The background of the slide features a large, faint watermark of the Stanford University seal. The seal is circular and contains the text "LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY" around the top edge and "1891" at the bottom. In the center of the seal is a redwood tree with a path leading to it, and the words "FREIGHTS" and "FREIGHTS" are visible on either side of the tree.

# The relationship between iconicity as motor-sensory analogy and social meaning: Evidence from creaky voice

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DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

# Iconicity

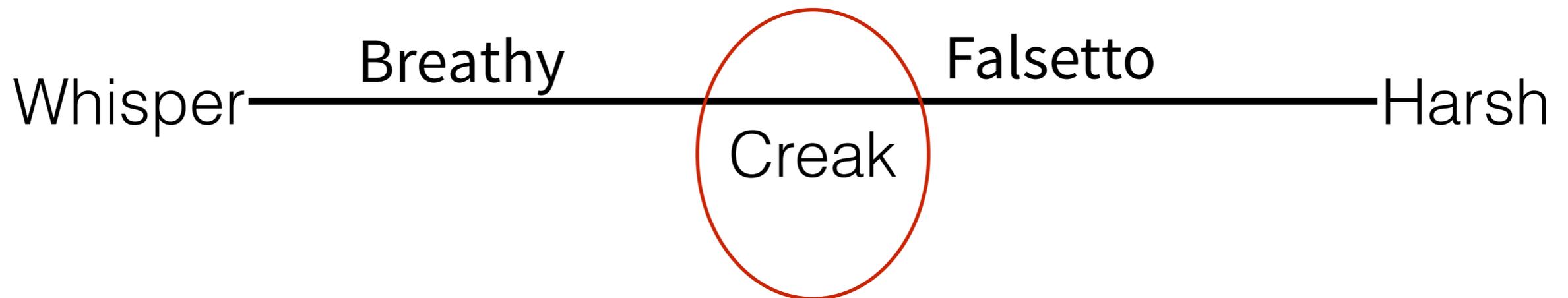
- Different approaches across sciences and social sciences
- Iconicity as perceptuomotor analogies (Dingemanse et al 2015)
- Iconicity as ideological process (Bucholtz and Hall 2016)
  - Indexical iconization (c.f. Irvine 2001; Silverstein 2003; Eckert 2008)
- **Mapping of form and meaning (fusing)**

**Do proto-iconic meanings get mapped to social meanings?**

**Creak: proto-iconic meaning**

Possible motor-sensory iconic basis: **low frequency**

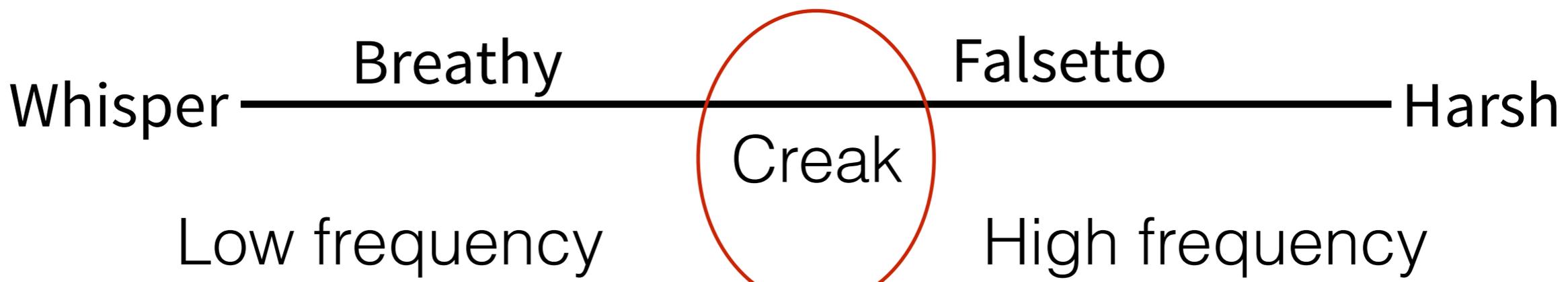
## **Pragmatic implicature?**



Ideological continuum of affect (Pratt 2017)

# Proto-iconic meaning

**Proto-iconic meaning?**  
**Interactional meanings?**  
**Mapped to macro-social category?**



Extreme-low-expressive  
Conspiratorial

Low-expressive  
Intimate

?

