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Hierarchical Femininities and Masculinities in Australia Based on Parenting and Employment: A Multidimensional, Multilevel, Relational and Intersectional Perspective

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ABSTRACT. Parenting and working are central to constructions of adulthood in Australia, although the value attached to different qualities, characteristics and practices of parenting and working vary for women and men. This theoretical paper firstly explores and integrates existing theories of gender hegemony into a multi-dimensional, multilevel, relational and intersectional perspective for exploring internal and external relations within and between hierarchical configurations of femininities and masculinities. It then explores existing multidimensional evidence on Australian regional-level hierarchies of femininities and masculinities based on parenting and employment, focusing on patriarchal-capitalist power relations, but including examples of other intersections. The extant research suggests hegemonic femininities are configured around intensive mothering and part-time working, hegemonic mascu-

linities are configured around breadwinning and involved fathering, and nuanced non-hegemonic femininities and masculinities are configured around complicit, compliant, non-compliant, pariah, precluded and marginalised qualities, characteristics and practices, depending upon the nature and degree of non-conformance to hegemonic configurations and the challenges they present to capitalist-patriarchal power relations, in the context of intersections with other power relations.

Keywords: pronatalism; capitalism; hegemony; femininities; masculinities; Australia

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1. Introduction

Get a job, get married, have children: the trappings of adulthood in Australian society. In particular, working and procreating are the means by which adults are seen to contribute to, and be worthwhile members of, society. However, the value placed on working and procreating varies for women and men. This theoretical paper explores hierarchical configurations of adult femininities and masculinities at the regional (that is, country or societal) level in Australia, based on parenting and employment, focusing on patriarchal-capitalist power relations, but also considering other intersectional influences. Before we explore existing evidence of regionally hierarchical masculinities and femininities in Australia, we discuss (in section two) and integrate (in section three) existing theories of gender hegemony, to suggest a multidimensional, multilevel, relational, intersectional perspective for exploring symbolic hierarchies of femininities and masculinities. We also outline symbolic hierarchies' implications for individual performances, particularly transgender, intersex, non-binary and gender fluid performances. Section four applies our perspective by discussing extant evidence of multidimensional and intersectional configurations of femininities and masculinities at the regional level in Australia's patriarchal-capitalist society, based on diverse parenting and working qualities, characteristics and practices. Section five integrates the theory and existing evidence to explore current hierarchical and intersectional relations between femininities and masculinities. Section six outlines the limitations, conclusions and implications.

2. Theoretical Background: Patriarchy, Capitalism and Hierarchical Femininities and Masculinities

Patriarchy and capitalism are systems of unequal power relations between men and women, and capital-owning and employer classes and employee classes, respectively (Connell & Pearse, 2015; Wright, 2005), which are reproduced by gendered and classed structures and discourses (Acker, 1988; Connell, 1987). Gender and class are patterns of social relations which are socially and discursively produced: at interacting local, regional and global-levels; and across interacting dimensions, including individual performances; human relations; divisions of labour and consumption; symbolism and discourses; and direct exercises of power (Connell & Pearse, 2015; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Wright, 2005). Although patriarchy and capitalism entail unequal power relations between men and women, and capital-owning and employer-classes and employee classes, there are also hierarchies within femininities, masculinities and workers (Bottero, 2004; Connell, 1987). Connell, Messerschmidt (1987; 2005; 2018), Schippers (2007) and Paechter's (2018) theories facilitate an understanding of how femininities, masculinities and workers are hierarchically configured in support of patriarchal-capitalist power relations.

Connell's (1987) theory (revised by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and revisited by Messerschmidt (2018)) argues there exist multiple and hierarchical masculinities. Hegemonic masculinities consist of contextual patterns of social practice that are produced at interacting local (interpersonal interactions within families, organisations and communities); regional (the nation state or "culture," evidenced in discourse, policy and demography); and global (world politics, transnational business and media) levels; and multidimensionally through discourses, political, media and institutional structures, cultures, nondiscursive practices such as wage-labour and childcare; and embodied social practices and interactions (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2018). Accordingly, hegemonic masculinities are not individuals' physical or personality characteristics, and although they may be associated with social ascendancy, they are not necessarily constituted by patterns of "dominant" masculinities or those enacted by objectively powerful men or majorities of men (Connell, 1987; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Rather, hierarchical masculinities are patterns of social practice that exist in relation to each other in order to maintain and legitimate unequal gender relations. Such hierarchies are dynamic and contextual: varying historical, social, cultural and institutional contexts configure shifting masculinities, to the extent that there may be multiple patterns of hegemonic masculinities at a particular level or in a particular context, and individuals may enact conflicting or, to borrow Messerschmidt's (2018) term, "fleeting," aspects of

masculinities, depending on the context (Connell, 1987; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Against this background, hegemonic masculinities are defined as contextual configurations that are taken to legitimate unequal gender relations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), or, as revised by Messerschmidt (2018: 75), locally, regionally or globally constructed patterns of practice that “legitimate an unequal relationship between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities.” Hegemonic masculinities are subject to challenge, necessitating policing, penalising, suppressing, and sometimes appropriating elements of, non-hegemonic masculinities (or femininities). These include: complicit masculinities, the majority who do not strictly fulfil hegemonic configurations, but consent to hegemonic masculinities’ social ascendancy in order to maintain men’s dominance of women and benefit from the patriarchal dividend (the authority, respect and material rewards flowing to men overall from men’s dominance of women); subordinated masculinities, which deviate from heterosexuality or blur distinctions between masculinities and femininities; marginalised masculinities within subordinated classes or ethnicities, which are excluded from hegemony regardless of their conformance; and protest masculinities constructed in protest against social configurations of race and class (Connell, 1987; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Poynting et al., 1999).

Although Connell (1987) conceptualises masculinities in the context of unequal gender relations, she describes an internal hierarchy within masculinities, without considering relations between non-hegemonic masculinities and femininities in detail. In relation to femininities, Connell (1987; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) argues maintaining hegemonic masculinities requires complex relations between masculinities and femininities, by which masculinities exclude and discredit femininities, and among multiple femininities. However, Connell (1987) argues no femininity is hegemonic because: all femininities are subordinated to masculinities; nurturing, compliant and empathic femininities are devoid of power, dominance, authority and aggression, and thus incapable of ascendancy; and there is no pressure for any femininity to subordinate other femininities. Rather, femininities consist of: “emphasised” heterosexual, nurturing, empathic femininity, which accommodates men’s needs and wants; and other femininities configured around strategies of compliance, cooperation, non-compliance and resistance, which are silenced and excluded from cultural expression. Messerschmidt (2012) further clarified that hegemonic femininities do not exist within Connell (1987) and Connell and Messerschmidt’s (2005) theoretical formulations, because “hegemony” exists to legitimate unequal gender relations between men and women, and relations within femininities do not do so. Messerschmidt (2012) explains gender hegemony can only be identified through relations between

hegemonic masculinities that maintain “superior” gender qualities, and emphasised femininities that maintain complementary and “inferior” gender qualities: relations which justify unequal gender relations. Messerschmidt therefore uses “emphasised femininity” to understand unequal gender relations through relations with hegemonic masculinities, and contextually unique “dominant femininities,” the most current, common or celebrated form of femininity, or “dominating femininities,” which exercise power, command and control in specific contexts, to understand unequal relations between femininities. Although emphasised femininities may in some contexts be dominant or dominating, that is only the case if dominant or dominating femininities contribute to legitimating unequal gender relations.

We highlight our diverging perspective. Connell’s (1987) argument there is no power in emphasised (heterosexual, nurturant and empathic) femininities relies on a stereotypically masculine definition of power equating to aggression, authority and dominance; overlooks the power inherent in the status attached to idealised configurations; and is inconsistent with Connell and Messerschmidt’s (2005) definitions of hegemonic masculinities as legitimating unequal gender relations, which do not require masculinities to be aggressive or dominant. Furthermore, despite emphasising masculinities are dynamic and contextual, Connell’s (1987) argument relies on a static construction of emphasised femininity (Paechter, 2018), which takes no account of how femininities may be contextually reconfigured to buffer hegemonic masculinities and unequal gender relations from emerging intersectional challenges. Although Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 848) acknowledged “new configurations of women’s identity and practice,” they did not describe such configurations as hegemonic. However, Messerschmidt (2012) recognised that emphasised femininities are contextual, and may in some contexts be constituted by dominant or dominating femininities if they exist in relation to hegemonic masculinities in order to legitimate unequal gender relations.

Moreover, Connell’s (1987) argument all femininities are subordinated to masculinities implies no femininities can be hegemonic because femininities must be subordinated to masculinities in order to maintain unequal gender relations. Thus, despite theorising internal hierarchies within masculinities that legitimate external gender hierarchies, Connell appears to situate all femininities against their external relations with hegemonic masculinities. Likewise, Messerschmidt (2012; 2018) defines hegemonic masculinities as legitimating unequal relationships between women and men, femininity and masculinity, and among masculinities, but argues hegemonic femininities cannot exist because power hierarchies within femininities do not contribute to the legitimating of unequal gender relations. In response to Connell (1987) and Messerschmidt (2012), we argue *external* subordination to masculinities does not negate unequal power within *internal* hierarchies of femininities,

which are configured as such in order to legitimate unequal gender relations. Connell's (1987) suggestion there is no pressure to subordinate alternative femininities ignores the utility of elevating femininities that support, and penalising and suppressing femininities that inadequately uphold or actively challenge, unequal gender relations. To that end, hegemonic projects may confer rhetorical status and value upon "emphasised" femininities, and stigmatise and devalue alternative femininities (Schippers, 2007), as they relate internally to each other, and externally to masculinities. As such, Connell's (1987) compliant, co-operative, non-compliant and resistant femininities, as well as marginalised femininities, require elaboration. Indeed, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) emphasise the importance of empirical research on femininities, largely because they contribute to constructions of masculinities. This (perhaps unintentionally) theoretically and empirically subjugates femininities to masculinities, rather than recognising different configurations of femininities and masculinities are relational and equally theoretically and empirically salient to each other's constructions, the legitimisation of unequal gender relations, and the implications for individuals' performances and experiences. In this respect, Messerschmidt (2012) laudably shifted the emphasis of the importance of research on femininities from understanding constructions of masculinities, to understanding the legitimisation of unequal gender relations.

Overall, a more detailed explication of how femininities' internal hierarchies legitimate the external gender order, in the context of intersecting power relations, is warranted. In this vein, Schippers (2007) and Paechter (2018) offer important contributions. In contrast to Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005; 2018) multidimensional conceptualisation, Schippers (2007) argues hegemonic masculinities and femininities, as one feature of a broader system of gender relations, are purely symbolic, functioning to ideologically and discursively justify and normalise the gendering of social locations ("woman" and "man"), embodiments, practices and structures. Schippers' theory incorporates hegemonic masculinities *and* femininities, whose significance lay in the "idealized quality content" of what it is to be a "man" and "woman" in respect to their heterosexual relationships with each other (90).

