with the Irish police force- the Garda.

> For service users whose cars are being tracked, the trackers on the cars are so small and that you can't even find them. The last job that I worked in, I phoned the Gardai and talk to them about it, these trackers. I had a conversation with them and they had no idea. After talking to them, fast forward about two months and I had a conversation with the Gardai again and they were like "all right. OK, yeah, we know all about that now". (Respondent 6)

Respondents described the increasing range of technology-facilitated abuse experienced by their service users, highlighting in particular the potential for coercion created by internet-enabled devices:

> We have had women disclose that their photographs have been put up online, which is also another big issue that has come up for us. Then, if you look beyond social media to

> the Internet-enabled devices, you've got things like online banking where accounts have been cleared, and passwords have been hacked, tracking devices on cars, tracking in the home and the home essentially being bugged. It comes up quite often, more often than you'd think. (Respondent 4)

> We had a really severe case of coercive control and that is controlling in an **integrated house**. OK, so all of the family home is **technologically integrated** and then you have him remotely controlling things via his phone. And I've had the experience of working with the woman who had her partner who controlled the heating of the water. He's controlled the TV, he's controlled the Internet access by turning it on and off. And, so she's living here and he's working remotely. As in when I say remotely, he's working in another county, but he still has control over everything that's happening in the house for her and her children and that's really quite disturbing. (Respondent 3)

> In an integrated house, it is common to have a speaker … in every room, for example, to play music or to speak to Alexa and things like this. It's very straightforward and but she said that he was able to control everything via an App on his phone. So even though he was in another county or another country with his work as well, sometimes he was still able to just open his app and do whatever it was he wanted to do. And, of course then he didn't share that app with her. (Respondent 6)

My findings have revealed that perpetrators do not necessarily need to understand the technology themselves, they only require to find a way to control the victim-survivor in order to sustain technology-facilitated coercive control. One Respondent highlighted how an everyday Apps such as REVOLUT has been deployed in a coercive way:

> Perpetrators do not have to be tech-savvy. They can just be sending 100s of messages or emails constantly to control the victim. We see it across the banking apps. For example, with REVOLUT, you can send 1 euro and also send a message. In several cases, (a victim), she may have blocked a perpetrator but still needs to use her banking and that is the one way that he may get to her to continue the messaging (Respondent 1).

c. Children used for technology-facilitated coercive control

All 8 respondents revealed experiences where perpetrators use the children of the victim-survivor to sustain technology-facilitated coercive control, especially in a post-relationship situation where the partners are no longer living together in the same family-home. This is usually characterized by giving

the children toys with trackers, smart speakers or listening devices to capture conversations in the home in the absence of the perpetrator.

> … but there's children involved, the perpetrator still has some access to them especially for people who have **smartphones,** they've been able to hack into them even though they may no longer be living in the house, or cut off the electricity remotely, or be able to listen in through smart speakers. This has especially been used on the children, as a means of **controlling the children** and checking in with the children to know how that grooming process has gone with the children. So, an example of that would be when the perpetrator was very much trying to turn the attitudes of the children against their mother. (Respondent 5)

> I know we've had instances where, like the children have gone on access with the perpetrator- parent and come back and had **very decorative like padlocks on the bag-pack** and you wouldn't notice it, but it was a tracking device, so they can be dressed up in really fancy ways. They're so creative with it, it's it can be quite alarming. (Respondent 4)

> We've had kids in here as young as 8 years and they have phones, you know because they're digital natives, that's what happens. And so, then Dad, will you know phone the child entirely inappropriately, in order to get to mom. I've heard and witnessed conversations with small boys particularly, where Dad is on the phone, demanding and speaking inappropriately to their 8-year-old boy to get mum to come to the phone and of course, in order to protect her child, she will take the phone from the child and so therefore he has contact again. (Respondent 2)

d. Effects of technology-facilitated coercive control on victims-survivors

My findings indicate that victims-survivors experience fear the perpetrators of technology-facilitated coercive control. They have a constant feeling of being watched by the perpetrator who plays an omnipresence role in controlling victim-survivors and this can cause severe distress for them. Respondents 4 and 6 described how this omnipresence was experienced by victims-survivors:

> In this case, the mother and her children in a family home. **The perpetrator became like a God-like figure to the mother and children and always watching them. So, they became so fearful of him. You know, they couldn't relax even when their father wasn't in their company, because there was always this sense that their father knew what was happening, even when he wasn't in the room.** The mother didn't have the expertise to notice that or understand that's how he was doing that. It took a long time of that happening before she was able to identify that he still had access to this security system that had been put in place to keep them safe from him. (Respondent 2)

> Another effect that it had on her (victim-survivor) was that it really severely impacted her mental health because at the beginning, before she figured it out, she thought she was losing her mind. She thought that she was going crazy. Lots of women do feel the same way around coercive control and for me, that's the most dangerous aspect, of coercive control because of the psychological damage that it does to a woman. It's him monopolizing her perception of reality, which is very damaging to her. (Respondent 6).

> **She was terrified, absolutely terrified**. I don't quite know what word to describe it, but she was not only a prisoner in her own home, she was a slave in her own home. She was frightened to be in her own home, and she was frightened for her daughter. And she was so frightened that I spent I spent about three years trying to get her to leave that relationship, but she couldn't because she was so frightened of the consequences, because he was controlling her so much (Respondent 6)

The gendered nature of technology-facilitated coercion was emphasized by one respondent who highlighted how this can inhibit victim- survivors addressing coercion even when they are aware of it.

> I would say it's really gendered and I think it has nothing to do with the fact that women aren't attracted or engaged with technology. When it comes to an abusive relationship, specifically, a technological-facilitated coercively controlled relationship, all of the responsibility for the home and the children is put on her**. So, I think it's gendered in the sense that she doesn't have any headspace in which to try to engage with the technology because she's trying to look after the kids**. Again, it comes back to this, her mind has been colonized by him and she's just trying to think, "how do I keep everybody safe today?" She's not thinking about the technology alone and not thinking if she could dismantle a camera within the home because again, there's going to be consequences because he will be notified immediately via technology if she does dismantle anything or she puts the wires or if she removes the tracking device or turns off her location on her phone. All these would be flagged to him immediately (Respondent 6)

2. **Awareness and efficacy of policy and legislative framework**

a. Awareness of existing legislation

All respondents referred to the 2018 Domestic Violence Act as the appropriate piece of legislation that criminalizes coercive control, however, they were also clear the provisions of the Act do not specifically refer to technology-facilitated coercive control. As Respondent 1 noted:

> Well, the Domestic Violence Act of 2018 does not specifically use the term "Technology Facilitated Abuse". It does recognize the harm that can be caused by this form of abuse, and it does provide measures to address it. It recognizes that technology can facilitate forms of domestic violence. It allows, for a court to issue a safety order to protect the

> victim from technology facilitated abuse, such as maybe harassment or stalking through social media or text messages or other kind of electronic communication (Respondent 1).

> To the best of my knowledge there is no legislation that directly deals with technology as a form of abuse, and I think the courts and the guards will come back and say that it will be covered under coercive control, which it would, but the difficulty is how to prove it (Respondent 2)

However, Respondent 1 and 4, a solicitor and policy advocate respectively, who are both frontline workers, highlighted other legislative provisions that address coercive control through technology as a form of abuse. These include the Criminal Justice Offenses Relating to Information Systems Act 2017, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 and the Criminal Justice Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 2023. The Respondents knew and understood these laws. However, in their experience, they believed that the legislation was limited in its capacity to address technology-facilitated coercive control.

Significantly, Respondents believed that this situation weakens the existing legislation and results in perpetrators escaping justice.

b. Efficacy of Legislation and Inconsistency in Policing and Judiciary Practices

The efficacy of implementation of the existing legislation on technology-facilitated coercive control is evidenced by how easy it is to ensure sanctions are made against perpetrators. My findings reveal however that convictions of perpetrators remain very low because of the burden of proof being placed on victim-survivors and because of ambiguities in the legislation. Respondent 2 highlighted that the burden of proving an offence of technology-facilitated coercive control lies on victims-survivors who are expected to gather the evidence of their experience, thus making it extremely difficult to achieve justice with the legislation:

> What is the extent that the guards are going to investigate technology- facilitated coercive control? Because for a lot of times, we're only guessing that there's a digital surveillance of some form happening but we have no proof of it. It's an assumption that we're coming

> to, but we need someone else to do the work of gathering the proof. But the guards sometimes require the victim to come up with the proof instead of assisting them to coming up with the proof. I think because we have very poor insight into how broad it is, it makes it difficult to legislate for, and it definitely has not been properly assessed in the existing legislation. (Respondent 2).

Another barrier to successful prosecution under existing legislation was identified by Respondent 4, who highlighted ambiguities in the existing legislation:

> I think there is also some **ambiguity around which legislation to use** and when it is appropriate to use it. While you might have someone who's using technology, are you pursuing that under the 2018 domestic violence legislation or are you then using part four of the Miscellaneous Provisions Act?
> It's unclear, and I'd say it is widespread and not dissimilar to when the Domestic Violence Act came out in 2018. It was a lot. It was a lot of information, and there was a bit of confusion as to how it was going to be used. But then there was a settling-in period and people managed to find their way around that. So, I do believe that part 4 and part 5 of the Criminal Justice Miscellaneous Provisions Act will work when it comes into force and it'll take some time to navigate that. (Respondent 4)

In terms of sanctions against perpetrators, it has been established through my findings that although there are prescribed sanctions within the legislation, it becomes unclear which sanction applies to perpetrators when they are prosecuted under more than one piece of legislation. Respondent 4 addressed this in their response:

> Under the legislation there, if someone were to breach a safety order or a protection order or a barring order, it isn't crystal clear as to the punishments once it becomes a criminal law matter. So, in County Kerry, at the moment we have a judge who implies that a perpetrator has **three strikes before they're out**.
> So, the first breach usually gets a very **strong warning** and it's meant to put manners on the perpetrator but doesn't always do so. Then the second breach usually attracts a **financial fine**, and sometimes that fine isn't nearly enough because they have the money to pay, and it's a bit of a laugh from their perspective. The third is **imprisonment** but in order to reach that level, that third strike, the breach would have to be quite severe. I do think that there should be some clarity around the punishments that perpetrators should receive and I think it should be stronger (Respondent 4).