High Expressive  
Entertaining

Extreme Expressive  
Aggressive

US (English): least common in white men  
(Podesva 2011)

Peninsula Spanish women (Trittin and de Santos y Lleó (1995)

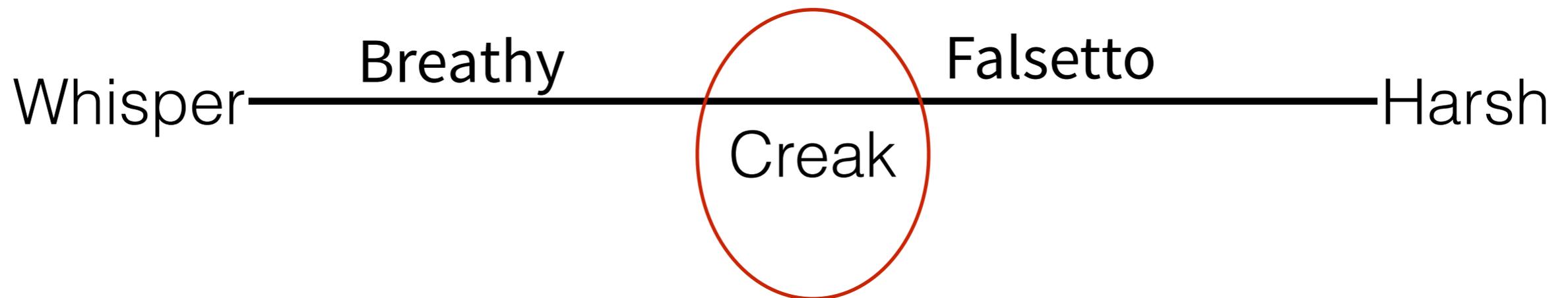
US (English): “gay diva”  
(Podesva 2007; 2011)

China (Wu): most common in old men (Rose 1989)

## Proto-iconic meaning

Possible motor-sensory iconic basis: **low frequency**

## Pragmatic implicature?



**Passive**  
**Non-committal**  
**Tempering**  
**Control**

# Creak

## *How is creak's proto-iconicity exploited?*

•**Gender:** Yuasa (2010); Podesva (2011); Lefkowitz and Sicoli (2015);

Becker, Khan and Zimman (2015)

•**Class:** Esling (1979)

•**Distancing/mediating stance:** Levon (2016); Sicoli (2010); Laver (1980);

Pratt (2015); D'Onofrio, Hilton and Pratt (2013)

•**Stylistic uses:** Esposito (2016); Mendoza-Denton (2011); Shaw and

Crocker (2015)

•**Embodiment:** Podesva, Callier, Voigt, and Hilton (2015)

## Case study

- Class in UK (upper class\* vs working class)
  - Power in being unexpressive/low energy?



\*Using interchangeably with upper-middle

# Case study



## Data Collection

- London 2016: men (x3) sociolinguistic interview; women (x3) group sociolinguistic interview
- Mean age 27.3 years
- Prerequisite: had to have attended an English HMC “public” school

## Class

- “Objective” and “subjective” questionnaire
- Not perfect system

Participant	Objective class score	Subjective class category
Robert	35	Upper middle class
Jonathan	33	Upper middle class
David	27	Lower middle class
Katie	31	Lower middle class
Caroline	30	Upper middle class
Sophie	30	Upper middle class

## Analysis

- Auditory analysis vocal quality of each participants’ vowels
- Creak proportion for each speaker  $(\text{creak}/\text{total}) \times 100$

# Participants

- Variation in creak usage (David=0.68%, Robert = 32.5%)
- How and why is creak being used by these speakers in interaction?

Name	Gender	Total vowels (n=)	Total creaky voice (n=)	% creaky voice
Robert	Male	3351	1088	32.5
Jonathan	Male	4332	557	12.9
David	Male	4394	30	0.68
Katie	Female	890	211	23.7
Caroline	Female	735	187	25.4
Sophie	Female	1326	174	13.1

# Creak in interaction: Robert (32.5%)

umm..have I? yea I've yea I've probably seen a few crimes

- *Non-commitment, control*

I didn't really struggle I don't think I think some people probably did maybe the ones that didn't.. necessarily get on so well in the first place um **but I suppose that's no different to any other school apart from you don't get to leave**

- *Emotional/expressive tempering - mediating, control*
- *Goes almost into whisper*

when you're thrown out of home at twelve years old

- *Semantic (+ pragmatic) expressive meaning transferred, socially numbs/tempers affective meaning (control maintained)*

## Creak in interaction: Jonathan (12.9%)

I- I only did weekly so it wasn't too bad cos my parents lived about twenty five thirty miles away so yea it wasn't too bad I I quite liked it there were bits I didn't like but by and large it was ok

- *Not committing affectively*

teaching yea from my experience they have much more knowledgable much better teachers at private schools um compared to half the people- it's it's [pff] that's possibly a little bit unfair there are some incredibly incredibly good teachers at state schools some of them are excellent