In this context, Schippers defines hegemonic masculinities and femininities as contextually unique symbols constituted by characteristics defined as manly or womanly, that "establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship" between masculinities and femininities (2007: 94). Although Schippers defines hegemonic femininities according to their external relations with hegemonic masculinities, she positions hegemonic femininity as internally hegemonic over other femininities, which are also constructed against femininities and masculinities' idealised relationships. Rather than "subordinated" femininities (because all femininities are subordinated to masculin-

ities), Schippers argues there are “pariah” femininities, which contaminate and threaten complementary and hierarchical gender relations by deviating from hegemonic femininities and possessing hegemonic masculinities’ qualities: simultaneously failing to complement hegemonic masculinities and threatening men’s dominance of women. Pariah femininities include lesbian, promiscuous, sexually inaccessible, frigid and aggressive femininities. Such femininities are penalised and stigmatised in order to contain the threats they represent and discourage contagion. While Schippers frames pariah femininities as *not* inferior to hegemonic femininities, we argue penalising and containing such femininities necessitates their symbolic configuration as socially and morally inferior, and thus internally subordinated, to hegemonic femininities. Furthermore, Schippers’ definition links pariah femininities to hegemonic masculinities, the enactment of which may not always subject femininities to pariah status, given masculinities are dynamic, contextual and intersectional. However, “pariah femininities” remains an enlightening description of femininities that are subordinated because they subvert and challenge gender relations.

Schippers (2007) also discards “subordinated masculinities”: in the symbolic realm, no masculinities can be subordinated, as masculinities are always superior to femininities. Instead, male enactments of hegemonic femininities are configured as “male femininities”. While this argument has weight externally, Connell’s (1987) subordinated masculinities remain helpful in elucidating internal hierarchies within masculinities. Furthermore, linking male femininities to hegemonic femininities implies a fixed concept of hegemonic femininity (Paechter, 2018) as submissive, emotional and empathic, which may not always be the configuration that maintains complementary and hierarchical gender relations.

Schippers (2007) also argues against defining masculinities and femininities from non-hegemonic races and classes as “different” (for example, “marginalised”), because culturally nuanced hegemonic masculinities and femininities can exist in non-white, non-middle classed contexts, in order to normalise unequal gender relations. While we agree with Schippers, “marginalised” remains a useful descriptor within hegemonically white, middle-classed contexts, where, in order to legitimate unequal race, class and other power relations, the qualities, characteristics and practices attached to non-hegemonic races, classes and other socially constructed identities, are marginalised and automatically excluded from hegemony, regardless of their conformance or otherwise to its current configurations. In this vein, Schippers’ argument all masculinities are configured as dominant over all femininities elevates white, middle-class perspectives of gender relations. However, gender hierarchies cannot be conceptualised in isolation from intersecting power relations, which may be more salient than gender in particular contexts.

Paechter's (2018) theory focuses on hegemony by way of "truth": naturalising, internalising and consenting to patriarchal gender relations. While Paechter acknowledges hegemony is produced through "multiple and networked power relations" and "normalising forces which influence people's thinking as usual" (123), her theory focuses on how individuals' discursive performances reproduce hegemony locally. Paechter provides a gender-neutral definition of "hegemonic gender performances [as] those which act, within a particular context, to uphold a gender binary and maintain traditional social relations between genders" (124). This definition emphasises that hegemonic gender performances are contextual (that is, locally and intersectionally nuanced), such that possibilities of non-white and non-middle classed hegemonic performances depend on the context.

There is some common ground between the theorists. Messerschmidt (2012), Paechter (2018) and Schippers (2007) argue not all femininities and masculinities fall within hierarchical gender relations, but that some are simply "different" (Paechter, 2018) or irrelevant to hierarchical and complementary gender relations (Messerschmidt, 2012; Schippers, 2007). According to Schippers' theory, femininities and masculinities that do not constitute hegemonic femininities/masculinities, pariah femininities, or male femininities, presumably fall outside hierarchical configurations. While we agree some configurations might be irrelevant to patriarchal gender relations, additional nuanced configurations may be relevant. For example, some configurations may fall short of achieving hegemonic femininities and masculinities in ways that, for femininities do not threaten patriarchal gender relations and warrant pariah status, and for masculinities are not on the basis of enacting hegemonic femininities, but otherwise fail to adequately uphold complementary and hierarchical gender relations. Furthermore, intersections with other power relations may subsume otherwise non-hierarchical qualities within hierarchical configurations.

Finally, Messerschmidt (2018), Paechter (2018) and Schippers (2007) agree male bodies can perform femininities, and female bodies can perform masculinities. They diverge in that, while Connell and Messerschmidt (2005; 2018) and Paechter (2018) argue individual performances construct or reproduce hegemonic masculinities and femininities, Schippers (2007) argues that, as symbols purporting to ideologically justify unequal gender relations, only female enactments are configured as hegemonic femininities, and only male enactments are configured as hegemonic masculinities. We discuss our perspective and its implications in section three.

3. A Multilevel, Multidimensional, Relational and Intersectional Perspective of Hierarchical Femininities and Masculinities

The different theories of gender hegemony, and conflicts between them, are coherent in the context of their theoretical perspectives on, and positioning of, gender hierarchies. Thus, we start our theoretical integration by stating our perspectives. We agree with Schippers (2007) and Gramsci (1971), that hierarchical configurations of femininities, masculinities, classes, races and other “identities,” are symbols that ideologically and discursively justify and naturalise existing power relations, and in turn shape ways of thinking, acting and interacting. However, we distinguish the symbolic nature and purpose of hierarchical configurations, from the mechanisms of their production. We suggest, in accordance with Connell & Messerschmidt (2005), that nuanced and contextual symbolic hierarchies of femininities and masculinities are produced through *interactions* between multi-level, multi-dimensional and intersectional influences, which have varying degrees of salience depending on the context.

However, we must emphasise a slight divergence. In clarifying that hierarchies of masculinities are constructed at interacting local (interpersonal interactions within families, organisations and communities); regional (the nation state or “culture”); and global (world politics, transnational business and media) levels, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005; 2018) appear to suggest that, at the local level, individual men and women can *construct* hegemonic masculinities that legitimate unequal gender relations between, for example, one man and one woman in one particular interaction. Conversely, our perspective emphasises hierarchies of femininities and masculinities are symbols that are produced through *interactions* between multi-level, multi-dimensional and intersectional influences. As such, we do not frame individual performances or interactions as “constructions” of femininities and masculinities, just as an influential policy or discourse at the regional or global level does not by itself “construct” hierarchical configurations. Instead, contextual hierarchies are produced not by individual performances *or* human interactions and relations *or* divisions of labour *or* policies *or* discourses, but by interactions between those dimensions, and between contextually and intersectionally nuanced local, regional and global levels.

Accordingly, we restate Connell & Messerschmidt’s (2005) clarification that hierarchical configurations of femininities and masculinities are neither individuals’ physical nor personality characteristics, nor demographic groups constituting majorities or minorities of women or men. Rather, they are those idealised (or stigmatised) qualities, characteristics and practices that are taken to symbolise what women and men should (and should not) be in relation to each other (Schippers, 2007). In our perspective, individuals do not constitute

or construct particular configurations of masculinities or femininities; rather, individuals perform or resist complex and sometimes conflicting aspects of different femininities and masculinities, within the constraints imposed by (and in turn influencing) multidimensional and multi-level hierarchies (Butler, 2011; Connell, 1987; Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Furthermore, as Paechter (2018) suggested, individuals who perform the qualities and characteristics of hegemonic femininities and masculinities are not necessarily powerful in themselves; rather, their performances form part of a multidimensional and multilevel web of influences reinforcing hierarchical configurations and unequal gender relations. Similarly, although some individuals who enact non-hegemonic femininities and masculinities may have some degree of personal power, others may socially stigmatise them for not performing hegemonic configurations. Moreover, although individuals may appear to perform qualities, characteristics or practices associated with hegemonic or non-hegemonic configurations, such individuals may not identify with that, or indeed any, configuration in the context of their lived and embodied experiences, performances and interactions.

In this respect, we agree with Schippers (2007) that, in the symbolic realm, the maintenance of unequal (implied and compulsorily cisgender, gender-binary and sex-binary) gender relations requires the symbolic tethering of birth-assigned female enactments to femininities and birth-assigned male enactments to masculinities, in order to reject the validity of and suppress transgender, intersex and non-binary enactments and identities. We argue this not to invalidate the identities and lived and embodied experiences of transgender, intersex and non-binary individuals, but to make explicit their oppression and suppression. Thus, enactments of masculinities by transgender men, who were birth-assigned females but identify as men, are symbolically configured as femininities: female enactments that “deviate” from hegemonic femininities by enacting or identifying as, but being unable to symbolically constitute, masculinities. Similarly, enactments of femininities by transgender women who were birth-assigned males but identify as women, are symbolically configured as masculinities: male enactments that “deviate” from hegemonic masculinities by enacting or identifying as, but being unable to symbolically constitute, femininities. Similarly, enactments by non-binary birth-assigned females or males who identify as neither women nor men, are symbolically configured as enactments of femininities or masculinities according to their birth-assigned sex. We also tentatively suggest enactments by individuals born with intersex characteristics are symbolically configured as femininities or masculinities according to whether they were assigned (or enforced, through “normalising” medical or surgical interventions (Carpenter, 2016, 2018) female or male at birth, regardless of whether they identify with their assigned/enforced sex; but may be configured as having less validity

than femininities performed by biologically female bodies, or masculinities performed by biologically male bodies (Carpenter, 2016).

To be clear, we agree with Schippers (2007), Paechter (2018) and Messerschmidt (2018) that the symbolic binding of birth-assigned sex to femininities and masculinities does not prevent individual birth-assigned females from enacting the qualities, characteristics and practices of masculinities or identifying as men, individual birth-assigned males from enacting femininities or identifying as women, or individuals from identifying with neither femininities nor masculinities. However, regardless of individuals' lived and embodied performances and identities, others may view them through the lens of hierarchical femininities and masculinities associated with their birth-assigned sex, and reward or penalise them accordingly. As noted by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), individuals' performances are constrained by embodiment, and the costs of non-conformant performances and identities can be "extremely high" (843).

In accordance with Demetriou (2001), we also foreground internal hierarchies within femininities and masculinities, and external hierarchies between femininities and masculinities across the gender order, all of which contribute to maintaining unequal gender relations. In this respect, internal and external ordering and "labelling" of femininities and masculinities may vary, and internal or external hierarchies may be more or less salient in particular contexts and from particular perspectives.