Overall, the existing legislation around technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland needs to be expanded and strengthened to meet the ever-growing needs of victims-survivors. Furthermore, professionals who are implementing and interpreting the laws such as the gardai and the judiciary need to have consistent trainings on how best to support victims-survivors. This will result in the adequate

tightening of procedures around evidence-gathering in cases of technology-facilitated coercive control, improve conviction rates and sentencing of perpetrators.

3. Practice and Procedures

Understanding what specific needs victims-survivors have is necessary to structure the support services that frontline workers and agencies provide. My findings reveal that agencies in Ireland routinely carry out an assessment with victims-survivors to ascertain what specific needs they have. Respondent 6 described this procedure in their interview:

> We're very aware that technology and has a very negative impact on the women that we work with in their lives. **So, when she makes a call, we'll invite her for an assessment**. So, she will come in and **we'll do an assessment with her and that's quite detailed. It really is a conversation b**ut for us, we're making notes all of the time.
> Through the assessment, we want her to be able to in some way **name the abuse** because sometimes, there's a whole lot of other abuse in there as well - financial, sexual, psychological abuse.
> Also, at this point as well, through the assessment, we're looking to see if we're the correct service for her (Respondent 6)

From my findings, the most important support services for victims-survivors are: access to information, validation of experiences and E-safety planning. The findings on these support services and the practices around them are described below.

a. *Access to Information*

All respondents highlighted that Victims-survivors experiencing technology-facilitated coercive control require access to information about this emerging form of abuse.

Providing information begins by naming the abuse that the perpetrator is committing. Naming technology-facilitated coercive control is important for victims-survivors because as Respondent 6 explained they may not recognize this form of abuse or know how to describe what is happening to them.

> **One of the most important things that we do here is we give her the language**, of coercive control. **We name the abuse for her** (Respondent 6).

Access to information also involves providing details about how these smart technologies work, how they can be used to exert control, and how the Victim-survivor can manage smart devices independently without the perpetrator.

> So, I think information around technology in terms of how to keep themselves safe from that level of abuse would be beneficial to them, and to everyone really. I think it's very important information. Alot of us don't know how to use you know, our iPhones or our Samsung galaxies especially if they are connected to smart devices within the home. We know how to make a call and send a text, but do we know our privacy settings? That's not common information that we kind of get to know so I think they need information. I think a lot of women are not getting the information they need. (Respondent 4)

Another information need relates to how to gather evidence of technology-facilitated coercive control especially in situations where victims-survivors still reside in the family-home where the abuse is taking place. This evidence is usually useful for the victim-survivor to make reports and pursue the cause of justice.

> Another support service is then **collecting evidence.** If it's safe enough to take screenshots and keep records of what technology is being and when, keeping copies of any text messages, any threats or any other contacts that they might get, and then reporting the abuse if they want to, and if they're ready to, both to the guards and the **hotline.ie,** they will get the best kind of course of action from the Gardai. including reporting directly to the host of the technology (Respondent 1).

Information is also required by the Victim-survivor on the appropriate legislation that criminalizes technology-facilitated coercive control. Because victims-survivors may not know how the actions of the perpetrator may be a crime, it is important to provide information on legislative provisions and encourage the victim to go to court.

> On the legal side of things, **we do encourage women to go to court**. We have the court accompaniment worker. That's part of her role, to talk a woman through an **information sheet explaining the legislation** that she presents to the court in her application for a protection order. All that work is really valuable. Again, that's where the language comes in, in naming the abuse and then giving her examples because all that work is building her up into a place where she can walk into a massive courtroom and tell the court what really happened to her. (Respondent 6)

> There needs to be information about legislation. There needs to be **information about support services. There needs to be information around technology and all of that is intertwined** and all has a role on effect on the service-user. So, if you're keeping yourself safe in terms of technology, in terms of getting your car bugged, knowing that how to turn a camera off or smart device if it's in your house, and then if you know the legal background of that, aren't you empowering yourself as a woman, keeping yourself safe and knowing your rights? So, I think that if there's anything else besides information that a service-user needs, I don't know what that will be. I think that information is widespread. (Respondent 4)

Information is also provided for actively networking Victims-survivors to other agencies such as TUSLA and the Gardai, that can provide support services. Victims-survivors are able to adequately utilize the services of other agencies through this networking process. Respondent 8, 6 and 2 described this process:

> When they come into us actually as part of our process and procedures for coming in, we make an immediate **Child Protection Referral to TUSLA** if they have children, and that's just flagging up that they're here. And sometimes you know, **we'll phone the Gardai** as well or we'll ask her to phone the Gardai to tell them where she is. So, when he phones to say "she's kidnapped my children!" the garda will know she's safe and that she hasn't kidnapped the kids. (Respondent 6)

> So, when a service user comes to us, we try to have a conversation where we have to manage their expectation and just let them know that it is a bit of a process, but we're there to support them. We then **contact the Gardai** to come down and we'll start working on making statements. We always kind of encourage women to write down a bit of a narrative if they're able, and it's something that we often sit with a woman to assist with. Apart from the technological abuse, if there has been sexual abuse disclosed, then **we call our special unit so the PSU (Protective Services Unit)** and they'll take the statement because they're trained for disclosures around sexual abuse.
> Then, once all the statements are provided to the Gardai and they have all their evidence, that is- hospital reports, GP support letters, all of that then goes up to the Department of Public Prosecutions, where it's then decided if they'll pursue that. (Respondent 4).

> The more practical supports that we give to people are **signposting to other agencies that can help**. We signpost to the legal aid board, solicitors and the housing department or the APS. So, these people are in Cork. I don't know if you know them. They're the Accommodation Placement Services and they're like the city housing department (Respondent 8)

> Another thing that we do is **we notify the public health nurses as well**. This is another part, of coercive control because I've met people whose children haven't been vaccinated, they've not met their public health nurses because the perpetrators refused them to. Public health nurses are in a really privileged position to get into the family home, to see what's happening and to feel the atmosphere and the vibe in there, and then report back to us. It's

> a process that the HSE takes as part of a protective measure for the women and the children as well. This includes checking the kids out, if they're meeting developmental milestones including what their speech is like. Because we also know we have first-hand experience of the effects of the mother's domestic violence on her children (Respondent 6).

Access to the right information is a key need for Victims-survivors of technology-facilitated coercive control.

b. ***Validation of Experiences***

As technologies are constantly evolving, the Victim-survivor's lived experiences may never have been experienced by anyone else before or may never have been brought to the attention of support services or professionals before. Hence, Victims-survivors face the challenge of not being believed even when they recognize this form of violence and report it. All Respondents emphasized the need to provide validation for a victim-survivor's experiences and to believe them. They identified this as a critical support that victims-survivors require in the face of technology-facilitated coercive control.

As Respondent 1 put it:

> First, and foremost, **service-users need to be believed**, and to be met and understood and heard. I think they need support. That's the first port of call, that is to be believed and to actually get support so that they don't have to face it alone, to make sure that they're in a safe place and then that they can actually have support to even have access to their own technology, to be able to maybe get support to getting a separate phone, get support then and being able to lock down the devices without alerting risk or without alerting the perpetrator.
> They need to find a way to secure their devices if they're still in the relationship in a safe way. If they're have left the relationship, they can actually be a little freer to move on with their lives. So, getting support is the first one being believed and getting support. (Respondent 1)

c. ***Safety Planning***

Another major support service identified in my findings is the practice of creating a proper safety plan for victims-survivors of technology-facilitated coercive control. Safety planning comprises general planning and E-safety planning. Safety planning is designed from a trauma-informed approach which

understands the trauma and fear that the victim-survivor experiences. Safety planning is also designed to capture unfamiliarity with smart technologies which may have been used by a perpetrator.

i. *E-Safety Planning*

E-safety planning includes supporting Victim- survivors to change the passwords of smart-home devices, logout other external users and delete apps that may continue to grant perpetrators access to the smart home technologies. Respondents 1, 7 and 8 highlighted the importance of e-safety planning in their interviews and the following account clearly outlines its significance:

> Another support service for service-users is creating an **E-safety Safety Plan.** So, when they're safety planning, they really need to go through all of the electronics that they come into contact with in the home. They need to understand if he's showing up when they arrive at a place, why they think that might be? Could he have a tracker on the car? Could he have something on something belonging to the children in the home? So, it's really about being able to E-safety plan around her own devices with children's devices as well. And to be able to kind of think about best practice guidelines for how to help the children manage this as well, because often you know the apps are put on children's phones and they're told to keep the phone on with them at all times (Respondent 1)

ii. *General Safety Planning*

In general safety planning, the agency providing support services guides the victim-survivor on the best way to exit a relationship with the perpetrator. In a case of technology-facilitated coercive control, relevant devices, the safety plan will include the removal of documents and items that the perpetrator may remotely destroy to harm the Victim-survivor.