- *Not committing epistemically/affectively*
- *Plausible deniability*

- *Committing epistemically/affectively*

## Katie (23.7%)

she said are you ok with the work load I said [name removed]  
I can smash the work load I don't even care about the work  
load I'm just more concerned that we're bringing in someone  
who is equally as qualified as me

- *Creak as tempering big-headed/boasting*
- *Plausible deniability*

my dad is such a wanker

- *Expressive/affective tempering*

## Katie (23.7%) and Caroline (25.4%)

Mixed uses:

- *Sincere (Esposito 2016) navigating personal question*

Katie: but-

Caroline: would he stay in london like how long would he stay in london

- *Seeking empathy (Sicoli 2010)*

Katie: longer.he would stay in **london longer**

but he was supposed to be married he was

supposed to be not married sorry not married

Caroline: [laughs]

- *Retracting statement*
- *(non-commitment epistemic/affective distancing)*

Sophie: I'm like what the fuck

# So far...

- Motor-sensory analogy (low-frequency, middle of phonation pragmatic space) proto-  
iconic meaning of passivity
  - Micro-contextual deployment as navigating social tool
    - **Non-commitment (affective and/or epistemic)**
    - **Expressive/affective tempering**
      - semantic expressives vs affect expressive
    - **Regaining or reasserting control in interaction**
    - **Other: seeking empathy (Sicoli 2010); sincerity (Esposito 2016);**
  - Creak as passive power (cards close to your chest)

## So far...Questions

- Robert substantially higher creak rate (32.5%) (mean = 18%)
- David substantially lower creak rate (0.68%) (mean = 18%)
- Their interviews didn't differ in topic...
- **Something else going on?**

# Emergence of class identity

**Sport as social symbolism and cultural capital: (Bourdieu 1978, 1984; Wilson 2002)**

Robert: Exclusive sport - involvement and knowledge

Jonathan: Cricket; exclusive sport - some knowledge, no involvement

David: Football; exclusive sport - not played at his school

## School social orientation

Robert: older brother attended same school; deep social circle

Jonathan: social circle orientated outside of school (SW England) - diverse class group

(“scholarship” boys)