Finally, we define femininities and masculinities in the context of prevailing unequal (heteronormative) gender relations in Australian society, and their intersections with sometimes complementary, and sometimes conflicting, power relations. However, hierarchical configurations of femininities and masculinities are dynamic, changing over time and in different contexts. Accordingly, the definitions of hegemonic and non-hegemonic femininities and masculinities, and the very concepts of femininities and masculinities, may not be appropriate in (perhaps utopian) contexts in which patriarchal gender relations, and their heterosexual, cisgender and gender/sex-binary requisites, do not exist. Furthermore, labels and definitions such as "hegemonic," "subordinated," "marginalised," and "pariah" may not be relevant in all contexts, and other configurations may exist. Accordingly, our contribution should be taken as rough guidance for understanding contextual configurations of and relations between symbolic femininities and masculinities, rather than a definitive list.

3.1. A rough guide to understanding hierarchical configurations of femininities and masculinities

Against these perspectives and caveats, we integrate Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and Schippers' (2007) theories to suggest an overall concep-

tualisation of hierarchical femininities and masculinities as symbols: contextually and intersectionally *configured* at interacting global, regional and local levels, and multidimensionally through interacting symbols, discourses and ideologies, exercises of power, divisions of labour, human relations and performances; *consisting of* dynamic and contextual internally (within femininities and within masculinities) and externally (across the gender order) “ordered” configurations of idealised (and subordinated) qualities, characteristics and practices that represent what women and men should (and should not) be and do in relation to their hierarchical and complementary relationships with each other; and *servicing the symbolic purpose* of maintaining, justifying and naturalising hierarchical and complementary gender relations in the context of intersections with other power relations. We use the term “configurations” because masculinities and femininities can be configured around combinations or groupings of symbolically idealised or stigmatised qualities, characteristics and practices, which by themselves, or combined with different qualities, characteristics or practices, may be inconsistently idealised (or stigmatised).

3.1.1. Nuanced configurations of femininities and masculinities

Within the context of this broad definition and prevailing unequal gender relations, we slightly revise Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and Schippers’ (2007) definitions to describe hegemonic masculinities as those contextual and intersectional configurations of symbolically idealised masculinities that are positioned as having social and moral value and ascendancy over all other masculinities internally, and all femininities externally, because they constitute the current configurations which best maintain and naturalise hierarchical and complementary gender relations in the context of intersections between patriarchal and other, sometimes complementary, and sometimes conflicting, power relations. Similarly, internally hegemonic and externally emphasised femininities (the symbolic “complements” of hegemonic masculinities), are those contextual and intersectional configurations of symbolically idealised femininities that are positioned as having social and moral value and ascendancy over all other femininities internally, and/or emphasised over other femininities (but subordinated at least to hegemonic masculinities) externally, because they constitute the current configurations that best maintain hierarchical, complementary gender relations, in the context of intersections between patriarchal and other power relations.

We integrate Connell (1987), Poynting et al. (1999), Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), Schippers (2007) and Paechter’s (2018) arguments, to suggest maintaining hegemonic femininities and masculinities requires complex internal relations within femininities and masculinities, and complex external relations between femininities and masculinities across the gender order.

Broadly, non-hegemonic femininities and masculinities consist of contextually nuanced and heterogenous configurations that are positioned as socially and morally inferior to hegemonic configurations, because they challenge, or do not adequately uphold, hierarchical and complementary gender relations. These could include “complicit” femininities and masculinities (Connell, 1987), which do not strictly adhere to hegemonic configurations, but consent to hegemonic configurations internally and unequal gender relations externally, in order to benefit from the patriarchal dividend indirectly (by femininities), or directly (by masculinities). For example, internally hegemonic femininities may be configured as externally complicit with the gender order if they benefit from the patriarchal dividend (Paechter, 2018), albeit indirectly (through men), dependently (upon men) and conditionally (upon compliance with men).

Nuanced configurations of subordinated femininities and masculinities are also likely to exist. Rather than linking them to static definitions of hegemonic femininities and masculinities, we suggest an adaptive description of subordinated femininities and masculinities as those that do not conform to current configurations of hegemonic femininities or masculinities, in ways that go beyond the minor shortcomings of “complicit” configurations, to the extent that they challenge or do not adequately uphold hierarchical, complementary, intersectional gender relations. Furthermore, we emphasise the existence of heterogenous configurations that are subject to nuanced subordination and stigmatisation based on the nature and degree of their deviance from hegemonic configurations internally, and the threats they pose to hierarchical and complementary gender relations externally, in the context of intersections with other power relations. These could include existing suggestions for non-hegemonic femininities (Connell, 1987), such as “compliant” femininities and masculinities, which, despite their subordination for failing to achieve hegemonic configurations, acquiesce and pose no challenge to their respective hegemonic configurations (internally) and complementary and hierarchical gender relations (externally); “non-compliant” femininities and masculinities, whose deviance from qualities or characteristics of their respective hegemonic configurations is of a nature or degree that represents a passive, indirect, or insubstantial, challenge to hegemonic configurations (internally) and complementary and hierarchical gender relations (externally); and a slight variation on Schippers’ (2007) incisively defined “pariah” femininities (and masculinities), as configurations that warrant particular suppression and stigmatisation as socially and morally inferior and “other,” because their deliberate or culpable “deviance” from their respective hegemonic configurations, is of a nature or degree that represents an active rejection of, or direct and substantial threat to, hegemonic configurations (internally) and hierarchical and complementary gender relations (externally).

We initially concurred with Schippers' (2007) argument that lesbian femininities are subordinated as pariah femininities, because they reject and threaten heterosexual patriarchal gender relations. On reflection, we contend they and some other femininities and masculinities are uniquely subordinated as "precluded" femininities and masculinities. While it is again essential to emphasise heterogeneity, we argue gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, transgender, non-binary and intersex femininities and masculinities, as well as single (and even partnered but unmarried) femininities and masculinities, are automatically precluded from hegemony, regardless of their conformance or otherwise to currently *explicit* features of hegemonic configurations (such as parenting and working), because they "deviate," from within the gender order, from implied and compulsory married, heterosexual, cisgender, gender-binary and sex-binary features of hegemonic configurations, and threaten complementary and hierarchical patriarchal gender relations. Unlike pariah femininities and masculinities, which are subject to pariah status because they reject currently hegemonic qualities, characteristics and practices, precluded femininities and masculinities are judged against a different set of standards, by which they may be excluded from, or stigmatised for, conforming to practices configured as hegemonic (such as parenting).

Moreover, we account for intersecting power relations by recognising that in (for example) hegemonically neoliberal, middle-classed, white, abled, working-aged contexts, nuanced configurations of Connell's (1987) "marginalised" masculinities (and femininities) are likely to exist. In such contexts, intersecting power relations configure as "marginalised" femininities and masculinities, the qualities, characteristics and practices of non-hegemonic classes, races, cultures, abilities, ages and other hierarchically configured constructs, automatically excluding them from hegemony regardless of whether they conform to its current configurations. There may also be nuanced marginalised configurations, such as "protest" femininities and masculinities configured (and accordingly stigmatised) in protest against intersecting neoliberal, middle-classed, white, abled, working-aged configurations (Connell, 1987). Furthermore, complex interactions between marginalisation, preclusion and subordination are likely to amplify stigmatisation. However, as Schippers (2007) argued, marginalisation within hegemonically middle-classed, white, abled, working-aged contexts does not prevent locally contextual configurations of non-white, working-classed, disabled, younger and older hegemonic femininities and masculinities that contribute to maintaining hierarchical and complementary gender relations.

The labels and definitions we have suggested are not restrictive: there may be other configurations with contextual and intersectional relationships to hegemonic configurations internally, and the patriarchal gender order externally. Importantly, the labels should not be used to rigidly define, over-

simplify or homogenise nuanced configurations of femininities and masculinities, within which greater heterogeneity is likely to exist. Rather, they serve as descriptors that foreground heterogeneity and facilitate an understanding of the nature and extent of, and threat represented by, their non-conformance to hegemonic configurations, and in turn how, why and to what extent they are subordinated, relative to other femininities and masculinities internally and externally.

3.1.2. Hierarchies of femininities and masculinities

To understand hierarchical gender relations, it is necessary to understand not only internal hierarchies of qualities, characteristics and practices attached to femininities and masculinities, but also relations between heterogeneous femininities and masculinities in the external gender order. In the foregoing discussion we attempted to “label” nuanced configurations of femininities and masculinities such that they are intelligible internally and externally, and can and should be responsive to evidence of how masculinities and femininities are configured in unique circumstances. The suggested “hierarchies” within femininities and masculinities, in roughly descending order from hegemonic, complicit, compliant, non-compliant and pariah, intersect with precluded, marginalised and protest configurations to magnify stigmatisation, and are subject to including as yet undefined configurations, and reordering based on unique contexts and intersections. However, these internal “orderings” do not reveal where nuanced configurations of femininities and non-hegemonic masculinities are positioned in relation to each other. This is a deliberate omission. With the exception of hegemonic masculinities (which are socially ascendant over all other configurations of masculinities and all configurations of femininities) and complicit masculinities, which in most patriarchal contexts are likely to be positioned as externally socially ascendant over all configurations of femininities, we are reluctant to suggest where other configurations of masculinities and femininities are positioned in relation to each other. Much like femininities and masculinities, the internal and external hierarchies they form are contextual and dynamic. In particular, we leave open the possibility that not all femininities are always subordinated to all masculinities. In the context of sometimes conflicting and sometimes complementary intersecting power relations, where class, race, religion, age, ability or another power relation may be more salient than gender, specific configurations of femininities, such as emphasised and complicit femininities, may sometimes be positioned above particularly stigmatised, precluded or marginalised masculinities.

The remainder of this paper applies our integrated perspective to extant multidimensional evidence at the regional level in Australia, to explore regionally hierarchical femininities and masculinities based on parenting and

employment. In reviewing the multidimensional evidence at the regional level, we include, as suggested by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), existing discursive, political and demographic research, but also research on human relations and interactions (in the shape of aspirations, attitudes and experiences) and individual performances, as they form part of the multi-dimensional web of evidence that facilitates an understanding of regional-level hierarchies of masculinities and femininities. Our discussion focuses on intersecting patriarchal-capitalist power relations, but includes intersectional examples demonstrating marginalisation in Australia's hegemonically white, English-speaking, middle-classed, abled, working-aged context.