4. Training and Education

The emergence of technology-facilitated coercive control has created an imperative for frontline workers to receive training on understanding technology-facilitated coercive control. My findings reveal that training resources on technology-facilitated abuse and coercive control are just emerging in Ireland. Of the 8 respondents interviewed, 5 highlighted that they had not had any trainings on technology-facilitated coercive control and did not have any information on any training available in Ireland. Training resources identified by the other three respondents include “Let’s Talk Tech”, a Webinar series on technology-

facilitated abuse led by Safe Ireland, and most recently, the University College Cork course on "Recognizing and Responding to Technology-Facilitated Abuse".

a. *Let's Talk Tech (2021-2023)*

After the COVID pandemic in 2021, the National Cyber-Security Awareness Taskforce was created by Cyber Awareness Ireland (CAI) which is a national body that conducts research and develops and curates cyber security awareness in Ireland. The taskforce focused on educating the public on technology-facilitated abuse. This coincided with Safe Ireland's goal to address forms of technology enabled violence perpetrated in Ireland. A collaboration between the National Cyber security Awareness Taskforce and Safe Ireland commenced in 2021. This collaboration created a webinar series with Trend Micro, a multinational cyber security software company in Ireland. The training webinar series "Let's Talk Tech" delivered between 2021 and 2023, was the primary training on technology-facilitated coercive control available in Ireland at that time and was specifically focused on online social media abuse through technology. Respondent 1 who works with Safe Ireland outlined the type of training provided in Let's Talk Tech:

> Because it was very much during COVID and with the rise of technology-facilitated abuse being used, it was really about creating as much of a response for women that we could. So, we worked through the National Cyber Security Awareness Task Force with Trend Micro to create a webinar series called **Let's Talk Tech** and that was designed to empower and support women around technology. We made over 50 mini-video tutorials on how to get the safety, security and privacy settings on your accounts just right. So, we wanted to really be able to create these tutorials and we did a number of webinars as well on things like how to sync your accounts, how to search incognito, how to clear your search history, how to protect all your accounts across Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, how to make sure you know all of your privacy settings, multi-factor authentication. All of that was in place for the frontline workers in the sector that are working with women. We also made the decision to put them up on the Safe Ireland website so that we would be able to reach the women who are not coming forward for support, so that they could actually go on to the website and very simply follow these five steps to secure their accounts online. So, we created a section on the Safe Ireland website called "**Let's Talk Tech"**. We also created a booklet and launched the **booklet** in October two years ago, around working with women who are experiencing domestic-technology facilitated abuse. (Respondent 1).

b. ***Recognizing and Responding to Technology-Facilitated Abuse (2024)***

The Safe Ireland National Social Change Agency, which is the lead development and coordination body for 37 domestic violence services in Ireland, realized the growing concern around technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland. They collaborated with E-safety Women, an initiative that empowers Australian women to manage technology risks and abuse in Australia. E-safety Women generously shared their previously designed training tools with Safe Ireland, and they were redesigned to fit the Irish context. The language and legislation of the adopted training were changed from the Australian context to reflect Irish language and laws. Safe Ireland and the National Cyber Security Task-Force also entered into a partnership with University College Cork for the design of this bespoke Irish training now offered as an online Digital Badge by the university. The course is free for students of the university and costs only 25 euro for frontline workers and support agencies in Ireland. Respondent 1 provided details of this training in their interview:

> We reached out then to E-safety Women in Australia who had already designed a training on technology, facilitated abuse and we met with them in the early hours of the morning many times where they very kindly offered the content of the training that they had designed. There was no gatekeeping, it was really fantastic sharing of learning and of experience and of tools.
> We were able then to take that content with their permission and you know "Irishise" it to an Irish context. We added in some more modules and really were able to kind of move ahead then and you know launch it here in Ireland because there wasn't anything available around it (Respondent 1).

This training focuses on equipping frontline workers, key professionals and other workers in the services industries who might be in contact with Victim-survivors (e.g. hairdressers) with the tools to address technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland.

> We worked with the National Cyber Security Awareness Task Force. We brought in academia which is University College Cork and then the domestic violence sector which is Safe Ireland all together with the with the objective of educating not just frontline professionals, but everybody around technology facilitated abuse and then aimed at safeguarding people too.
> We developed the kind of first of its kind in Ireland digital badge course focused on addressing this issue. It's a course that's accessible to everyone. It's key to working with

> survivors, but it's also key to kind of providing ways to understand it and to recognize the term and to recognize what it involves and then to help prevent it. It provides the participants that take the training and the learners with an understanding of the dynamics of technology facilitated abuse, covers kind of topics like the latest technological advancements, the use of technology for abuse and coercion, recognizing the signs, intersectionality and then legal regulations around it (Respondent 1)

The training consists of a suite of materials that explains which technologies are used by perpetrators and how they employ them to perpetrate violence.

> …So, we created the booklets, we created a suite of tutorials, a couple of webinars and then we created the UCC Training course and that was our immediate response in the moment to working with this issue and helping the women because, even on the ground, some of the services are very tech savvy and some are not at all. So, it was really about creating something that was visual, accessible and very short so that people don't get overwhelmed by technical steps or advice. So, we would take an actual iPhone and go through it just secure it and then record it and put it up.
> Our hope was that we would reach women who were seeking support around this without having to come forward. (Respondent 1)

My findings reveal that these trainings were designed with limited use of data of the lived experiences of Irish Victims-survivors of technology-facilitated coercive control. This is because the data on cases of this nature are not yet being systematically recorded in Ireland by the agencies or the national body.

5.3 Discussion

The following discussion of findings is informed by an intersectional lens and considers how power relations between perpetrators and Victims-survivors allow technology-facilitated coercive control to be sustained.

1. *Awareness of technology-facilitated coercive control*

To address technology-facilitated coercive control as an emerging form of violence, it is important to evaluate the awareness of the actors who have the responsibility to address it. Support agencies, frontline workers, the police, the judiciary and Victims-survivors need to be aware of the tactics and technologies

that perpetrators use to sustain coercive control. The level of this awareness can be influenced by the age, class, race, ability, sexual orientation etc. of the Victim-survivor or frontline worker. Evaluating differences in awareness among various cohorts of women and indeed and how intersecting factors of race, age, class etc. shape experiences of technology-facilitated coercive control, is important.

Support agencies and frontline workers become aware of technology-facilitated coercive control through the reports they receive from victims-survivors. In evaluating the level of awareness of frontline workers, my findings have revealed that the younger frontline workers recognize the technology-facilitated coercive control much faster than those who are older. For older frontline workers, the assumption is that all technology-based abuse is reduced to the phone, hence, they do not understand how a perpetrator may use smart technologies to exert control even within the home and without having access to the victim's phone. Some frontline workers who relatively recently started to use phones, acknowledge that they still struggle to navigate their own way around their phones. It is therefore difficult for them to understand how IoT technologies work especially within the home and how perpetrators can use these technologies remotely (Bayne, 2023).

In evaluating the level of awareness of technology, I have referred on the categorization of Generation X, Millennials, Generation Z and Generation Alphas. Typically, people in Generation X commonly known as GEN X are born between 1965-1980, Millennials are born between 1981-1996, Generation Z commonly known as GEN Z are born between 1997 to 2012 and the Generation Alphas are born since 2013 (Bejtkovský Jiří, 2016). Through my findings, respondents categorized generations of frontline workers as GEN X and Millennials who are not very familiar with IoT technologies that emerged in the middle of the 1990's. As these technologies continue to evolve, perpetrators become more innovative in finding newer ways to use these technologies to sustain coercive control over their victims. Therefore, this highlights the critical need for older frontline workers in particular, to receive training to be aware of how technology is changing and being used to commit violence.

The age-generational cohort has also shaped the type of abuse that women face. My findings revealed that younger women in the Millennial and Gen Z generations are often unfamiliar with acts of technology-facilitated coercive control. They experience a more severe form of technology-facilitated coercive control than older women and notwithstanding this, these young women do not immediately recognize that they are experiencing this form of violence. This is because the nature of coercive control is subtle, non-visible and non-physical (Stark, 2007). Since violence has been recognized in its physical form for a long time, it is difficult for victims-survivors to recognize the new way violence is being sustained against women.

Women with younger children who belong to the GEN Z and GEN Alpha generations are more likely to experience technology-facilitated coercive control than women who do not have children. This is because, the Gen Z's and Gen Alpha's are more dependent on the internet than other generations. Communication, transportation, cooking, laundry and so other daily activities are highly dependent on the internet. These generations are referred to as digital-natives whose daily lives are accustomed to technology (Munsch, 2021). Smart speakers such as an Alexa, Google voice, smart switches, smart door ring-bells, cookers, alarm systems and so on are commonly used by digital-natives within the home. Perpetrators understand that due to this, Victims-survivors will never cut of the internet and hence are able to leverage on digital-natives to sustain technology-facilitated coercive control.

Awareness on the technologies used to sustain coercive control by perpetrators is also highly gendered. The results of my findings revealed that men rather than women are often considered more likely to understand smart technologies. Hence, the applications that control these technologies within the home are often domiciled in the man's phone. If such a man becomes a perpetrator, it becomes extremely easy to use those technologies to exert coercive control on the Victim-survivor. Technology companies constantly engage men over women when installing smart home technologies within the family home.

This poses a huge risk to the woman when she begins to face technology-facilitated coercive control because she is not aware of how the technology operates.

My findings suggest that the omnipresence control that the perpetrator wields can makes it difficult for victim-survivors to evade even if they are aware as they believe the perpetrator is watching them all the time. This feeling of an omnipresence disarms the victim-survivor completely and they become afraid of what other actions the perpetrator might engage in (Woodlock et al, 2023

Technology-facilitated coercive control translates the perpetrator into a superpower that hovers over the victim-survivor constantly and without their consent. The imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim-survivor therefore puts the latter in a position where they become powerless in the face of violence even if they are aware of it.