David: international friends, social circle away from UC



# Creak as marker of \*male\* class identity

Robert: identities most/orients most

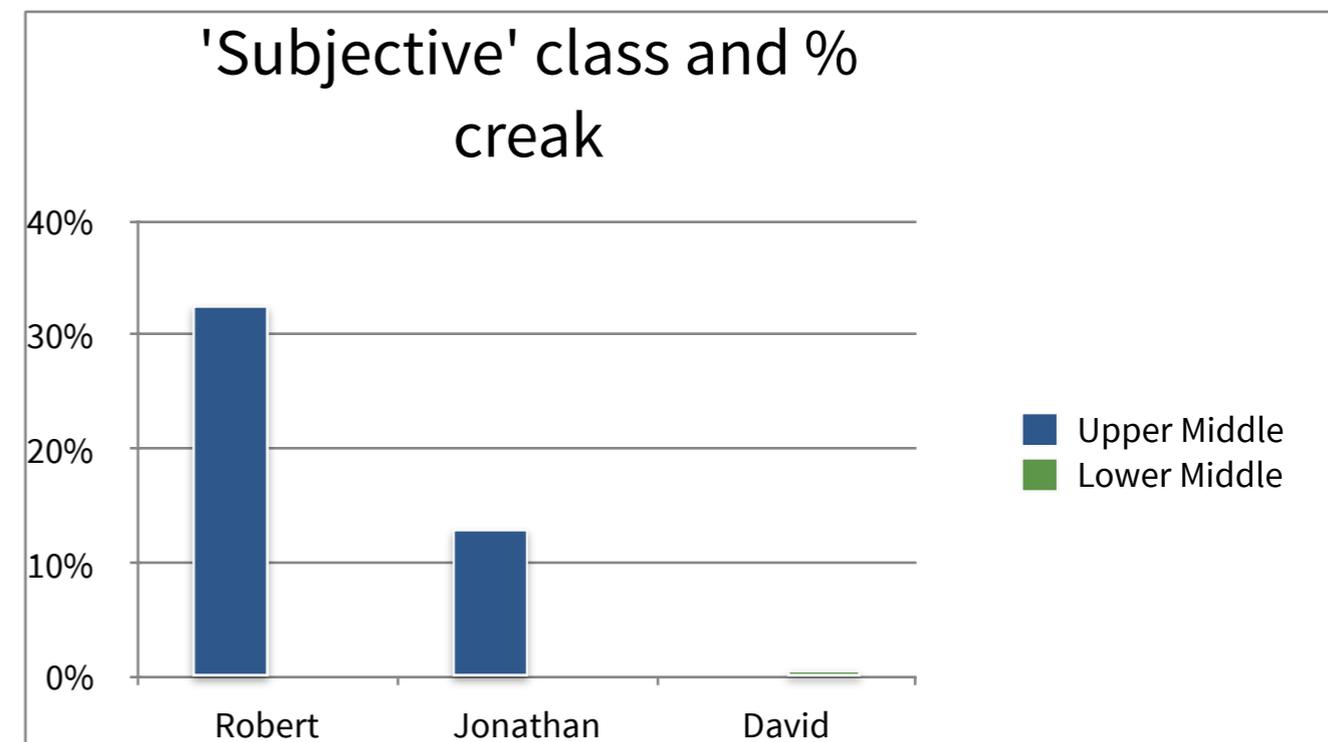
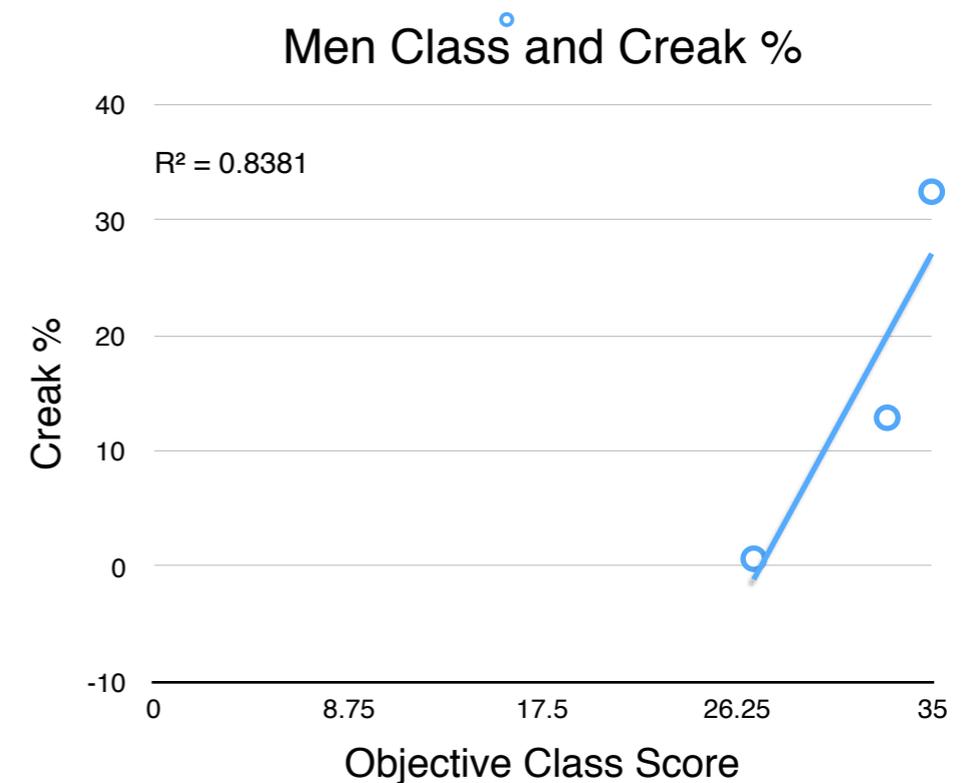
- Homogenous class social circle
- Involved in UC culture
- Orientated at school to UC culture
- Identifies as UM class
- Works in finance

Jonathan: mixed

- Diverse class social circle
- Orientated away from school social life
- Identifies as UM class
- Teacher in a state school

