Masculinities, Care & Equality

Fathers and Affective Equality

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Outline

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2. What does involving fathers mean?
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6. Fathering & affective equality
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Affective inequality & other inequalities

What does involving fathers mean?

- Parenting? Fathering? Mothering?
- Practical and personal caring?
- Household labour?
- Love and intimacy?
- How should / can fathers become more involved?
- The quantity & quality of involvement?
Caring work

- Care is work – intensity, time (24/7), effort, energy
  1. **Physical** - practical & personal care
  2. **Mental/cognitive** – thought, attention & know-how
  3. **Emotional/ nurturing** – intuition, feeling, sensing, receptivity, awareness, responsiveness
- Complex inter-relationship between what we think, how we feel & what we do
- Inseparable from [TDHL] Total Division of Household Labour of domestic work & breadwinning
Benefits and Burdens

- Physically, psychologically & emotionally demanding
- Emotionally, spiritually, psychologically rewarding/fulfilling
Love labour

- Inalienable / non-commodifible – the bond / attachment with a particular child is the goal/object
- Relational identity & belonging
- Meaning, purpose & fulfilment
- Duty, obligation & responsibility
- (Inter)dependencies, reciprocity, mutuality
- Intimacy – knowing oneself and another
- Negotiation of meanings & practices
- Within context of cultural expectations & institutional constraints
Fathering & inequality

- Gendered caring practices - mothering, fathering, parenting – differences & similarities in flux
- Mothering femininity & primary caregiving – burdens of caring & domestic work, benefits of intimacy (complex!)
- Men as primary breadwinners – benefits politically, economically (resources, power, status etc.), burdens of estrangement / fulfilment (complex!)
Affective equality

- How the benefits & burdens of love/care relations asymmetrical & unequal?
- The benefits - how can fathers/mothers have ample (& equal) scope to develop relationships of love & care?
- The burdens - how can love & care work be more equally shared?
- Politics of involving fathers must begin by appreciating how fathers & mothers lose & gain from the division of love & care
Hegemonic masculinity as care-free

- Hegemonic masculinity writes out care from the script of masculinity
- Hegemonic masculinity is about the operation of power, but also about being care-less and care-free
- Care free masculinities institutionalised & embodied through practice, but constantly challenged, undermined & ambivalent
- Men encounter caring contradictions in daily life & actively manage & engage then
Caring fathers - suggestions

- Promote cultural discourses of caring masculinity & fathering
- Valuing caring generally & the expectation of gender equality in familial relations
- Change inhibiting social structures (esp. labour-market & welfare arenas)
- Mainstream gender-neutral & targeted approaches to fathering
- Educate for the diverse & deinstitutionalised family
- Practice and Reflexivity – doing changes masculinity
References