2. *Development of Legislation on Technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland*

As technology-facilitated coercive control is an emerging form of violence in Ireland, legislative provisions struggle to capture the current realities of Victims-survivors and prove inadequate in a number of ways.

a. Ambiguity of the legislative provisions

My findings reveal that the ambiguity of the legislative provisions on technology-facilitated coercive control weaken the prosecution and conviction rate of perpetrators. Since the interpretation of these provisions are solely left to the courts, justice can only be achieved through the court system and not by the mere provision of the laws.

Judges interpret the provisions of the legislation on technology-facilitated coercive control in combination with other factors such as signs of physical or sexual violence (Stannard, 2023).

Victims-survivors of technology-facilitated coercive control who are predominantly female, are not being believed by the judiciary who are primarily men The judiciary need to understand the ways in which violence is changing into more invisible forms towards women.

b. Extended time for prosecution of perpetrators

The length of time that is required to gather evidence and prosecute perpetrators is extremely long. The Gardai are not systematically collecting evidence on technology-facilitated coercive control and the burden of proving cases lies on the Victim-survivor rather than on the perpetrator as it should be in criminal cases. Perpetrators escape justice during this long prosecution time and can find emerging ways to sustain technology-facilitated coercive control. With newer technologies emerging all the time, it is necessary to have a judicial process that is flexible and structured enough to contain these changes in the technologies and innovative actions of perpetrators. Below is a reference to Respondent 4's response on the length of time to prosecute perpetrators.

> We're also finding it quite a lengthy process. We recently did a technology coercive control case with a lady who's been with our service for quite some time and finally got her to a place where she was able to disclose and be very open and very vulnerable. And we had to mind her in that. It was nearly three-year process before it was decided that her case wouldn't be pursued by the DPP (Director of Public Prosecution). From the day that she started to the day that the DPP made a decision and it was nearly three years. It was too long. It shouldn't be that long (Respondent 4).

If perpetrators escape the course of justice, technology-facilitated coercive control will continue to be sustained against Victims-survivors.

c. Lack of mapping and data collection

The unavailability of appropriate data on the number of cases of technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland is another factor that has inhibited the development of legislation around the topic. My findings show that while support agencies individually record cases of technology-facilitated coercive control on

their systems, there is no national collation of these cases, which inhibits calls for improved legislation, policing and prosecution.

> There is nothing that is universally collected and pulled into a kind of aggregated report or anything like that at the moment. Instances of technology-facilitated abuse will be recorded on each services' system. But it's not collated at the moment and it's not isolated at the moment. But that's certainly something that we may look at, but, at the moment, with the establishment of CUAN, we are just trying to line up all of the data collection, agreed definitions and terms so that is very clear you know and aligned with what CUAN wants us to collect (Respondent 1)

The development, interpretation and implementation of legislative provisions should advance with the appropriate data collection of the lived experiences of Victims-survivors.

3. ***Development of support services for victims-survivors of technology-facilitated coercive control***

In addressing the rising incidences of technology-facilitated coercive control there is also a role for actors such as technology companies.

Typically, support services provided to Victims-survivors include information, validation of experiences and safety planning. These services vary because of the diversities that exist amongst Victims-survivors. The gender, race, age, literacy, disability, social class etc. of Victims-survivors determine what sort of information and safety planning will be provided to them by frontline workers. Victims-survivors require information about smart technologies and which is accessible and compatible with the needs of different generations, the language of service users of different cultural backgrounds.

4. ***Development of training and support needs for agencies***

I have identified the existing training available to equip frontline workers and Victims-survivors in addressing technology-facilitated coercive control. The current training course on technology-facilitated coercive control available at University College Cork is accessible to frontline workers, the police, the judiciary and the general public and takes about 20 hours to complete. Significantly, this training is

optional and has not been made compulsory for any of the actors that provide support services to Victims-survivors.

There is a critical need for this training to be mandatory for frontline workers the Gardai, the justice department and judges and solicitors. Training on policing and evidence gathering for cases of technology-facilitated coercive control for the Gardai should be incorporated into the learning curriculum of the Gardai Training College.

5.4 Conclusion

As technologies continue to emerge, a huge gap remains in the research around technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland. Research has not explored how emerging technologies are being used by perpetrators to sustain abuse against victims-survivors.

My findings have revealed that there are gaps in awareness, legislation, support services and training on technology-facilitated coercive control. In my next chapter, I outline recommendations to address these gaps.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusion

This chapter provides concluding observations and recommendations for policy development and future research.

In this study, three research questions were considered:

1. What is known about Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC) in terms of the Literature and Policies in Ireland?
2. What awareness exists about Technology-facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC) among service providers and practitioners in Ireland?
3. What needs to be done to protect victims of violence from Technology-facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC) in Ireland?

6.2. Answers to Research Questions

a. What is known about Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC) in terms of the Literature and Policies in Ireland?

Existing academic literature has revealed that there is a gap in research on technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland. Extensive research has been carried on this topic in Australia, hence, Ireland relies on Australia for academic literature on technology-facilitated coercive control. This situation has not allowed for the Irish context around technology-facilitated coercive control to be adequately captured. It is strongly recommended that research in Ireland advances to cover lived experiences, policies, legislation and support services around technology-facilitated coercive control. The legislation in Ireland on technology-facilitated coercive control has however advanced much quicker than the research. Despite this advancement, there are still gaps in the legislation that make it difficult for perpetrators to face justice. A key recommendation for legislative advancement in Ireland is a review of

the domestic violence laws to capture technology-facilitated coercive control as a form of violence against women. Additionally, agencies that provide support services to victims-survivors need a standardized mechanism to specifically report experiences of technology-facilitated coercive control.

b. What awareness exists about Technology-facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC) among service providers and practitioners in Ireland?

Agencies providing support services are aware of technology-facilitated coercive control as an emerging form of abuse. Service providers are able to appropriately name this abuse to Victims-survivors. A gap that had existed for service providers had been a lack of training on addressing technology-facilitated coercive control. Emerging trainings around this from Safe Ireland, University College Cork and the National Cyber-Security Awareness Taskforce has largely addressed this gap. As a recommendation, service providers need to access existing trainings on technology-facilitated coercive control. The existing trainings also need to be periodically reviewed to capture the emerging technologies that may be used for technology-facilitated coercive control.

c. What needs to be done to protect victims of violence from Technology-facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC) in Ireland?

Victims-survivors experience technology-facilitated coercive control in diverse ways. Hence, it is important that appropriate support services are offered to them. Through this study, I have explored what victims-survivors need the most. These needs will form the basis of my recommendations below.

6.3 Recommendations

Smart technologies continue to emerge and this provides an avenue for perpetrators to learn how to use new technologies to sustain coercive control against their victims. Hence, it is important that in Ireland, the research, legislation and support services are strengthened to protect victims-survivors from this form

of violence. Below, I outline my three recommendations to addressing technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland.

1. **Strengthening feminist research and policy implementation**

Exploring technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland has revealed that there is a gap in academic research on the topic in Ireland. As smart technologies continue to emerge, research needs to evolve to capture the changing way that perpetrators sustain violence against women. Feminist research which captures the gendered nature of technology, and the lived experiences of women needs to be considered. Research on how perpetrators use new smart technologies and artificial intelligence to sustain coercive control against their victims needs to be explored.

Ambiguities in the legislation on technology-facilitated coercive control need to be addressed. The word "technology" needs to be reflected specifically in the legislation to capture coercive controlling behaviors from perpetrators to their victims. Additionally, members of the justice system – solicitors, the police and judges require trainings to recognize and prosecute perpetrators of coercive control especially through technology. The Gardai needs to lead the gathering of evidence rather than leaving this role to the Victim-survivor. The burden of proof in cases of technology-facilitated coercive control should not lie on women but on the perpetrators. Ultimately, this will lead to more convictions of perpetrators, and protect women from the occurrence of technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland.

2. **Awareness raising for State Actors and Service Providers**

State actors require further awareness of the technologies that perpetrators use to sustain their coercive controlling behaviors. Training sessions for state actors need to be publicized, delivered in a consistent schedule, continuously updated, refined and disseminated in ways that suit potential audiences. State actors refer to the police, the judiciary, and legislators.

Equipping service providers with knowledge of smart technologies will ensure that victims-survivors receive the information that they need to protect themselves from perpetrators exerting coercive

controlling behaviors. Exploring how awareness can be advanced for service providers especially in rural areas of Ireland is a gap for further research to address. For women experiencing technology-facilitated coercive control, it is important to raise their awareness on technology. Therefore, I recommend an awareness campaign on technology-facilitated coercive control across Ireland which can be led by agencies providing support services. This awareness campaign would encourage women to get key information that they need to understand how perpetrators can use technology to sustain coercive control against them.

For the Irish police – the Gardai, it would be important to incorporate learnings on technology-facilitated coercive control in their training curriculum. Similarly, a specific training is required for judges and solicitors to understand the emerging technologies and technology-facilitated coercive control in general. This will advance the course of justice and ultimately protect Victims-survivors in Ireland.

Second and third level educational institutions need to incorporate training on technology-facilitated coercive into life skills curricula in a way that teaches young people about emerging technologies that perpetrators can use to control their victims.

3. Mapping and data collection of technology-facilitated coercive control cases.

My research has revealed a gap in service providers mapping of reported cases of technology-facilitated coercive control from victims-survivors. There is no aggregate report of these cases at the national level in Ireland. Hence, appropriate interventions have not been created for victims-survivors based on the frequency or manner in which perpetrators exert technology-facilitated coercive control. A needs assessment of the primary needs of victims-survivors is required to be captured in order to evaluate what support services should be prioritized in Ireland. Data collection of reports from victims-survivors would capture what is needed to protect them from further occurrences of technology-facilitated coercive control.