4. Extant Evidence of Regional-Level Configurations of Adult Femininities and Masculinities in Australia

Gendered and classed configurations of femininities and masculinities in Australia hark back at least to incipient capitalism. The introduction in 1907 of the "family wage" institutionalised the assumption of a male breadwinner supporting a wife and children (Acker, 1988; Baird & Cutcher, 2005; Broomhill & Sharp, 2005). Capitalism was thus predicated on: men's full-time paid productive labour; women's unpaid reproductive labour of caring for husbands/workers and reproducing and nurturing children/future workers (Acker, 1988; Glenn, 1999); and, as women entered the workforce, devaluing women's productive labour, which increased capitalist profit (Connell, 1987). Simultaneously, patriarchy benefited by enabling men to monopolise the rewards of productive labour and maintaining women's dependence on men (Bradley, 2012; Glenn, 1999). Accordingly, patriarchal-capitalist power relations historically idealised and institutionalised masculinities configured around breadwinning and femininities around mothering and caring. However, existing multidimensional research reveals evolving configurations.

4.1. Discourses and ideologies:

Citizen-worker, pronatalism and maternalism

Configurations of normative adulthood encompassing full-time paid employment and heterosexual marriage with children constitute a powerful ideal in Australia (Blatterer, 2007). Such configurations are influenced by citizen-worker, pronatalist and maternalist discourses. Neoliberal restructuring of capitalist economies has resulted in a "universal adult worker" model obliging all adults to work (Lewis & Giullari, 2005; Manne, 2005; Runswick-Cole et al., 2016), reinforced by discourses constructing self-reliant, individually responsible and full-time paid "citizen workers," who achieve full citizenship, social worth, self-actualisation and identity through dedication to paid work

(Archer, 2009; Blaxland, 2010; Engels, 2006; Marston, 2008). In Australia, political, media and popular discourses idealise “ordinary Australian” taxpayers, “lifters,” “battlers,” and “hardworking families” as worthy and moral contributors to society; and stigmatise “dole bludgers,” “leaners,” “welfare cheats,” and “welfare dependents” as undeserving, dishonest, immoral, lazy, inferior, irresponsible, blameworthy, parasitic burdens on society (Archer, 2009; Blaxland, 2010; Engels, 2006; Fronek & Chester, 2016; Holdsworth, 2017; Manne, 2005; Marston, 2008; Runswick-Cole et al., 2016; Soldatic & Meekosha, 2012; Wilcock, 2014). Thus, such discourses have constructed a “deserving” class of full-time employed “lifters,” and an “undeserving” underclass of unemployed and underemployed “leaners” conflated with, for example, single mothering, young mothering, Aboriginality, disability, working-classed unemployment, and new migrant, refugee and asylum seeker status (Bielefeld, 2018; Bullen & Kenway, 2004; Hibbins, 2005; Macoun, 2011; Ramsay, 2016; Soldatic & Meekosha, 2012; Wilson & Turnbull, 2001).

Citizen-worker discourses are gendered and intersectional, producing inequitable conditions for achieving adulthood and citizenship (Blaxland, 2010; Butler, 2011; Lewis & Giullari, 2005; Soldatic & Meekosha, 2012). In this respect, citizen-worker discourses interact with pronatalism, which promotes fertility by conflating adulthood and parenthood (Gillespie, 2001; Hird & Abshoff, 2000; Veevers, 1980). However, pronatalism is also gendered: it applies to women and men in nuanced ways, configuring “mothering” and “fathering” around different but complementary qualities, characteristics and practices.

Pronatalism is particularly salient for women, combining with maternalist discourses idealising and naturalising motherhood, to construct mothering as women’s primary and natural identity; essential to women’s maturity, adulthood, completeness and fulfilment; and integral to the wellbeing of individuals, children, families, societies and economies (Bown, Sumsion, & Press, 2011; Gillespie, 2000; Graham & Rich, 2012; Hird & Abshoff, 2000; Peterson, 2014). In Australia, analyses of political and media rhetoric have revealed discourses idealising female fertility as a precious resource, and mothering as feminine, natural and patriotic (Ainsworth & Cutcher, 2008; Bown et al., 2011; Dever, 2005; Dever & Curtin, 2007; Heard, 2006; Sawer, 2013). However, pronatalist discourses are increasingly subject to neoliberal restructuring. Although mothering remains essential to configurations of femininities (Gillespie, 2000, 2003; Letherby, 2002), some argue paid work is increasingly crucial (Chesterman & Ross-Smith, 2010; Lupton & Schmied, 2002; Parris & Vickers, 2010). Thus, there exist multiple femininities configured around idealised or stigmatised qualities, characteristics and practices relating to whether, to what extent, and how, they mother and/or work.

Within femininities configured around mothering, pervasive media, political and popular discourses produce hierarchies of qualities, characteristics and practices idealised as “good mothering” or stigmatised as “bad mothering” (Goodwin & Huppertz, 2010). In Australia, “good” mothering has been discursively configured as “intensive” mothering: “sacrificing” work, prioritising children and devoting substantial time, energy, emotion and money to selfless nurturing in order to maximise children’s opportunities (as future workers and consumers) (Blaxland, 2010; de Souza, 2013; Goodwin & Huppertz, 2010; Liamputtong, 2006; Lupton, 2011; Maher & Saugeres, 2007; Stevenson, 2015). However, neoliberal revisions are increasingly idealising femininities configured around intensive mothering *and* part-time working, as simultaneously: reproducing and nurturing future workers; contributing economically through paid labour and consumption; providing financially and emotionally for children; seeking self-actualisation, fulfilment, independence and identity through work; and being positive neoliberal role models and better mothers for their children (Blaxland, 2010; Hird & Abshoff, 2000; Lupton & Schmeid, 2002; Manne, 2005; Stevenson, 2015). Contributing to such configurations are discourses of employed “supermums” who “have it all” (McDonald et al., 2005), and feminist and scientific discourses of “non-traditional” mothers who model educated, emancipated working mothering and gender equality (Manne, 2005; Stevenson, 2015).

While pronatalism configures all adults as parents (Veevers, 1980), some argue parenthood is not as integral to masculinities as it is to femininities (Miller, 2010; Peterson, 2014): although biological reproduction is equated to virile and potent masculinities in Western societies (Gannon et al., 2004; Hinton & Miller, 2013), masculinities can be configured around numerous characteristics, such as sporting, career and economic success (Hibbins, 2005; Hird & Abshoff, 2000; Peterson, 2014). However, others argue media, political and academic discourses configure fathering as vital to adult masculinities (Hinton & Miller, 2013; Marshall et al., 2014). Australian research reflects these conflicts. Ainsworth and Cutcher (2008) found fathers were absent, repressed and invisible in Australian print media discussions of fertility. In contrast, Tincknell and Chambers (2002) argued the 1994 film *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* reasserted the value of masculinities and patriarchal power by framing fathering as crucial to masculinities and children’s wellbeing.

If fathering is increasingly idealised, the qualities, characteristics and practices associated with “good” fathering are more equivocal. Traditionally, masculinities configured around breadwinning fathering were idealised (Friedman, 2015; Hunter et al., 2017). Such discourses, which maintain men’s economic power over women, incorporate essentialist assumptions men are biological or natural breadwinners (Hunter et al., 2017; Miller,

2010). Accordingly, Australian political and media discourses have excluded involved fathering from configurations of masculinities, by representing men as having no instinctive nurturing capacity (Blaxland, 2010; Cannold, 2005; Johnson, 2014).

However, masculinities are undergoing gradual neoliberal reconfigurations (Schmitz, 2016). Much like intensive mothering discourses, academic, scientific and media discourses are framing “involved” fathering as essential to men’s adult identities, life satisfaction and wellbeing; necessary for children’s wellbeing; and benefiting mothers and society (Craig et al., 2014; Hunter et al., 2017; Lupton & Schmied, 2002; Miller, 2010; Schmitz, 2016; Tincknell & Chambers, 2002). Analyses of Australian political debates and entertainment and news media have revealed idealised masculinities configured around the qualities and practices of caring, active, responsive, responsible “involved” fathering (enacted through “masculine” practices such as sport and outdoor activities), but which remain naturally career-focused and inept helpers to caregiving mothers (Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Dempsey, 2006; Pini & Conway, 2017; Stevens, 2015). Thus, involved fathering discourses continue to prioritise and essentialise primary breadwinning, which complements the prioritisation and essentialisation of primary caregiving in discourses idealising intensive mothering and part-time working in femininities.

In order to maintain idealised configurations, neoliberal pronatalism and maternalism also suppress femininities and masculinities that inadequately uphold, or challenge, Australia’s complex power relations. Within femininities, media and political discourses stigmatise femininities configured around “bad mothering” qualities, characteristics and practices, such as selfish career-orientation (interfering with intensive mothering) (Raith, 2008) and full-time “just” mothering (failing to contribute economically) (Pocock, 2003). However, some of the most stigmatised characteristics and practices are being involuntarily childless (wishing to have children but being unable to achieve a viable pregnancy because of their own infertility), circumstantially childless (wishing, but unable, to have children due to external circumstances), and childfree (freely choosing not to have children) (Cannold, 2005; Daniluk, 2001; Veevers, 1979). In Australia, political and media discourses stigmatise women’s childlessness as irresponsible, selfish, immature, career-focused, blameworthy and discrediting (Dever, 2005; Graham & Rich, 2012a, 2012b; Heard, 2006; Sawer, 2013). These configurations reveal the limited practices available to adult femininities: in the absence of mothering, neoliberalism configures femininities around the qualities and practices of dedicated, competitive, self-sufficient, ambitious, unencumbered working (Wager, 2000). While such qualities are idealised in masculinities, they are configured as selfish, irresponsible and unnatural in femininities (Graham & Rich, 2012a).

Furthermore, linking involuntary childlessness with desperation and victimhood; and childfreeness with selfishness, immaturity and failing to contribute to society (Dever, 2005; Graham & Rich, 2012a), suggests femininities configured around childlessness are subordinated in different ways according whether their non-conformance is “guilty” (childfreeness), “innocent” (involuntary childlessness) or both (circumstantial childlessness, which, despite “innocent” intentions, can be configured as culpable for the circumstances of their childlessness) (Turnbull et al., 2016).

There is limited Australian research on regional-level discursive configurations of masculinities outside the practices of traditional or involved breadwinning fathering. Primary caregiving fathering (including full-time fathering or part-time working fathering) has been stigmatised as immature, abnormal, lazy, incompetent and emasculating (Grbich, 1997; Lee & Owens, 2002; Parris & Vickers, 2010), while being childfree has been subordinated as immature, selfish and incomplete (Blatterer, 2007). Indeed, the lack of representation in Australian media, policy and popular discourses of masculinities configured around other qualities, characteristics and practices related to employment and parenting, may be a mechanism of silencing and invalidating such masculinities.