David: identifies least/orients least

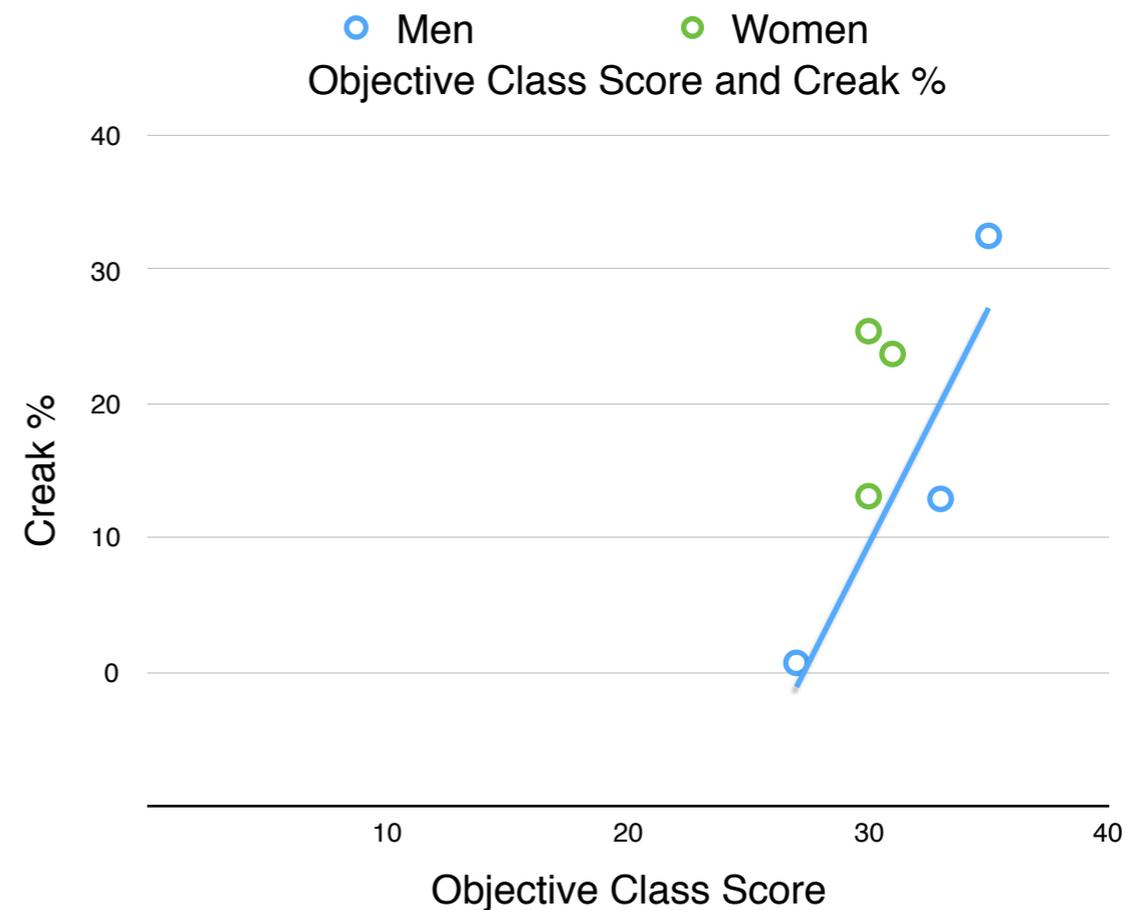
- Diverse class social circle
- Orientated away from UC culture
- Orientated away from school culture
- Identifies as LM class
- Works in strategy management



# Is this class identity effect seen in the women too?

## 1. “Objective” class score $p=0.09$

Participant	Objective class score
Robert	35
Jonathan	33
David	27
Katie	31
Caroline	30
Sophie	30



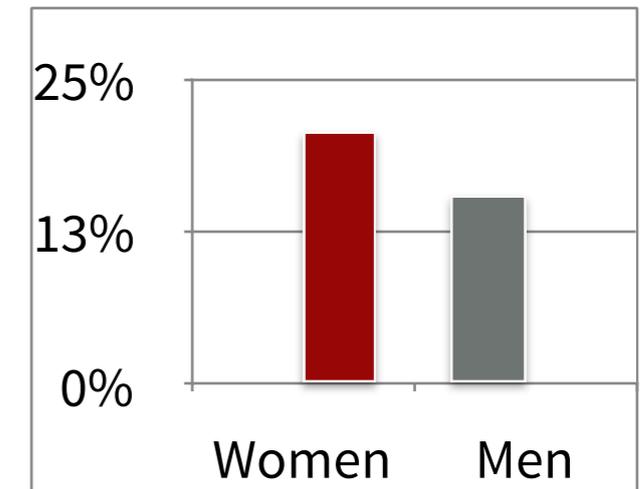
Yes and no...

1. These women's class and creak usage more homogenous
2. But shows their creak is more or less stable for their class identities