6.4 Reflections on the research process

The research on technology-facilitated coercive control was quite traumatic for me as I had to review several academic publications, books and victims' lived experiences of technology-facilitated coercive control. Reading and listening to the gruesome acts of violence from perpetrators to Victims-survivors was difficult. I had initially assumed that my previous work as a frontline responder to violence against women would make me immune to the impact of this research on my mental health. In reflecting on this, I now believe that I would have prepared to have special therapy sessions for this research before I commenced it. Despite this, the study was extremely rewarding for me as I now understand what the situation around technology-facilitated coercive control is like.

As a feminist lawyer who has worked in addressing violence against women in Nigeria, I have gained professional learning from exploring the situation around technology-facilitated coercive control in the Irish context. Most prominently, I have learnt that through technology, violence against women is changing to a less tangible and more invisible format which is reinforced by patriarchal structures. Hence, an organized feminist consciousness-raising effort through policy development and implementation and support services and research is required to address the situation. I will take this key learnings into my practice.

REFERENCES

Afrouz, R. (2023). The Nature, Patterns and Consequences of Technology-Facilitated Domestic Abuse: A Scoping Review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *24*(2), 913-927. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380211046752 (accessed 25 February 2024)

Amber Women's Refuge (2023), Annual Report 2022 https://amberwomensrefuge.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Amber-Womens-Refuge-Annual-Report-2022.pdf (accessed 20 July 2024)

Bansal, V., Rezwan, M., Iyer, M., Leasure, E., Roth, C., Pal, P., & Hinson, L. (2024). A Scoping Review of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in Low- and Middle-Income Countries Across Asia. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *25*(1), 463-475. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380231154614(accessed 10 March 2024)

Bayne, A. *et al.* (2023) 'Technology-facilitated abuse among Americans age 50 and older: a latent class analysis', *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 35(1), pp. 65–87 https://doi:10.1080/08946566.2023.2197270 (accessed 28 August, 2024)

Beck. C, Raghan. C (2010). Intimate partner abuse screening in custody mediation: The importance of assessing coercive control. Family Court Review. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1617.2010.01329.x (accessed 25 March 2024).

Bejtkovský Jiří, (2016) The Employees of Baby Boomers Generation, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z in Selected Czech Corporations as Conceivers of Development and Competitiveness in their Corporation. *Journal of Competitiveness*, **8**(4), pp. 105-123. https://doi:10.7441/joc.2016.04.07 (accessed 29 August 2024)

Benjamin K. Sovacool, Dylan D. Furszyfer Del Rio (2020), Smart home technologies in Europe: A critical review of concepts, benefits, risks and policies, Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, Volume 120, 2020, 109663, ISSN 1364-0321, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rser.2019.109663. (accessed 24 June, 2024)

Bhandari, A., & Bimo, S. (2022). Why's Everyone on TikTok Now? The Algorithmized Self and the Future of Self-Making on social media. Social Media + Society, 8(1), 20563051221086240. https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221086241 (accessed 04 August 2024)

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa (accessed 15 July 2024)

Brookfield. K, Fyson. R Goulden. M, Technology-Facilitated Domestic Abuse: An under-Recognised Safeguarding Issue? (2024) *The British Journal of Social Work*, Volume 54, Issue 1, January 2024, Pages 419–436, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcad206 (accessed 24 March 2024)

Brown, A., Harkin, D., & Tanczer, L. M. (2024). Safeguarding the "Internet of Things" for Victim-Survivors of Domestic and Family Violence: Anticipating Exploitative Use and Encouraging Safety-by-Design. Violence Against Women Journal. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012231222486 (accessed 20 March, 2024)

Brubaker, S. J. (2021). Embracing and Expanding Feminist Theory: (Re)conceptualizing Gender and Power. Violence Against Women, 27(5), 717-726. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801220958494 (accessed 8 July, 2024)

Chambers, D. (2020) Domesticating the "Smarter than You" Home. Gendered Agency Scripts Embedded in Smart Home Discourses. Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft 68 (3): 304–317. https://doi:10.5771/1615-634X-2020-3-304. (accessed 22 March, 2024)

Chatterjee, R., Doerfler, P., Orgad, H., Havron, S., Palmer, J., Freed, D., Levy, K., Dell, N., Mcoy, D., & Ristenpart, T. (2018). The spyware used in intimate partner violence. In *IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy*. https://doi.org/10.1109/SP.2018.00061 (accessed 23 March 2024)

Connie J. A. Beck, J. Michael. M, Karey O'Hara Brewster & Figueredo. J.A (2009) Validation of a Measure of Intimate Partner Abuse with Couples Participating in Divorce Mediation, Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 50:5, 295-308, DOI: 10.1080/10502550902766399 (accessed 21 March 2024)

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241–1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039 (accessed 27 March 2024)

Domestic Violence Response Galway (2023), Annual Report 2022. https://www.domesticviolenceresponse.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/dvr-annual-report-2022.pdf (accessed 30 July 2024)

Douglas, H., Harris, B. A., & Dragiewicz, M. (2019). Technology facilitated domestic and family violence: Women's experiences. *British Journal of Criminology*, *59*(3), 551–570. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azy068 (accessed 27 February 2024)

Dragiewicz. M, Burgess. J, Matamoros-Fernández. A, Salter. M, Nicolas P. Suzor, Delanie Woodlock & Bridget Harris (2018) Technology facilitated coercive control: domestic violence and the competing roles of digital media platforms, Feminist Media Studies, 18:4, 609-625, DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2018.1447341 (accessed 20 February 2024)

Dragiewicz, Molly. (2020). eSafety. (2020). Children and technology-facilitated abuse in domestic and family violence situations: Infographic. eSafety Commissioner & Australian Government. https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/Children%20and%20technology-facilitated%20abuse%20-%20Full%20report.pdf (accessed 05 August 2024)

Dragiewicz M., Delanie, W., Salter, M. And Harris, B. (2022). "What's Mum's Password?": Australian Mothers' Perceptions of Children's Involvement in Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control. *Journal*

of Family Violence, **37**(1), pp. 137-149. http://doi:10.1007/s10896-021-00283-4 (accessed 05 August 2024)

Duerksen, K. N., & Woodin, E. M. (2019). Technological intimate partner violence: Exploring technology-related perpetration factors and overlap with in-person intimate partner violence. *Computers in Human Behavior, 98,* 223–231. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.05.001 (accessed 02 March 2024)

Durfee, A. (2011). "I'm Not a Victim, She's an Abuser": Masculinity, Victimization, and Protection Orders. *Gender & Society*, *25*(3), 316-334. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243211404889 (accessed 17 July 2024)

Dutton, M. A., & Goodman, L. A. (2005). Coercion in Intimate Partner Violence: Toward a New Conceptualization. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, 52*(11-12), 743–756. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-4196-6 (accessed 03 March 2024)

Eterovic-Soric, B., Choo, K. K. R., Ashman, H., & Mubarak, S. (2017). Stalking the stalkers—Detecting and deterring stalking behaviours using technology: A review. *Computers & Security*, *70*, 278–289. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cose.2017.06.008 (accessed 26 March 2024)

Fiolet R, Brown C, Wellington M, Bentley K, Hegarty K. (2021) Exploring the Impact of Technology-Facilitated Abuse and Its Relationship with Domestic Violence: A Qualitative Study on Experts' Perceptions. Global Qualitative Nursing Research. 2021;8. https://doi.org/10.1177/23333936211028176 (accessed 05 March 2024)

Freed, D., Palmer, J., Minchala, D. E., Levy, K., Ristenpart, T., & Dell, N. (2018). "A Stalker's Paradise": How intimate partner abusers exploit technology. In *Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1–13). https://doi.org/10.1145/3173574.3174241. (accessed 19 March 2024)

Grose, R. G., & Grabe, S. (2014). The Explanatory Role of Relationship Power and Control in Domestic Violence Against Women in Nicaragua: A Feminist Psychology Analysis. *Violence Against Women*, *20*(8), 972-993. https://doi-org.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/1077801214546231 (accessed 26 March 2024)

GREVIO Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2023). Baseline Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), November 2023. https://rm.coe.int/grevio-s-baseline-evaluation-report-on-legislative-and-other-measures-/1680ad3febhttps:/rm.coe.int/grevio-s-baseline-evaluation-report-on-legislative-and-other-measures-/1680ad3feb (accessed 16 May 2024)

GREVIO Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2023). Baseline Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), November 2023. https://rm.coe.int/grevio-s-baseline-evaluation-report-on-legislative-and-other-measures-/1680ad3febhttps:/rm.coe.int/grevio-s-baseline-evaluation-report-on-legislative-and-other-measures-/1680ad3feb (accessed 16 May 2024)

Hackworth, L. (2018) Limitations of 'just gender': the need for an intersectional reframing of online harassment discourse and research, in J.R. Vickery and T. Everbach (eds) *Mediating Misogyny: Gender, Technology and Harassment*, Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, pp 51–70.