Furthermore, nuances arise within gender relations and from intersections with other power relations, such that pronatalist and maternalist discourses are applied inconsistently. Within gender relations, “good” mothering and fathering are configured around the implied and compulsory practices of being married, heterosexual, gender-binary and cisgender, in order to maintain complementary and hierarchical gender relations. As exemplified by conservative parliamentary, religious and media rhetoric against same-sex marriage and access to assisted reproductive technologies (ART) and surrogacy by single people, unmarried couples, lesbians and, in particular, gay men, femininities and masculinities configured around being single, lesbian and gay have been stigmatised as non-parents or inherently “bad” parents: unnatural, immoral, deviant, aberrant, indecent, inadequate, depriving children of idealised heterosexual married biological parents upon which to model sexualities and gender identities, and antithetical to children’s welfare (Bullen & Kenway, 2004; Collins, 2014; de Souza, 2013; Matthews & Augoustinos, 2012; Poulos, 2020; Tuazon-McCheyne, 2010; Wolfinger, 2014). Even unmarried coupled parenting is configured as fragile, unstable and risky (Webb et al., 2019). Moreover, by their discursive and cultural invisibility (Charter et al., 2018; von Doussa et al., 2015), mothering and fathering by transgender women and men are rendered symbolically non-existent.

In Australia’s intersectional context, neoliberal-pronatalist-maternalist discourses idealise parenting configured around being white, English-speaking,

Australian-born, middle-classed, independent, non-disabled and working-aged, and exclude from “good” parenting non-white, non-English speaking, migrant, working-classed, communal, disabled and “too old” or “too young” parenting, and in particular mothering (de Souza, 2013; Liamputtong, 2006; Meekosha, 2006). In Australia, the procreation imperative has been selectively imposed upon particular socially constructed categories of women in support of patriarchy, capitalism, nationalism, eugenics and ethnocentrism (Ainsworth & Cutcher, 2008; de Souza, 2013; Dever & Curtin, 2007). For example, pronatalist political and media rhetoric has explicitly exhorted (middle and upper-classed) university educated, high-earning women and white women to procreate, and implicitly excluded working-classed and under-classed welfare-dependent single women and non-white women (Ainsworth & Cutcher, 2008; Wolfinger, 2014).

In turn, femininities and masculinities configured around, for example, non-white, working-classed or disabled parenting are discursively excluded from “good” parenting. There is a long and continuing history of racist and ethnocentric political and media discourses accompanying interventionist, discriminatory and genocidal government policies, which stigmatise and homogenise Australia’s First Nations peoples’ parenting (and in particular, fathering) around the characteristics and practices of alcoholism, neglect, violence, irresponsibility, promiscuity and non-monogamy (Kean, 2019; Macoun, 2011). Similarly, gendered, classed and aged discourses exclude working-classed and underclassed mothering from “good” mothering and “good” neoliberal citizenship (Bullen & Kenway, 2004). Australian political, media and popular discourses identify working-classed “boganette” women as mothers and ignore working-classed “bogan” fathering (Pini & Previte, 2013); and automatically associate working-classed mothering with: the economically irresponsible and inadequately neoliberal characteristics of being single, too young, uneducated, unemployed and welfare dependent; and “bad” mothering practices such as substance abuse, prolific childbearing, and excessive screen time (Bullen & Kenway, 2004; Pini & Previte, 2013; Wolfinger, 2014).

The privileging of parenting and working configured around “ability” is also apparent in Australia. Masculinities configured around disabilities have been discursively stigmatised as weak and welfare dependent, excluding them from conforming to neoliberal-patriarchal configurations of masculinities around dominance, independence and breadwinning (Barrett, 2014; Meekosha, 2006; Pini & Conway, 2017). Furthermore, disabled femininities and masculinities have been configured as asexual or non-gendered (Meekosha, 2006), excluding them altogether from idealised characteristics and practices such as gender, heterosexuality and parenting.

Overall, the existing Australian evidence of regional-level discourses, suggests interacting neoliberal, pronatalist and maternalist discourses idealise femininities configured around the qualities, characteristics and practices of intensive mothering and part-time working; and masculinities configured around breadwinning and involved fathering. Such configurations maintain an uneasy compromise between patriarchy (perpetuating women's roles as heterosexual wives and mothers, who are subordinated to and financially dependent upon men) and capitalism (exploiting women's reproductive labour and men's productive labour, and devaluing women's productive labour) (Bown et al., 2011; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2018). In turn, intersectional discourses subordinate, stigmatise, preclude and marginalise other qualities, characteristics and practices such as childlessness (which threatens women's dependence on men and the reproduction of future workers); single, gay and lesbian parenting (which deprives children of heterosexual, gendered role models); and parenting and working qualities and practices that fall afoul of intersecting power relations such as class, race, age and ability.

4.2. Direct exercises of power: Working mothering, breadwinning fathering, childless workers and penalised non-compliance

In Australia, direct exercises of power have institutionalised citizen-worker discourses by introducing neoliberal employment and welfare regimes that require citizens to be financially self-sufficient, and penalise non-workers with: stricter eligibility requirements for income support (shifting, for example, "non-severely" disabled people, and single parents of older children, from higher-paying entitlements to lower-paying unemployment benefits despite structural barriers to gaining employment); cashless welfare cards depriving recipients of control over where they can spend money (which, by targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recipients, configure them as irresponsible and culpable substance abusers and gamblers (Bielefeld, 2018)); and "workfare" programs requiring people receiving unemployment benefits (including new migrants, unemployed young people, single mothers and "non-severely" disabled people) to undergo training, increase employability and find paid work (Engels, 2006; Grahame & Marston, 2012; Holdsworth, 2017; Lantz & Marston, 2012; Soldatic & Meekosha, 2012; Van Acker, 2005; Wilson & Turnbull, 2001; Wolfinger, 2014). In concert, these policies enforce economic citizenship. For example, women's citizenship has been redefined from caring to economic citizenship, pressuring working-classed women into paid work by eliminating income support for life-long caregivers, reducing income support and introducing workfare programs for single parents (most of whom are women) and low-income families, and withdrawing subsidised childcare from parents not engaged in adequate hours of work, training or study (Beutler & Fenech, 2018; Blaxland, 2010;

Graham et al., 2018; Holdsworth, 2017; Manne, 2005; Stevenson, 2015; Van Acker, 2005; Wolfinger, 2014). Such policies are gendered, classed and raced. They penalise and coerce into employment working classed and “under-classed” single mothers, while married, middle-classed mothers who can afford to be independent of public funding remain free to “choose” between full-time mothering and working, but are increasingly “supported” to contribute reproductively and productively (Cannold, 2005; Manne, 2005; Probert, 2002; Wolfinger, 2014). Furthermore, such policies institutionalise impediments to practising “good” neoliberal part-time working mothering, for many refugee and migrant women, whose first language is not English, and who therefore face difficulties accessing employment services and barriers to obtaining employment (Benza & Liamputtong, 2017; Liamputtong, 2006; Ramsay, 2016).

Despite coercing women into paid employment, Australian policy and taxation regimes institutionalise masculinities configured around breadwinning and fathering, and femininities configured around intensive mothering and part-time working, by financially rewarding conformance to a “modified breadwinner” model of heterosexual, two-parent families with children, in which fathers work full-time, and mothers work part-time and perform most caring and household work (Broomhill & Sharp, 2005; Charlesworth et al., 2011; Van Acker, 2005). There is ample evidence of Australian policy promoting intensive mothering by assuming women are responsible for fertility and nurturing children, and breadwinning fathering by assuming men are responsible for financially supporting families (Baird & Cutcher, 2005; Broomhill & Sharp, 2005; Graham et al., 2018). Analyses of Australian government policies since the early 2000s have revealed a gendered, classed and raced pronatalist agenda that promotes fertility by rewarding or removing obstacles to white, middle-classed mothering, but largely ignores fathering (Baird & Cutcher, 2005; Broomhill & Sharp, 2005; Graham et al., 2018).

Exemplifying policies rewarding procreation were the federal government’s introduction in 2004 of a lump sum payment to mothers on the birth of each child regardless of employment status, and family tax benefits payable to parents of dependent children (Baird & Cutcher, 2005; Dever, 2005; Heard, 2006). While the former is now defunct, the latter continue to exist, subject to increasingly strict eligibility conditions (Graham et al., 2018). In Australia, policies simultaneously removing obstacles to mothering and promoting or coercing employment, include employment protection for employees on parental leave, government paid parental leave (18 weeks for primary carers and two weeks for secondary carers), paid carers’ leave, employed parents’ and carers’ entitlement to request flexible work, and childcare subsidies for parents engaged in adequate hours of work, study or training (Beutler & Fenech, 2018; Dever, 2005; Graham et al., 2018). These

policies reveal intertwining neoliberal capitalist, patriarchal and pronatalist agendas, simultaneously promoting and coercing: economic productivity, by exploiting women's productive labour (Lewis & Giullari, 2005) and withholding financial support such as childcare subsidies from those (including full-time parents) who are not sufficiently economically productive (Beutler & Fenech, 2018); fertility, by reducing impediments to women combining procreation, caregiving and working (Dever & Curtin, 2007; Heitlinger, 1991); and complementary and hierarchical patriarchal-capitalist gender relations, by promoting part-time working and primary caregiving mothering, and full-time breadwinning fathering (Baird & Cutcher, 2005; McCurdy, 2014; Pocock et al., 2013), with belated but limited support for involved fathering through two weeks' paid "dad and partner" leave (Baird & Whitehouse, 2012; Graham et al., 2016).

Unsurprisingly, government policies (and policy omissions) also institutionalise the stigmatisation and exclusion of, for example, single, queer, working-classed, non-white and disabled parenting. For example, Australian governments' continuing failure to address the lack of high quality and affordable childcare, means the ability to make the "correct" choice to combine intensive mothering and part-time employment is affordable and available only to women from the middle classes and above, while working-classed and single mothers can often afford to enact only "bad" full-time mothering or full-time working (Stevenson, 2015; Wolfinger, 2014).

Other policies embed configurations of white, individualised, independent parenting, and penalise non-conformance. Australia's child welfare regime, for example, constructs non-white, non-individualised, and disabled parenting as bad parenting, with implications for the removal of children from parents' (and in particular mothers') custody (Ramsay, 2016). Non-white, communal mothering practices have been stigmatised "inadequately attached" and "bad" mothering (Ramsay, 2016), while historical and contemporary forced removal of children has penalised Aboriginal mothering practices as "bad" mothering (Ussher et al., 2016). Parents with disabilities are also disproportionately likely to have children removed from care, based on constructions and automatic assumptions of inadequate disabled parenting (Elliott, 2017).