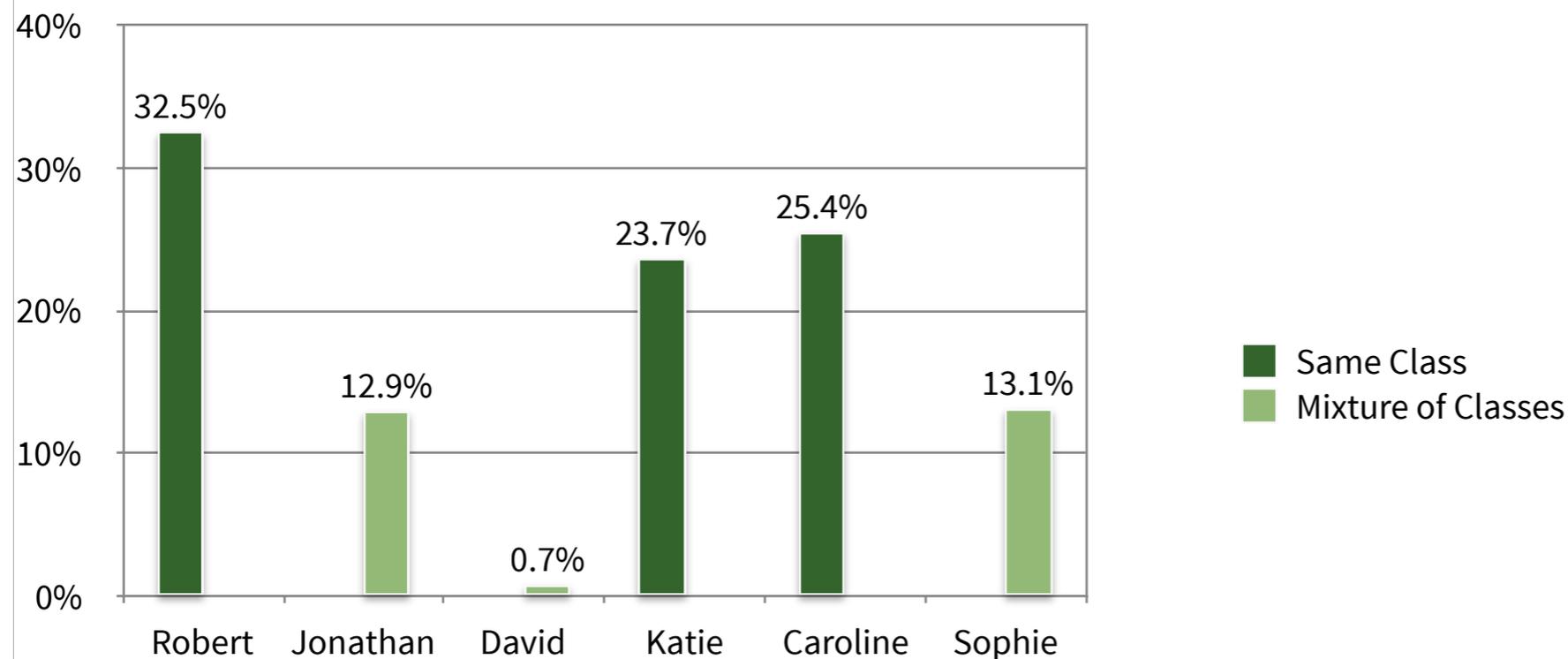
# Is this class identity effect seen in the women too?

- The women are creaking more than men overall ( $p < 0.001$ )

Jonathan: a lot of the friends that I was at school with still will hang out almost exclusively with people either we went to school with or with people who went to similar schools locally umm and you see it at university as well when you go to university there tend to be like cliques



### Creaky voice % and social circles

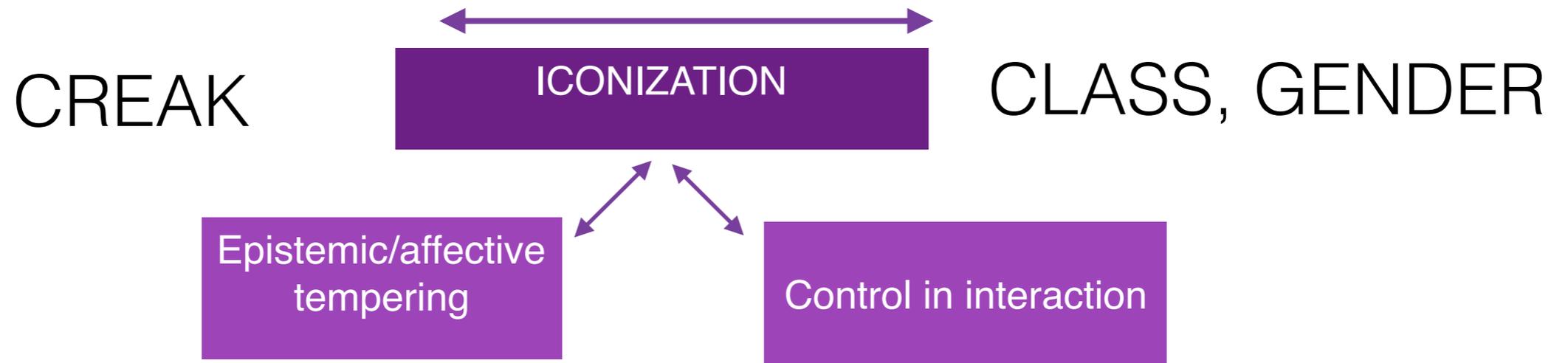


- Those that have a homogenous class social circle use more creak (Chi Square  $p < 0.01$ )
- Awareness of creak as upper-class identity marker?**