Hamberger, L. K., Larsen, S. E., & Lehrner, A. (2017). Coercive control in intimate partner violence. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 37,* 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2017.08.003 (accessed 23 March 2024)

Harris, B., and Vitis, L. (2020). Digital intrusions: technology, spatiality and violence against women. *Journal of Gender-Based Violence* 4, 3, 325-341, available from: https://doi.org/10.1332/239868020X15986402363663 [Accessed 27 March 2024]

Henry, N., & Powell, A. (2018). Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence: A Literature Review of Empirical Research. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *19*(2), 195-208. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838016650189 (accessed 07 March 2024)

Henry, N., Flynn, A., & Powell, A. (2020). Technology-Facilitated Domestic and Sexual Violence: A Review. *Violence Against Women*, *26*(15-16), 1828-1854. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801219875821 (accessed 07 March 2024)

Henry, N., Vasil, S., Flynn, A., Kellard, K., & Mortreux, C. (2022). Technology-Facilitated Domestic Violence Against Immigrant and Refugee Women: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *37*(13-14), NP12634-NP12660. https://doi-org.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/08862605211001465 (accessed 06, August 2024)

Johnson H, Thompson A. (2008). The development and maintenance of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in civilian adult survivors of war trauma and torture: a review. Clin Psychol Rev. 2008 Jan;28(1):36-47. https://doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2007.01.017. (accessed 25 June 2024)

Katuk, N., Ruhana Ku-Mahamud. M, Haryani Zakaria. N, and Aizaini Maarof. M. (2018) 'Implementation and Recent Progress in Cloud-Based Smart Home Automation Systems'. In 2018 IEEE Symposium on Computer Applications Industrial Electronics (ISCAIE), Penang, Malaysia, 71–77. 10.1109/ ISCAIE.2018.8405447.76L. K. AAGAARD. (accessed 27 March 2024).
Kingston, A.K. (2020). Feminist Research Ethics. In: Iphofen, R. (eds) Handbook of Research Ethics and Scientific Integrity. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-16759-2_64 (accessed 09 September 2024)

Kennedy, J., B. Nansen, M. Arnold, R. Wilken, and M. Gibbs. (2015). Digital Housekeepers and Domestic Expertise in the Networked Home. Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies. https://doi/10.1177/1354856515579848. (accessed 10 March 2024)

Kullolli, Taulant & Trebicka, Brunela. (2023). Generation Z and the Evolution of Social Media: A Two-Decade Analysis of Impact and Usage Trends. Interdisciplinary Journal of Research and Development. https://doi/10. 77. 10.56345/ijrdv10n311. (accessed 04 August 2024).

Kuo, S.-Y., Zhang, L., & Chang, K.-M. (2023). Technology-Facilitated Abuse in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: A Qualitative Study of Women Survivors in Taiwan. *Violence Again Women*, *29*(12-13), 2464-2485. https://doi-org.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/10778012231188093 (accessed 26 March 2024).

Knewtson, H.S and Rosenbaum, Z.A Kw (2020), "Toward understanding FinTech and its industry", *Managerial Finance*, Vol. 46 No. 8, pp. 1043-1060. https://doi-org.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1108/MF-01-2020-0024 (accessed 20 June 2024)

Line Kryger Aagaard (2023) When Smart Technologies Enter Household Practices: The Gendered Implications of Digital Housekeeping, Housing, Theory and Society, 40:1, 60-77, DOI: 10.1080/14036096.2022.2094460 (accessed 25 March 2024)

Haugaard. M (2022) Foucault and Power: A Critique and Retheorization, Critical Review, 34:3-4, 341-371, DOI: 10.1080/08913811.2022.2133803 (accessed 23 March 2024)

McMahon Elle (2021) Dearcadh: Graduate Journal of Gender, Globalisation and Rights Volume 2, 2021 URL: https://doi.org/10.13025/ntjh-5a83 (accessed 25 March 2024).

McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. Signs, 3, 1771– 1800

Mná Feasa (2022), Annual Report 2020. https://mnafeasa.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Annual-Report-2020.pdf (accessed July 14, 2024).

Munsch, A. (2021) 'Millennial and generation Z digital marketing communication and advertising effectiveness: A qualitative exploration', Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science, 31(1), pp. 10–29. https://doi:10.1080/21639159.2020.1808812 (accessed 28 August 2024)

National Women's Council, (2022). Toolkit on Social Media Policies for Political Parties 2022. https://www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/NWC_Toolkit_SocialMediaAbuse_2022FINAL.pdf

Nazneen S, Darkwah A, Sultan M (2014) Researching women' s empowerment: reflections on methodology by southern feminists. Women' s Stud Int Forum 45:55–62. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.11.008 (accessed 12 August 2024)

Parent, M.C., DeBlaere, C. & Moradi, B. (2013) Approaches to Research on Intersectionality: Perspectives on Gender, LGBT, and Racial/Ethnic Identities. *Sex Roles* **68**, 639–645 https://doi-org.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s11199-013-0283-2 (accessed 15 June 2024)

Powell A., Henry N., Flynn A., Scott A. J. (2019). Image-based sexual abuse: The extent, nature, and predictors of perpetration in a community sample of Australian residents. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 92, 393-402. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.11.009 (accessed 27 July 2024)

Reed, Lauren A., Tolman. M. R, and Monique Ward. L (2017). "Gender Matters: Experiences and Consequences of Digital Dating Abuse Victimization in Adolescent Dating Relationships." *Journal of Adolescence* 59: 79–89. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.05.015. (accessed 24 March 2024)

Rogers, M. M., Fisher, C., Ali, P., Allmark, P., & Fontes, L. (2023). Technology-Facilitated Abuse in Intimate Relationships: A Scoping Review. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 24(4), 2210-2226. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221090218 (accessed 23 March 2024)

Rui, J. R., & Wang, H. (2015). Social network sites and international students' cross-cultural adaptation. Computers in Human Behavior, 49, 400–411. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.03.041 (accessed 04 August 2024).

Safe Ireland (2022) Supporting Women-Responding to Technology-facilitated Domestic Violence. https://www.safeireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/Supporting-Women-Responding-to-Technology-Facilitated-Domestic-Abuse.pdf. (accessed 10 April 2024).

Safe Ireland (2023), Annual Report 2022 https://www.safeireland.ie/about/transparency/annual-review-reports/ (accessed 18 July 2024)

Safe Ireland (2022), Annual Report 2021 https://www.safeireland.ie/about/transparency/annual-review-reports/ (accessed 18 July 2024)

Safe Ireland (2021), Annual Report 2020 https://www.safeireland.ie/about/transparency/annual-review-reports/ (accessed 18 July 2024).

Saoirse Domestic Violence Service (2022), Annual Report 2021 https://sdvs.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SDVS-Annual-Report-2021-FINAL-print-compressed.pdf (accessed 29 July 2024)

Stannard, J. E. (2023). The Merits of Ambiguity: Provocation from the Irish Perspective. *The Journal of Criminal Law*, *87*(2), 122-139. https://doi.org/10.1177/00220183231165822 (accessed 29 July, 2024)

Stark, E. (2007) Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, (2009). ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uccie-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4704270.
Created from uccie-ebooks on 2024-03-25 21:59:50 (accessed 25 March 2024)
Stark. E (2012) Looking Beyond Domestic Violence: Policing Coercive Control, Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations, 12:2, 199-217, DOI: 10.1080/15332586.2012.725016 (accessed 25 March 2024).

Stark, E. (2007) *Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life*, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, (2009). *ProQuest Ebook Central*, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uccie-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4704270.
Created from uccie-ebooks on 2024-03-25 21:59:50 (accessed 25 March 2024).

Shields, S. A. (2008). Gender: An intersectionality perspective. Sex Roles, 59, 301–311. https://doi:10.1007/s11199-008-9501-8 (accessed 29 June, 2024).

The Domestic Violence Act, 2018.

Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2022) https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/9e169-dsgbv-strategies/#third-national-strategy-on-domestic-sexual-and-gender-based-violence (accessed 10 May 2024).

University College Cork (2024) Recognising and Responding to Technology-Facilitated Abuse https://www.ucc.ie/en/recognising-responding-to-tfa.
Walby, S., & Towers, J. (2018). Untangling the concept of coercive control: Theorizing domestic violent crime. Criminology & Criminal Justice, 18(1), 7-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895817743541 (accessed 15 June 2024)

Wendy O'Brien & Marie-Helen Maras (2024) Technology-facilitated coercive control: response, redress, risk, and reform, International Review of Law, Computers & Technology, 38:2, 174-194, https://doi/10.1080/13600869.2023.2295097 (accessed 21 July 2024).

West Cork Women Against Violence (2021), Annual Report 2021.

Women's Aid (2024) Annual Impact Report 2023 https://www.womensaid.ie/app/uploads/2024/06/Womens-Aid-Annual-Report-2023.pdf (accessed 30 July 2024).

Woodlock D. (2017). The abuse of technology in domestic violence and stalking. *Violence Against Women*, 23(5), 584–602. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801216646277 (accessed 23 March 2024)

Woodlock, D., Salter, M., Dragiewicz, M., & Harris, B. (2023). "Living in the Darkness": Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control, Disenfranchised Grief, and Institutional Betrayal. Violence Against Women, 29(5), 987-1004. https://doiorg.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/10778012221114920 (accessed 05 August, 2024).