Furthermore, in stark contrast to pronatalist policies promoting child-bearing, is the continuing legality of forced sterilisation of people with disabilities (disproportionately imposed upon girls and women), who are constructed as economic burdens on society automatically incapable of "good" parenting, and thus excluded from parenting altogether (Elliott, 2017). Similarly, only recently have most Australian jurisdictions removed most (but not all) legal barriers to single people, lesbians and gay men having children (including access to fostering, adoption, ART and altruistic surrogacy, and legal recognition of non-biological parents) (Hayman & Wilkes, 2017;

Pennington & Knight, 2011). Such barriers configure lesbian femininities and gay masculinities around being non-familial, non-parental, bad for children and non-legitimate parents and families (Hayman & Wilkes, 2017; Zanghellini, 2007); and continue to stigmatise single, lesbian and, in particular, gay parenting, through the ongoing illegality in Western Australia of ART for surrogates of male couples and altruistic surrogacy for same-sex couples and single people; the illegality in all states of commercial surrogacy; financial barriers to accessing ART resulting from subsidies being limited to infertility diagnoses; and non-automatic legal recognition at birth of gay fathers in some states (Pennington & Knight, 2011; Tuazon-McCheyne, 2010; Webb et al., 2017).

There is limited research on Australian policy configurations of childlessness. Arguably, the policy absence of childlessness promotes femininities and masculinities configured around parenting (Graham et al., 2018), and leaves open only the qualities, characteristics and practices of “citizen-workers” for femininities and masculinities configured around childlessness. For example, in Australia, the entitlement to request flexible working arrangements is limited to parents or carers of school-aged or younger children, and other limited categories of people (Fair Work Ombudsman, 2015). Such policies support pronatalist-neoliberal-capitalist agendas of halting declining birth-rates, ensuring women reproduce future workers, and increasing mothers’ workforce participation (Bridgman & Davis, 2004; Eikhof et al., 2007). Accordingly, flexible work policies are targeted at mothers, not fathers or childless women and men (Chesterman & Ross-Smith, 2010; Miller, 2010; Stevenson, 2015), based on assumptions only mothers have responsibilities outside work, and fathers (who contribute solely as breadwinners) and childless people (who contribute solely as citizen-workers) have no external responsibilities that impinge upon their economic citizenship (Eikhof et al., 2007; Friedman, 2015; Wager, 2000).

Overall, Australian policies complement discursively configured hierarchies by institutionalising femininities configured around intensive mothering and part-time working, and masculinities configured around breadwinning and involved fathering (which does not impinge upon breadwinning); and penalising, excluding or ignoring femininities and masculinities configured around non-conformance to idealised parenting and working practices within patriarchal-capitalist power relations; implied and compulsory heteronormative coupled parenting within gender relations; or white, English-speaking, middle-classed, abled, working-aged parenting. These policy configurations reflect an intersectional patriarchal-neoliberal compromise maximising complementarily and hierarchically gendered reproduction and production by: encouraging, enabling and coercing women to mother (primarily) and work (secondarily); assuming men work (primarily) and father (secondarily);

imposing career-orientation on women and men with no children; and policing or preventing automatically “bad” (single, same-sex, non-white, non-English speaking, communal, working-classed, underclassed, disabled, too young or too old) parenting practices and characteristics, which place at risk the reproduction of adequately gendered, individualised, self-reliant, neoliberal future-workers.

4.3. Divisions of labour: Reflections of idealised femininities and masculinities

Although majorities of men and women, and what majorities of men and women do, do not constitute hegemonic masculinities or femininities, demographic data on childbearing and participation in paid and unpaid labour contribute to the multidimensional web of evidence by reflecting discursive and policy configurations. Most Australian women (85.1%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2017a) and men (87.2%) (Parr, 2010) have biological children by the end of their reproductive years. In contrast, minorities of Australian lesbian women (33%), gay men (11%) (Leonard et al., 2012), transgender men (17.4%) and transgender women (30.7%) (Riggs et al., 2016) have children, excluding them from conforming to the idealised practice of parenting.

Table 1 shows most Australian women and men also enact economic citizenship by engaging in paid work, including large majorities of Australian men with dependent children, and smaller majorities of women with dependent children. In contrast, minorities of people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander are in paid work, excluding the majority from idealised economic citizenship.

Table 1 Australian adults in paid work

	In paid work (%)	
	Males	Females
With dependent children aged 6–14 years	92.0	77.4
With dependent children aged 0–5 years	93.7	59.7
Aged 20–59 years regardless of parent-status	97.5	95.7
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 15 years and over	44.0	41.0

Sources: ABS (2016, 2017b, 2019).

Most Australian heterosexual couples with children conform to the “modified breadwinner” model in which fathers work full-time and mothers work part-time (Baxter, 2007, 2013; Charlesworth et al., 2011). Table 2 shows most employed Australian men with dependent children work full-time, while minorities of employed Australian women with dependent children work full-time (as opposed to part-time).

Table 2 Employed Australian parents in full-time work

	In full-time work (%)	
	Employed males	Employed females
With dependent children aged 6–14 years	91.6	46.4
With dependent children aged 0–5 years	92.3	37.8

Sources: ABS (2016, 2017b).

Femininities configured around intensive mothering and part-time working, and masculinities configured around breadwinning and involved fathering, are also reflected in statistics on unpaid labour participation. From 1992 to 2006, Australian mothers' time engaged in childcare remained stable, despite women's increased participation in paid employment; while Australian fathers' time engaged in childcare increased, simultaneously with increasing working hours (Craig & Mullan, 2012; Craig et al., 2014). However, Australian women spend substantially more time than men undertaking unpaid caring and domestic labour (Argyrous et al., 2017; Pocock et al., 2013). Likewise, higher percentages of women than men identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander undertake unpaid childcare and domestic work (ABS, 2019). In contrast, compared with heterosexual couples, same-sex parents divide household labour more equally, and lesbian parents share parenting tasks more equally (Perlesz et al., 2010).

Finally, the “nuclear” norm is also the dominant family model: 45.5 per cent of families are couples with children, 38.4 per cent are couples with no children (including future parents), and 16.1 per cent are single parent families (ABS, 2017a). While a similarly high 41 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander one-family households are constituted by couples with children, only 22 per cent are couple families with no children, and a substantially higher 34 per cent are single parent families (85 per cent of whom are female) (ABS, 2019). This excludes a large minority of single Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers from conforming to discursively idealised configurations of femininities around married mothering.

Overall, demographic data suggest most heterosexual Australian women and men attempt to enact economic citizenship and discursively idealised and legally institutionalised married mothering and fathering practices. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and lesbian, gay and transgender adults, are less likely to enact these idealised practices, exposing them to the stigmatisation of non-conformance, amplified by the automatic exclusion resulting from preclusion and marginalisation.

4.4. Human relations: Hierarchical femininities and masculinities as “truth” in Australian society

Existing research suggests regional-level policy and discursive configurations of femininities and masculinities constitute “truth” in Australian society.

Research on beliefs and aspirations regarding mothering and working reflect idealised and subordinated configurations of femininities. Johnstone and Lee (2009) found between 86.2 and 88.2 per cent of women aged 18 to 30 years aspire to having at least one child, being in a stable relationship and being in paid work at age 35 years. Interestingly, of women aged 25 to 30 years, similar percentages aspire to having children and working full-time (25.6%) and part-time (24.1%), while under three per cent aspire to full-time motherhood, by 35 years of age (possibly reflecting assumptions children will be in school at that age, making it possible to perform intensive mothering outside full-time working hours). Qualitative research with female Australian undergraduate students reveals the classed nature of such aspirations: most participants aspire to be part-time working mothers for whom work will be optional, due to middle-classed assumptions they will have breadwinning husbands (Arthur & Lee, 2008).

Idealised “intensive” mothering practices and qualities are also reflected in qualitative studies’ findings that many women wish or expect to combine children and careers (for financial reasons or personal fulfilment), but nonetheless perceive mothering as pivotal to women’s identities, and believe “good” mothers are selfless, giving, patient, and prioritise caregiving over paid work (Probert, 2002; Stevenson, 2015). However, the subordination of other mothering practices is reflected in mothers’ experiences of being judged against different aspects of idealised configurations depending on the nature of their non-conformance. Some working mothers, despite enacting economic citizenship, feel judged against the gendered ideal of intensive mothering, as selfish, materialistic, bad mothers; while some full-time caregivers, including “underclassed” single mothers and disabled, working-classed mothers receiving welfare payments, feel judged against the neoliberal ideal of economic citizenship, as idle, incompetent, inferior, untrustworthy, immoral, undeserving and financially irresponsible second-class citizens, despite enacting intensive mothering (Grahame & Marston, 2012; Holdsworth, 2017; Lupton, 2011; Pocock, 2003; Soldatic & Meekosha, 2012).

There is also evidence of aspirations and attitudes reflecting regional-level idealisation of masculinities configured around breadwinning and involved fathering, and subordination of other fathering practices. Ninety-five per cent of Australian men aged 18 to 51 years want to have at least one child (Holton et al., 2016), while 91 per cent of first-year male university students aged 18 to 25 years aspire to work full-time by the age of 40 years (Weier & Lee, 2016). Qualitative studies with male university students (Thompson & Lee, 2011; Thompson et al., 2013) found most participants felt having children would be fulfilling and essential to future happiness; and perceived good fathering as combining breadwinning with emotional support, nurturing, love, sacrifices, dedication and selflessness. Although recent

research is scarce, attitudes reflecting the subordination of other fathering practices are revealed in the pity expressed by some men practising involved fathering, for fathers whose work overshadows relationships with children (Grbich, 1997; Stevens, 2015); and primary caregiving fathers' experiences of being judged against breadwinning ideals, as deviant, freakish, suspicious, inferior, bludgers, and "not real men" (Grbich, 1997; Smith, 1998).

Australian research also reveals aspirations, attitudes and experiences reflecting automatic exclusion from achieving idealised femininities and masculinities by regional-level configurations implying and mandating married, heteronormative parenting practices within gender relations; and marginalising non-white, communal, working-classed, disabled, too old and too young parenting practices. Within gender relations, the automatic subordination of queer parenting is revealed in Australian research on heterosexual adults' attitudes towards same-sex parenting, finding there is less support for same-sex parenting than heterosexual parenting (Webb et al., 2019); there is more support for female than male same-sex parenting (Webb et al., 2017); and some believe same-sex parenting is abnormal, promiscuous and a bad example to children, deprives children of opposite-gendered role models, and makes children gay (Pennington & Knight, 2011). Similarly, research with queer women and men has revealed, while there are some supportive experiences, some lesbian non-birth mothers experience exclusion by others from being "real" mothers (Hayman & Wilkes, 2017); some lesbian mothers feel negatively judged by their parents; some gay fathers experience public abuse, or think others believe they are unfit parents, insufficiently nurturing or paedophiles (McNair & Dempsey, 2018; Tuazon-McCheyne, 2010); some transgender women who identify as mothers or grandmothers have not been acknowledged on mothers' day; and some transgender men's families have invalidated their gender identities by conflating their desire to have children with being women (von Doussa et al., 2015). Furthermore, in comparison to the majorities of cisgender women and men aspiring to have children, minorities of childless Australian transgender men (29.7%), transgender women (12.7%), and gender diverse adults (13.6%) want to have children in the future, while 32.4 per cent of transgender men, 25.5 per cent of transgender women, and 31.8 per cent of gender diverse adults, remain uncertain (Riggs et al., 2016). These findings may reflect the structural barriers to, and discursive silencing and invalidation of, queer parenting; illustrate some queer parents' automatic exclusion from achieving "good" parenting; and supports our argument transgender enactments of parenting are discursively configured, and perceived and judged by others, according to birth-assigned sex rather than individuals' gender identities.