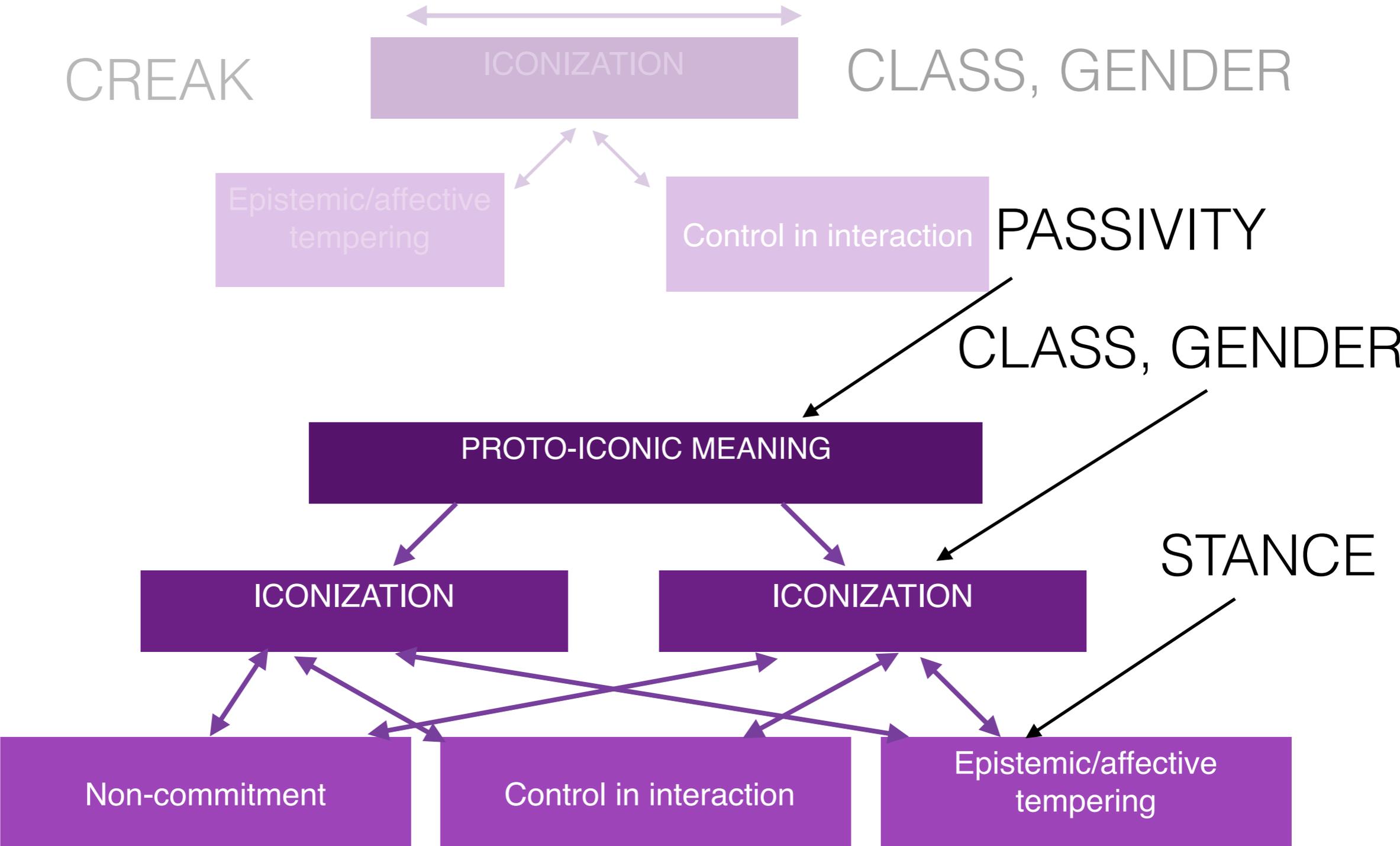
## So far...Part Two

- Women have overall higher creak rate than men
- Creak correlates with class in men
  - More variation amongst how the men orient to class
- Creak and class more muddled with women
  - These women's class identities appear more homogenous
- **BUT** social circles shows possible awareness of creak as upper-class identity marker