Yardley, E. (2021). Technology-Facilitated Domestic Abuse in Political Economy: A New Theoretical Framework. *Violence Against Women, 27*(10), 1479-1498. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801220947172 (accessed 20 February 2024)

Appendix 1

Literature Sources Reviewed

S/N	Journal Article Title and Author(s)	Year of Publication
1.	Afrouz, R. (2023). The Nature, Patterns and Consequences of Technology-Facilitated Domestic Abuse: A Scoping Review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *24*(2), 913-927. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380211046752 (accessed 25 February 2024)	2023
2.	Amber Women's Refuge (2023), Annual Report 2022 https://amberwomensrefuge.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Amber-Womens-Refuge-Annual-Report-2022.pdf (accessed 20 July 2024)	2023
3.	Bansal, V., Rezwan, M., Iyer, M., Leasure, E., Roth, C., Pal, P., & Hinson, L. (2024). A Scoping Review of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in Low- and Middle-Income Countries Across Asia. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *25*(1), 463-475. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380231154614(accessed 10 March 2024)	2024
4.	Bayne, A. *et al.* (2023) 'Technology-facilitated abuse among Americans age 50 and older: a latent class analysis', *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 35(1), pp. 65–87 https://doi:10.1080/08946566.2023.2197270 (accessed 28 August, 2024)	2023
5.	Beck. C, Raghan. C (2010). Intimate partner abuse screening in custody mediation: The importance of assessing coercive control. Family Court Review. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1617.2010.01329.x (accessed 25 March 2024).	2010
6.	Bejtkovský Jiří, (2016) The Employees of Baby Boomers Generation, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z in Selected Czech Corporations as Conceivers of Development and Competitiveness in their Corporation. *Journal of Competitiveness,* **8**(4), pp. 105-123. https://doi:10.7441/joc.2016.04.07 (accessed 29 August 2024)	2016
7.	Benjamin K. Sovacool, Dylan D. Furszyfer Del Rio (2020), Smart home technologies in Europe: A critical review of concepts, benefits, risks and policies, Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, Volume 120, 2020, 109663, ISSN 1364-0321, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rser.2019.109663. (accessed 24 June, 2024)	2020
8.	Bhandari, A., & Bimo, S. (2022). Why's Everyone on TikTok Now? The Algorithmized Self and the Future of Self-Making on social media. Social media + Society, 8(1),20563051221086240. https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221086241 (accessed 04 August 2024)	2022

9.	Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa (accessed 15 July 2024)	2006
10.	Brookfield. K, Fyson. R Goulden. M (2024), Technology-Facilitated Domestic Abuse: An under-Recognised Safeguarding Issue? *The British Journal of Social Work*, Volume 54, Issue 1, January 2024, Pages 419–436, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcad206 (accessed 24 March 2024)	2024
11.	Brown, A., Harkin, D., & Tanczer, L. M. (2024). Safeguarding the "Internet of Things" for Victim-Survivors of Domestic and Family Violence: Anticipating Exploitative Use and Encouraging Safety-by-Design. Violence Against Women Journal. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012231222486 (accessed 20 March, 2024)	2024
12.	Brubaker, S. J. (2021). Embracing and Expanding Feminist Theory: (Re)conceptualizing Gender and Power. Violence Against Women, 27(5), 717-726. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801220958494 (accessed 8 July, 2024)	2021
13.	Chambers, D. (2020) Domesticating the "Smarter than You" Home. Gendered Agency Scripts Embedded in Smart Home Discourses. Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft 68 (3): 304–317. https://doi:10.5771/1615-634X-2020-3-304. (accessed 22 March, 2024)	2020
14.	Chatterjee, R., Doerfler, P., Orgad, H., Havron, S., Palmer, J., Freed, D., Levy, K., Dell, N., Mcoy, D., & Ristenpart, T. (2018). The spyware used in intimate partner violence. In *IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy*. https://doi.org/10.1109/SP.2018.00061 (accessed 23 March 2024)	2018
15.	Connie J. A. Beck, J. Michael. M, Karey O'Hara Brewster & Figueredo. J.A (2009) Validation of a Measure of Intimate Partner Abuse WwithCouples Participating in Divorce Mediation, Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 50:5, 295-308, DOI: 10.1080/10502550902766399 (accessed 21 March 2024)	2009
16.	Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241–1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039 (accessed 27 March 2024)	1991
17.	Domestic Violence Response Galway (2023), Annual Report 2022. https://www.domesticviolenceresponse.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/dvr-annual-report-2022.pdf (accessed 30 July 2024)	2023
18.	Douglas, H., Harris, B. A., & Dragiewicz, M. (2019). Technology facilitated domestic and family violence: Women's experiences. *British Journal of Criminology*, *59*(3), 551–570. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azy068 (accessed 27 February 2024)	2019
19.	Dragiewicz. M, Burgess. J, Matamoros-Fernández. A, Salter. M, Nicolas P. Suzor, Delanie Woodlock & Bridget Harris (2018) Technology facilitated	2018

	coercive control: domestic violence and the competing roles of digital media platforms, Feminist Media Studies, 18:4, 609-625, https://doi/10.1080/14680777.2018.1447341 (accessed 20 February 2024)	
20.	Dragiewicz, Molly. (2020). eSafety. (2020). Children and technology-facilitated abuse in domestic and family violence situations: Infographic. eSafety Commissioner & Australian Government. https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/Children%20and%20technology-facilitated%20abuse%20-%20Full%20report.pdf (accessed 05 August 2024)	2020
21.	Dragiewicz M., Delanie, W., Salter, M. And Harris, B. (2022). "What's Mum's Password?": Australian Mothers' Perceptions of Children's Involvement in Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control. *Journal of Family Violence,* **37**(1), pp. 137-149. http://doi:10.1007/s10896-021-00283-4 (accessed 05 August 2024)	2022
22.	Duerksen, K. N., & Woodin, E. M. (2019). Technological intimate partner violence: Exploring technology-related perpetration factors and overlap with in-person intimate partner violence. *Computers in Human Behavior, 98,* 223–231. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.05.001 (accessed 02 March 2024)	2019
23.	Durfee, A. (2011). "I'm Not a Victim, She's an Abuser": Masculinity, Victimization, and Protection Orders. *Gender & Society*, *25*(3), 316-334. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243211404889 (accessed 17 July 2024)	2011
24.	Dutton, M. A., & Goodman, L. A. (2005). Coercion in Intimate Partner Violence: Toward a New Conceptualization. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, 52*(11-12), 743–756. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-4196-6 (accessed 03 March 2024)	2005
25.	Eterovic-Soric, B., Choo, K. K. R., Ashman, H., & Mubarak, S. (2017). Stalking the stalkers— Detecting and deterring stalking behaviours using technology: A review. *Computers & Security*, *70*, 278–289. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cose.2017.06.008 (accessed 26 March 2024)	2017
26.	Fiolet R, Brown C, Wellington M, Bentley K, Hegarty K. (2021) Exploring the Impact of Technology-Facilitated Abuse and Its Relationship with Domestic Violence: A Qualitative Study on Experts' Perceptions. Global Qualitative Nursing Research. 2021;8. https://doi.org/10.1177/23333936211028176 (accessed 05 March 2024)	2021
27.	Freed, D., Palmer, J., Minchala, D. E., Levy, K., Ristenpart, T., & Dell, N. (2018). "A Stalker's Paradise": How intimate partner abusers exploit technology. In *Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1–13). https://doi.org/10.1145/3173574.3174241. (accessed 19 March 2024)	2018
28.	Grose, R. G., & Grabe, S. (2014). The Explanatory Role of Relationship Power and Control in Domestic Violence Against Women in Nicaragua: A Feminist Psychology Analysis. *Violence Against Women*, *20*(8), 972-993. https://doi-org.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/1077801214546231 (accessed 26 March 2024)	2014

29.	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2023). Baseline Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), November 2023. https://rm.coe.int/grevio-s-baseline-evaluation-report-on-legislative-and-other-measures-/1680ad3febhttps:/rm.coe.int/grevio-s-baseline-evaluation-report-on-legislative-and-other-measures-/1680ad3feb (accessed 16 May 2024)	2023
30.	Hackworth, L. (2018) Limitations of 'just gender': the need for an intersectional reframing of online harassment discourse and research, in J.R. Vickery and T. Everbach (eds) *Mediating Misogyny: Gender, Technology and Harassment*, Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, pp 51–70.	2018
31.	Hamberger, L. K., Larsen, S. E., & Lehrner, A. (2017). Coercive control in intimate partner violence. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 37,* 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2017.08.003 (accessed 23 March 2024)	2017
32.	Harris, B., and Vitis, L. (2020). Digital intrusions: technology, spatiality and violence against women. *Journal of Gender-Based Violence* 4, 3, 325-341, available from: https://doi.org/10.1332/239868020X15986402363663 [Accessed 27 March 2024]	2020
33.	Haugaard. M (2022) Foucault and Power: A Critique and Retheorization, Critical Review, 34:3-4, 341-371, https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2022.2133803 (accessed 23 March 2024)	2022
34.	Henry, N., & Powell, A. (2018). Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence: A Literature Review of Empirical Research. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *19*(2), 195-208. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838016650189 (accessed 07 March 2024)	2018
35.	Henry, N., Flynn, A., & Powell, A. (2020). Technology-Facilitated Domestic and Sexual Violence: A Review. *Violence Against Women*, *26*(15-16), 1828-1854. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801219875821 (accessed 07 March 2024)	2020
36.	Henry, N., Vasil, S., Flynn, A., Kellard, K., & Mortreux, C. (2022). Technology-Facilitated Domestic Violence Against Immigrant and Refugee Women: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *37*(13-14), NP12634-NP12660. https://doi-org.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/08862605211001465 (accessed 06, August 2024)	2022
37.	Johnson H, Thompson A. The development and maintenance of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in civilian adult survivors of war trauma and torture: a review. Clin Psychol Rev. 2008 Jan;28(1):36-47. https://doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2007.01.017. (accessed 25 June 2024)	2008
38.	Katuk, N., Ruhana Ku-Mahamud. M, Haryani Zakaria. N, and Aizaini Maarof. M. (2018) 'Implementation and Recent Progress in Cloud-Based Smart Home Automation Systems'. In 2018 IEEE Symposium on Computer Applications Industrial Electronics (ISCAIE), Penang, Malaysia, 71–77. 10.1109/ ISCAIE.2018.8405447.76L. K. AAGAARD. (accessed 27 March 2024)	2018
39	Kennedy, J., B. Nansen, M. Arnold, R. Wilken, and M. Gibbs. (2015). Digital Housekeepers and Domestic Expertise in the Networked Home. Convergence:	2015

