The International Conference on Masculinities
Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality

Challenges & Opportunities for Affective Equality in Fathering Relations

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Presentation Points

1. Gender inequalities are multiple and intersectional

2. Affective Relations are constructed through practices of love, care & solidarity

3. Practices of love and care are gendered

4. Fathering engages diverse positions, politics & practices

5. Hegemonic masculinities are carefree

6. Counter-hegemonic nurturing masculinities can be advanced in four ways
1. Gender inequalities are multiple & intersectional

2. Affective Relations are constructed through practices of love, care & solidarity

- Basis of economic, social & cultural life
- Meaning, fulfilment, identity, belonging
- (Inter)dependency, reciprocity, mutuality
- Time, energy, effort, intensity etc.
- Nurturing practices & outcomes
- Affective as well as economic / cultural actors
- Physically, psychologically & emotionally demanding
- Emotionally, spiritually, psychologically rewarding/ fulfilling

3. Practices of love and care are gendered

- Caring disposition - complex inter-relationship between what we think, how we feel & what we do
- Inseparable from Total Division of Household Labour [TDHL] of domestic work & breadwinning
- Nurturing defined feminine – female moral imperative, voluntary / invisible responsibility for men
- Doing and undoing gender – doing gender differently
- Gender equality requires equal distribution in burdens & benefits of affective labour
4. Fathering engages diverse positions, politics & practices

Academic, activist & practitioner tensions

- **Diverse fathers** (biological, social, adoptive, step, gay etc.)
- **Diverse fathering relations** (traversing traditional boundaries, divorced, non-resident, lone, absent)
- **Diverse institutional constructions** (re welfare cash & care policies)
- **Diverse fathering practices** (breadwinning, nurturing, hands-on, distanced/excluded etc.)
- Deeply **personal & political** – conflict re burdens & benefits of affective relations

5. Hegemonic masculinities are care-free

- Hegemonic masculinity writes out caring disposition / practices from the script of masculinity
- Hegemonic masculinity is about the operation of power, antithetical to vulnerability & dependency
- Dominant neo-liberal expectations to be highly committed, flexible, & competitive care-free workers
- Primary caring a subordinated location for men / opportunity cost in competition for HM
- Care free masculinities institutionalised & embodied through practice, but constantly challenged, undermined & ambivalent
- Contradictory expectations between institutionalised neo-liberal norms & norms of intimacy (intimacy not necessarily egalitarian!)

6. Counter-hegemonic nurturing masculinities can be advanced in four fronts

- **Political Relations** - politics of care – caring societies/caring citizenship, change inhibiting social structures (esp. labour-market & welfare arenas)

- **Economic Relations** – fight neo-liberalization of welfare states, economic reductionism, individualization/privatization of love/care

- **Cultural Relations** – deconstruct/destabilise dominant cultural representations of care free masculinities

- **Affective Relations** – acknowledge & educate for complex nurturing work across deinstitutionalised relational & familial contexts