Regional-level configurations also interact with intersectional local-level configurations to produce contradictory and inequitable conditions for per-

forming idealised configurations. For example, research with Zimbabwean-born Australian mothers (Liamputtong & Benza, 2019) has revealed community expectations that women have and care for children while husbands work, in order to achieve adulthood, emotional fulfilment, social status and economic security. However, conforming to locally hegemonic configurations of full-time mothering and traditional breadwinning fathering conflicts with regional-level hierarchies. In another example, along with regional-level stigmatisation of “too young” mothering, migrant teenaged mothers from sub-Saharan Africa experience disapproval of teenaged mothering from their African communities, and thus feel unsupported, excluded and rejected from traditionally interdependent communities (Watts et al., 2015).

Australian research also reveals attitudes devaluing and stigmatising childless women and men, who do not perform the idealised practices of mothering and fathering. Qualitative research has found some adults perceive childless people as “other”: abnormal, odd, selfish, not living life fully, and lacking purpose (Imeson & McMurray, 1996; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2018; Thompson et al., 2013). Furthermore, some childless and childfree women believe others perceive them as inadequate, deficient, defective, unfulfilled, incomplete and failed women; and feel pressured to have children (Doyle et al., 2013; Rich et al., 2011; Turnbull et al., 2016a). Heterogenous regional-level configurations are also reflected in nuanced attitudes towards childless women and men according to the nature of their “deviance” from idealised configurations. Some discursively “innocent” involuntarily childless women and men believe others perceive them as pitiable, unhappy, shameful and desperate, and their infertility as embarrassing (Imeson & McMurray, 1996; Turnbull et al., 2016; 2017). “Guilty” childfree women (Turnbull et al., 2016) have been rated as less loving, nurturing, fulfilled and feminine than women who want children (Rowlands & Lee, 2006), and childfree couples have been described as self-interested, individualistic, and choosing careers or lifestyles over having children (Carmichael & Whittaker, 2007). Reflecting arguments pronatalism configures parenting as more essential to femininities than masculinities, and that economic citizenship is the only available practice in the absence of mothering, Australian studies have found childfree women feel pathologised, invalidated and pressured to have children, and believe others perceive them as ignorant about and disliking children, immature, selfish, materialistic, career-driven, non-nurturing, unwomanly, abnormal, unnatural, emotionally lacking and blameworthy (Maher & Saugeres, 2007; Dever & Saugeres, 2004; Doyle et al., 2013; Turnbull et al., 2016; 2017). In contrast, while some Australian childfree men are aware of societal expectations and feel pressured to have children by partners, parents, friends or society; others experience little pressure or do not care about the pressure (Smith et al., 2020). Similarly, Australian parents have described

circumstantially childless women, but not men, as being too selective about partners or prioritising careers (Carmichael & Whittaker, 2007), and circumstantially childless women have experienced such judgements from others (Turnbull et al., 2016; 2017).

Existing studies also suggest judgements and experiences of childlessness vary according to conformance to implied and compulsory married and heteronormative characteristics within gender relations. Australian university students have rated lesbian women who do not want children as less mature and happy than lesbian women who want children (Rowlands & Lee, 2006), suggesting the stigmatisation of childfreeness applies even to lesbian women, despite other research revealing heterosexist and homophobic attitudes towards same-sex parenting (Pennington & Knight, 2011). In that vein, gendered, heteronormative, classed, raced, aged and abled manifestations of pronatalism at the regional level are reflected in qualitative research findings that single, disabled, younger and older women, and single gay men and transgender women, who have been automatically excluded from “ideal” parenting, feel pressured by society, parents and services not to have children (Charter et al., 2018; McNair & Dempsey, 2018; Rich et al., 2011; Turnbull et al., 2017), subjecting them to different standards which nevertheless render them “incomplete” women and men.

Furthermore, research suggests local-level intersections between, for example, gender, race and culture, can exacerbate ostracism and exclusion for childless women in particular. Studies with Zimbabwean-born women (Liamputtong & Benza, 2019) and migrant women from Middle-Eastern, African and Asian backgrounds (Hawkey et al., 2018) have found that, in the context of local-level socio-cultural motherhood compulsions, childless women (rather than men) are blamed for infertility, seen as broken and pitiable, judged as failing their husbands, parents and communities, often divorced, publicly discriminated against, stigmatised and outcast from society, and have no other identities made available to them as women.

Despite the research gaps, particularly in relation to men with and without children, the evidence suggests Australian adults’ attitudes, aspirations and experiences tend to reflect regional configurations, including idealising femininities configured around intensive mothering and part-time working, and masculinities configured around breadwinning and involved fathering; devaluing femininities configured around full-time working and mothering, full-time mothering, childlessness or childfreeness, and masculinities configured around non-involved fathering, non-breadwinning, childlessness or childfreeness; and automatically excluding from “good” parenting performances of, for example, queer, too-young and non-white parenting practices, which are in turn complicated by conflicting local-level configurations.

4.5. Individual performances within the constraints of hierarchical configurations of femininities and masculinities

This section outlines Australian qualitative research on how individuals enact and resist regionally idealised and stigmatised qualities, characteristics and practices. Some individual mothers' performances reflect pronatalist discourses by enacting mothering as central to being a woman, and align with idealised, natural, self-sacrificing and fulfilled "intensive" mothering discourses (Lupton, 2011; Maher & Saugeres, 2007; Pocock, 2003; Raith, 2008). Some women, who feel unable to perform intensive mothering or experience mothering as challenging, nevertheless internalise intensive mothering discourses by apologising and identifying as bad mothers (Lupton, 2011; Pocock, 2003; Raith, 2008). Other mothers perform neoliberal independent mothering, seeking to regain agentic pre-motherhood identities through paid work, personal fulfilment and equal parenting (Maher, 2005; Maher & Dever, 2004; Pocock, 2003; Raith, 2008). Moreover, some women feel, although mothering is personally fulfilling, it is not respected or valued in society, where respect, self-worth and identity are acquired through paid work (Holdsworth, 2017; Maher & Dever, 2004; Maher & Saugeres, 2007; Pocock, 2003; Raith, 2008). This reflects the increasing influence of citizen-worker discourses and the material and social value applied to paid employment, as opposed to the rhetorical value applied to mothering. It also supports our suggestion that, while femininities and masculinities configured around certain qualities, characteristics and practices may be symbolically idealised, individuals who perform them may neither identify with, nor possess the social ascendancy allocated to, those configurations.

Research with Australian fathers similarly reveals diverse performances. Some strive to perform breadwinning involved fathering, by attempting to combine long working hours and quality time with children in evenings and on weekends (Hamilton & De Jonge, 2010). Akin to some mothers, some men experience fathering as difficult and frustrating (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). However, unlike mothers, such performances were unaccompanied by guilt or apologies. Few Australian men perform primary caregiving fathering (Stevens, 2015). Some who do, internalise discourses idealising and naturalising gendered parenting practices by feeling that abandoning breadwinning challenges their masculine identities, judging themselves as failed and inadequate men, and believing their performances of "mothering" are illegitimate and unnatural; while others reject breadwinning, and perform nurturing fathering by identifying with "feminine" traits or rejecting sex differences (Grbich, 1997; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Smith, 1998; Stevens, 2015). Regardless of how men perform fathering, some feel fathering is natural, normal, inevitable and essential to masculine identities, and endows them with status,

acceptance and recognition in broader society (Lupton & Barclay, 1997; White, 1994).

Nuanced identities and performances of mothering and fathering are also evident in research with, for example, lesbian and gay parents, young Aboriginal mothers, migrant and refugee women and men from Middle-Eastern, African, and Asian countries, and working-classed fathers with disabilities (Benza & Liamputtong, 2017; Hamano, 2014; Hawkey et al., 2018; Hayman & Wilkes, 2017; McNair & Dempsey, 2018; Tuazon-McCheyne, 2010; Ussher et al., 2016; Watts et al., 2015). Such individuals perform contextually nuanced mothering and fathering practices complicated by conflicting local and regional-level configurations, which reveal the challenges, exclusion and policing experienced by such individuals; but also, that individuals can identify as contextually “good” mothers and fathers, despite being excluded from conforming to regionally idealised configurations. For example, intersections between age, race, colonisation and dispossession are evident in the experiences of some young Aboriginal mothers, who perform traumatised yet resilient mothering by making necessary changes and overcoming difficulties, despite the trauma that influenced their lives; and thus identified as “good” mothers, despite being policed and stigmatised as “bad” mothers for being young and Aboriginal (Ussher et al., 2016). However, some single mothers receiving welfare payments internalise citizen-worker and neoliberal mothering discourses by feeling guilty for full-time mothering, and recognising they are unable to constitute full citizens while receiving welfare (Grahame & Marston, 2012). Some middle-classed Chinese-Australian migrant men perform a culturally nuanced practice of traditional breadwinning fathering, which prioritises sole financial provision for and protection of families, and renders unemployment (and by implication primary caregiving) disastrous to masculine identities (Hibbins, 2005). Similarly, Pini and Conway’s (2017) research with working-classed, rural, white fathers with acquired disabilities reveals challenges to performing breadwinning and involved fathering: some such fathers internalise breadwinning discourses, and consequently continue working in unfulfilling roles, emphasise pre-disability performances of breadwinning, or feel disappointed they are no longer breadwinners; while others can no longer perform masculinised involved fathering practices through physical, sporting and outdoor activities, and as a result perform reformulated involved fathering practices, by providing affective rather than physical support for such activities, or engaging in “feminine” activities such as school and community events and caregiving. Regardless of these reformulations, they are conscious of the visibility of their “different” performances of fathering.