	The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies. https://doi/10.1177/1354856515579848. (accessed 10 March 2024)	
40.	Kullolli, Taulant & Trebicka, Brunela. (2023). Generation Z and the Evolution of Social Media: A Two-Decade Analysis of Impact and Usage Trends. Interdisciplinary Journal of Research and Development. https://doi/10. 77. 10.56345/ijrdv10n311. (accessed 04 August 2024).	2023
41.	Kuo, S.-Y., Zhang, L., & Chang, K.-M. (2023). Technology-Facilitated Abuse in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: A Qualitative Study of Women Survivors in Taiwan. *Violence Again Women*, *29*(12-13), 2464-2485. https://doi-org.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/10778012231188093 (accessed 26 March 2024)	2023
41.	Knewtson H.S and Rosenbaum Z.A (2020), "Toward understanding FinTech and its industry", *Managerial Finance*, Vol. 46 No. 8, pp. 1043-1060. https://doi-org.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1108/MF-01-2020-0024 (accessed 20 June 2024)	2020
42.	Line Kryger Aagaard (2023) When Smart Technologies Enter Household Practices: The Gendered Implications of Digital Housekeeping, Housing, Theory and Society, 40:1, 60-77, DOI: 10.1080/14036096.2022.2094460 (accessed 25 March 2024)	2023
43.	McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. Signs, 3, 1771– 1800	2005
44.	McMahon Elle (2021) Dearcadh: Graduate Journal of Gender, Globalisation and Rights Volume 2, 2021 URL: https://doi.org/10.13025/ntjh-5a83 (accessed 25 March 2024)	2021
45.	Mná Feasa (2022), Annual Report 2020. https://mnafeasa.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Annual-Report-2020.pdf (accessed July 14, 2024)	2022
46.	Munsch, A. (2021) 'Millennial and generation Z digital marketing communication and advertising effectiveness: A qualitative exploration', Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science, 31(1), pp. 10–29. https://doi:10.1080/21639159.2020.1808812 (accessed 28 August 2024)	2021
47.	National Women's Council, 2022. Toolkit on Social Media Policies for Political Parties 2022. https://www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/NWC_Toolkit_SocialMediaAbuse_2022FINAL.pdf	2022
48.	Parent, M.C., DeBlaere, C. & Moradi, B (2013). Approaches to Research on Intersectionality: Perspectives on Gender, LGBT, and Racial/Ethnic Identities. *Sex Roles* **68**, 639–645 (2013). https://doi-org.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s11199-013-0283-2 (accessed 15 June 2024)	2013
49.	Powell A., Henry N., Flynn A., Scott A. J. (2019). Image-based sexual abuse: The extent, nature, and predictors of perpetration in a community sample of Australian residents. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 92, 393-402. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.11.009 (accessed 27 July 2024)	2019
51.	Reed, Lauren A., Tolman. M. R, and Monique Ward. L (2017). "Gender Matters: Experiences and Consequences of Digital Dating Abuse Victimization in Adolescent Dating Relationships." *Journal of Adolescence* 59: 79–89. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.05.015. (accessed 24 March 2024)	2017

50.	Rogers, M. M., Fisher, C., Ali, P., Allmark, P., & Fontes, L. (2023). Technology-Facilitated Abuse in Intimate Relationships: A Scoping Review. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 24(4), 2210-2226. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221090218 (accessed 23 March 2024)	2023
51.	Rui, J. R., & Wang, H. (2015). Social network sites and international students' cross-cultural adaptation. Computers in Human Behavior, 49, 400–411. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.03.041 (accessed 04 August 2024)	2015
52.	Safe Ireland (2021), Annual Report 2020 https://www.safeireland.ie/about/transparency/annual-review-reports/ (accessed 18 July 2024)	2020
53.	Safe Ireland (2022), Annual Report 2021 https://www.safeireland.ie/about/transparency/annual-review-reports/ (accessed 18 July 2024)	2021
54.	Safe Ireland (2023), Annual Report 2022 https://www.safeireland.ie/about/transparency/annual-review-reports/ (accessed 18 July 2024)	2022
55.	Saoirse Domestic Violence Service (2022), Annual Report 2021 https://sdvs.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SDVS-Annual-Report-2021-FINAL-print-compressed.pdf (accessed 29 July 2024)	2022
56.	Shields, S. A. (2008). Gender: An intersectionality perspective. Sex Roles, 59, 301–311. https://doi:10.1007/s11199-008-9501-8 (accessed 29 June, 2024)	2008
57.	Stannard, J. E. (2023). The Merits of Ambiguity: Provocation from the Irish Perspective. *The Journal of Criminal Law*, *87*(2), 122-139. https://doi.org/10.1177/00220183231165822 (accessed 29 July, 2024)	2023
58.	Stark, E. (2007) Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, (2009). ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uccie-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4704270. Created from uccie-ebooks on 2024-03-25 21:59:50 (accessed 25 March 2024)	2007
59.	Stark.E (2012) Looking Beyond Domestic Violence: Policing Coercive Control, Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations, 12:2, 199-217, DOI: 10.1080/15332586.2012.725016 (accessed 25 March 2024)	2012
60.	The Domestic Violence Act 2018	2018
60.	The 2017 Criminal Justice (Offences Relating to Information Systems) Act.	2017
61.	The 2023 Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act	2023
62.	Wendy O'Brien & Marie-Helen Maras (2024) Technology-facilitated coercive control: response, redress, risk, and reform, International Review of Law, Computers & Technology, 38:2, 174-194, https://doi/10.1080/13600869.2023.2295097 (accessed 21 July 2024)	2024
63.	West Cork Women Against Violence (2021), Annual Report 2021.	2021
64.	Women's Aid (2024) Annual Impact Report 2023 https://www.womensaid.ie/app/uploads/2024/06/Womens-Aid-Annual-Report-2023.pdf (accessed 30 July 2024)	2024
65.	Woodlock D. (2017). The abuse of technology in domestic violence and stalking. *Violence Against Women*, 23(5), 584–602. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801216646277 (accessed 23 March 2024)	

66.	Woodlock, D., Salter, M., Dragiewicz, M., & Harris, B. (2023). "Living in the Darkness": Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control, Disenfranchised Grief, and Institutional Betrayal. Violence Against Women, 29(5), 987-1004. https://doiorg.ucc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/10778012221114920 (accessed 05 August, 2024)	2023
67.	Yardley, E. (2021). Technology-Facilitated Domestic Abuse in Political Economy: A New Theoretical Framework. *Violence Against Women*, *27*(10), 1479-1498. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801220947172 (accessed 20 February 2024)	2021

Appendix 2

Service Provider Annual Reports and Websites Consulted

S/N	Agencies contacted	Websites reviewed	Location
1	Safe Ireland National Social Change Agency	https://www.safeireland.ie/	Dublin, Mayo and nationwide Ireland
2	Ruhama Ireland	https://www.ruhama.ie/	Dublin, Cork, Kerry regions and nationwide Ireland
3	West Cork Beacon	https://www.westcorkwomensproject.ie/	West Cork and Cork County
4	Adapt Women's Refuge, Kerry	https://kerryrefuge.com/	Kerry and Tippery regions
5	Edel House, Good Shepard, Cork	http://www.goodshepherdcork.ie/	Cork County
6	Cuanlee Refuge, Cork	https://cuanleerefuge.org/	Cork City and County
7	Dowling Security Systems	https://dowlingsecurity.ie/	Cork City and County
8	One Stop Shop for Domestic Violence, Cork	https://www.osscork.com/	Cork City
9.	LINC Ireland	https://www.linc.ie/	Cork City
10.	Mna Feasa	https://mnafeasa.com/	Cork City
11	National Women's Council	https://www.nwci.ie/	Dublin, nationwide Ireland
12.	YANA North Cork Domestic Violence Project	No website found	Mallow, North Cork and County
13	Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)[1]	https://www.mabs.ie/	Dublin, Cork and nationwide Ireland

[1] MABS is a generic money advice and budget service. It is included here as it was consulted to explore whether it provided any information specifically relating to technology-facilitated financial control.

Appendix 3

Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Can you tell me about your agency, where it is located, what catchment area do you serve, what services does your agency provide for survivors of violence (service users), how many service users do you have annually?
2. What is your role there and how long you have worked there?

FRONTLINE RESPONDERS/MANAGERS OF SERVICES

3. How aware are you of technology-facilitated coercive control? What types of behaviour do you think might it might refer to?
4. Are you aware of any legislation which defines and provides sanctions for perpetrators of technology-facilitated coercive control?
5. Have you had contact with service users who have experienced technology-facilitate control? Can you describe what their experiences were?
6. From your experience what services do you think service users who experience technology-facilitated coercive control need the most? Are these services provided and if so by whom?
7. Can you share what steps/procedures your agency uses to address reported cases of technology-facilitated coercive control from service users?
8. Have you had any specific training in handling cases of technology-facilitated coercive control?
9. Have you seen technologies used in coercive control in a post-relationship context?

POLICY MAKERS

10. How aware are you of technology-facilitated coercive control? What types of behaviour do you think might it might refer to? In Ireland, do you think there is a shared working definition/understanding of what technology-facilitated coercive control is?
11. Are you aware of any legislation which defines and provides sanctions for perpetrators of technology-facilitated coercive control?
12. Are there specific policies (either emergent policies or established ones) on technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland?
13. Is there a regular mapping/counting of incidents of technology-facilitated coercive control from service providers in Ireland?
14. Do quarterly or annual reports to the United Nations include/reflect technology-facilitated coercive control as an experience that DSGBV survivors in Ireland experience?
15. Does CUAN or the United Nations have a current agenda which covers technology-facilitated coercive control in its interaction with Safe Ireland or the service providers in Ireland?
16. What strategies have been developed by existing policies in addressing technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland?
17. What are the next steps for policy advancement for addressing technology-facilitated coercive control in Ireland?