# Proto-iconic mapping to social meaning

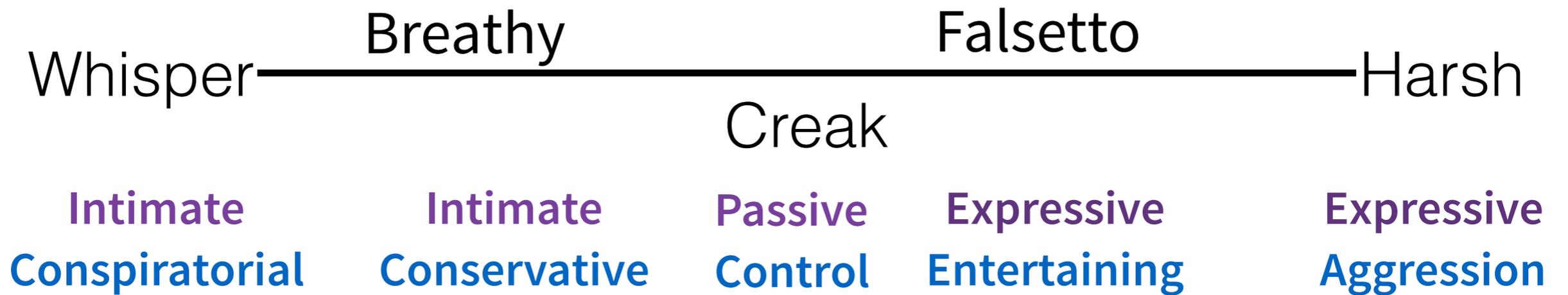


# Proto-iconic mapping to social meaning

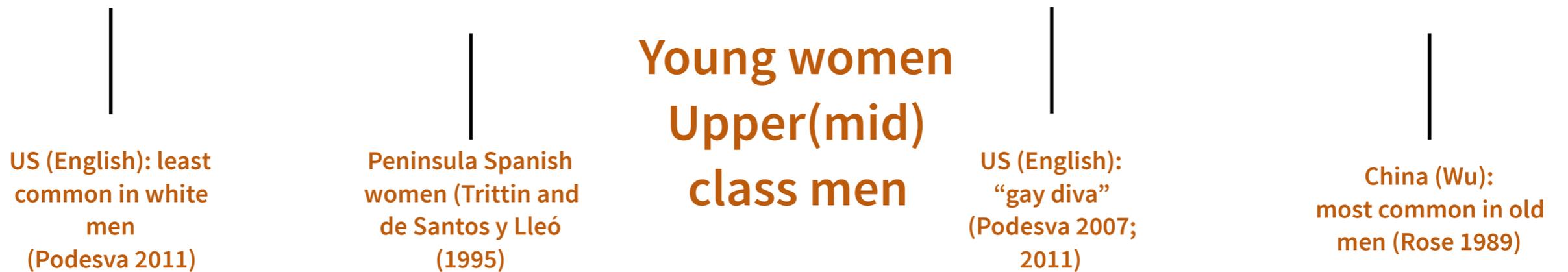


**Conclusion:  
Proto-iconic meaning**

**Proto-iconic meaning?  
Interactional meaning?  
Mapped to macro-social category?**



Ideological continuum of affect (Pratt 2017)



**Conclusion:  
Proto-iconic meaning**

Creak

Lack of expressivity

**Passive  
Control**

Mediation in interaction

Regain control

**Upper(middle) class**

Non-committal

- **Young women  
(not just this study?)**
- **Passive power**
- **Navigate double bind**
- **Assertion without “bitch”**



- **Men**
- **Reinforces power**
- **Demand on hearer**
- **Control in interaction**

## Conclusion:

### Proto-iconic meaning to social meaning

- Motor-sensory analogy can map to macro-social categories (through interactional associations?)
- Upper(mid) class identity marker for **both** men and women
- **BUT** possibly different interactional motivations:
  - women (double bind)
  - men (reinforces macro-societal power)
- Evidence for creak cross-linguistically in women  
Yuasa (2010); Podesva (2011); Lefkowitz and Sicoli (2015);  
Becker, Khan and Zimman (2015), Sicoli (2010)

The background of the slide features a large, light gray watermark of the Stanford University seal. The seal is circular and contains the text "LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY" around the top edge and "DIE LUFT DER FREIHEIT MEHT" around the bottom edge. In the center of the seal is a redwood tree standing on a hillside with mountains in the background. There are also several stars around the bottom edge of the seal.

Thank you!

Special thanks to Rebekah Baglini, Teresa Pratt, Penny Eckert's *Iconicity* seminar and Rob Podesva's *Embodiment* seminar for discussion and critique of these issues and ideas