Gay and lesbian parents’ performances reveal some similarities and some gendered nuances. In the context of heteronormative and homophobic chal-

allenges to their families' legitimacy and exclusion from being "good" parents, some lesbian mothers and gay fathers perform resilient parenting, while some perform vigilant parenting, a nuanced aspect of ensuring their children's wellbeing in the context of protecting them from, and building their resilience to, homophobic attitudes towards their parents (Hayman & Wilkes, 2017; McNair & Dempsey, 2018). Some gay fathers perform exemplary fathering in an attempt to place themselves beyond reproach (Tuazon-McCheyne, 2010), but others internalise essentialist natural, instinctive mothering discourses, by perceiving themselves as inadequate carers (McNair & Dempsey, 2018). Some gay and lesbian parents' performances of breadwinning and caring are flexible, intentional and based on preference and circumstance rather than gender expectations, with some gay men performing primary caregiving fathering, and some lesbian women describing equitable arrangements that cater to both women's aspirations (Hayman & Wilkes, 2017; McNair & Dempsey, 2018; Tuazon-McCheyne, 2010).

The experiences of transgender parents are also complex and nuanced, and exemplify embodied performances of femininities and masculinities. For example, some transgender men find the embodied experiences of inhabiting pregnant female bodies and chestfeeding to be highly challenging to their masculine identities (Charter et al., 2018). Furthermore, some transgender women do not want to use their own semen to have children due to the incongruence of being a mother and a biological father; while other transgender women do not feel able to claim to be "mother" or "grandmother" (von Doussa et al., 2015), revealing the detrimental implications for individuals, of hegemonic projects' symbolic tethering of performances by birth-assigned male and female bodies to masculinities and femininities respectively.

Finally, Australian research also reveals childless women and men's nuanced performances. Some involuntarily and circumstantially childless women and men are deeply cognisant of and internalise pronatalist discourses of mothering and fathering as the meaning of life and crucial to women's and men's identities, and experience themselves as failures, inadequate, incomplete, defective and abnormal; experience life as meaningless; and avoid stigmatising experiences by concealing their infertility, or avoiding people, activities, groups, events and spaces dominated by people with children (Imeson & McMurray, 1996; Turnbull et al., 2016; 2017). Involuntary childlessness also exemplifies intersectional and embodied performances of femininities and masculinities. For example, some women from non-Western migrant backgrounds, for whom mothering is culturally compelled and whose bodies are blamed for infertility, experience their bodies as "faulty" (Hawkey et al., 2018). However, some involuntarily and circumstantially childless women perform qualities, characteristics and practices distinct from

their inability to procreate, by foregrounding other aspects of their lives (Turnbull et al., 2016; 2017).

Research with childfree women and men has found childfree similarities and gendered nuances. Many childfree women and men are aware of pronatalist discourses, with some men internalising pronatalism by identifying themselves as selfish, lifestyle-oriented, or unconventional; some women and men proactively performing qualities, characteristics and practices aligned with neoliberal discourses, which foster freedom, choices, opportunities, independence and the capacity for self-actualisation; and other women and men performing socially and environmentally responsible qualities and characteristics, by contributing to society in other meaningful and fulfilling ways (Carmichael & Whittaker, 2007; Doyle et al., 2013; Maher & Saugeres, 2007; Smith et al., 2020; Turnbull et al., 2016; 2017). In contrast, some childfree men reinforce regionally idealised masculinities by emphasising their ability, if they wished, to have biological children and perform “good” breadwinning involved fathering (Smith et al., 2020). However, regardless of their positive childfree performances, some men feel guilty for not producing grandchildren, and some women feel stigmatised, resulting in avoidance of interactions with people with children, identity substitution as involuntarily childless in order to elicit pity rather than judgement, or passing as future mothers in order to avoid judgement (Turnbull et al., 2016; 2017). Furthermore, positive childfree performances and identities are not available to some women from migrant backgrounds, for whom mothering is a socio-cultural compulsion (Hawkey et al., 2018; Liamputtong & Benza, 2019).

Overall, the existing evidence of nuanced embodied performances suggests that, while individual enactments can be constrained and complicated by interactions between regional and local configurations of femininities and masculinities, some individuals may neither identify with, nor experience themselves as enacting, idealised or stigmatised configurations, while others may internalise such configurations and judge themselves accordingly. Furthermore, others may reward or penalise them against the standards of symbolically idealised or stigmatised configurations attached to their birth-assigned sex.

5. Integrating the Theory and Evidence

The multidimensional evidence presented in section four reveals multiple, dynamic, conflicting, hierarchical configurations of femininities and masculinities at the regional level in Australia. In this section we integrate the theory and evidence to describe configurations of femininities and masculinities in Australia, and how these configurations relate to each other in internal and external hierarchies.

5.1. Regional-level configurations of femininities and masculinities

The extant multidimensional and intersectional evidence we have reviewed (including discursive and policy configurations; their reflections in demographic research on divisions of labour and attitudes and aspirations towards working and parenting; and implications for individual experiences and performances) suggests that, at Australia's regional level, interacting intersectional neoliberal, pronatalist and maternalist discourses and policies, idealise, institutionalise and symbolically configure externally emphasised and internally hegemonic femininities around the qualities, characteristics and practices of (married, heteronormative, middle-classed, white, English-speaking, working-aged, abled) intensive mothering and part-time working; and internally and externally hegemonic masculinities around (married, heteronormative, middle-classed, white, English-speaking, working-aged, abled) breadwinning and involved fathering. That is, they constitute those idealised configurations of femininities and masculinities that maintain, justify and naturalise hierarchical and complementary gender relations in the prevailing intersectional capitalist-patriarchal structure. Indeed, femininities configured around intensive mothering and part-time working and masculinities configured around full-time breadwinning and involved fathering seem ideally complementarily and hierarchically matched to maximise the productive and reproductive output of women and men in Australia's capitalist-patriarchal society (Bown et al., 2011; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2018). Indeed, idealising femininities configured around intensive mothering and part-time working renders such configurations, and individual women who attempt to perform them, incomplete citizens in a society requiring full-time paid work to achieve economic citizenship, and ensures their subordination to hegemonic masculinities.

Corresponding to the need for complex internal and external relations within and between multiple femininities and masculinities in order to maintain hegemonic configurations and patriarchal-capitalist gender relations, non-hegemonic femininities and masculinities are subordinated in nuanced ways according to nature of their non-conformance to hegemonic configurations and challenge to the capitalist-patriarchal order, and precluded or marginalised if they fall afoul of heteronormative gender relations and intersecting power relations. Given the gendered significance of parenting and working for women and men, the extent and standard to which their associated qualities, characteristics and practices are achieved unsurprisingly produce disparate configurations of femininities and masculinities.

There is little evidence of regional-level configurations of complicit femininities and masculinities. Extrapolating from Connell's (1987) definition, they are constituted by femininities configured around practices that fall slightly short of intensive mothering and part-time working, and masculinities

configured around practices that fall slightly short of breadwinning and involved fathering; but consent to hegemonic configurations internally, and the patriarchal gender order externally, in order to indirectly or directly benefit from the patriarchal dividend. The absence of explicit regional-level configurations of complicit femininities and masculinities is explicable in the context of their emulation of and consent to hegemonic configurations, and the consequential lack of any need to symbolically subjugate them in order to maintain the gender order. However, in light of our argument that hierarchical configurations of femininities and masculinities serve a symbolic purpose, the existence of *symbolic* configurations of complicit femininities and masculinities may require rethinking if they remain invisible across different levels. If such is the case, complicity may exist purely in individuals' performances consenting to, internalising, emulating and benefiting from, but not quite achieving, the qualities, characteristics and practices of hegemonic configurations. Here is the means by which hegemonic configurations serve their symbolic purpose of maintaining power relations (and perhaps render symbolically complicit configurations unnecessary): influencing individuals' thoughts, values, beliefs and enactments towards conformance to or complicity with hegemonic configurations, even if most individuals cannot strictly perform them. However, we do not yet strike complicit femininities and masculinities from the symbolic realm, which would require more evidence, on a wider range of characteristics than parenting and employment, at local, regional and global levels.

In an example of complicit configurations' invisibility, masculinities configured around traditional breadwinning fathering, while once hegemonic, are decreasingly visible in discourses and policies. Despite its relegation, there is little evidence traditional breadwinning is yet subordinated as "bad" fathering. By their very invisibility, masculinities configured around traditional breadwinning fathering are arguably implicitly configured as complicit: their breadwinning conforms to an entrenched practice of hegemonic masculinities; their non-involved fathering constitutes a minor shortcoming from an emerging practice of hegemonic masculinities; they consent to hegemony in order to benefit from the patriarchal dividend; but their non-conformance is of such a minor nature that it does not warrant explicit subordination to maintain capitalist-patriarchal gender relations (being ignored is enough). However, if involved fathering's idealisation intensifies, masculinities configured around traditional breadwinning fathering may re-emerge from discursive and policy obscurity to be subordinated as compliant masculinities configured around "bad" fathering practices, which fail to adequately uphold, but pose no threat to, hegemonic masculinities or complementary and hierarchical capitalist-patriarchal gender relations.

While evidence of discursive and policy configurations of masculinities around childlessness is also limited, we argue they are subordinated as non-compliant masculinities. In the absence of children, masculinities are configured as incomplete and immature (Blatterer, 2007). However, as one of many available qualities or practices of hegemonic masculinities, the absence of fathering does not warrant pariah status. Furthermore, masculinities configured around childlessness tend to be conflated with full-time working and career-orientation (Friedman, 2015; Wager, 2000), core elements of hegemonic masculinities. However, we argue childlessness in masculinities is configured as “non-compliant” rather than “compliant,” because it poses an indirect threat to complementary and hierarchical capitalist-patriarchal gender relations: it implies and enables (but does not necessitate) the existence of its symbolic “complement,” childlessness in femininities and its threat to unequal gender relations (by reducing women’s financial dependence upon men) and neoliberal capitalism (threatening the reproduction of future workers and consumers).

We pause to exemplify our caveat that heterogeneity exists within sub-categories of femininities and masculinities, such as non-compliant masculinities. For example, the limited evidence indicates that, within “non-compliant” masculinities configured around childlessness, the subordination of involuntary childlessness is different in nature and degree to that of circumstantial childlessness and childfreeness. While masculinities configured around circumstantial childlessness and childfreeness “deviate” by circumstance or choice from fathering, an emerging practice of hegemonic masculinity, the “deviance” constituted by involuntarily childlessness is compounded: it relates to not only fathering, but also fertility and virility, which are arguably core to hegemonic masculinities (Hird & Abshoff, 2000; Peterson, 2014). Accordingly, masculinities configured around involuntary childlessness are derided as impotent, emasculated and failed masculinities (Gannon et al., 2004).

Although research about masculinities configured around primary caregiving fathering is also lacking, we contend they are configured as pariah masculinities. While primary caregiving fathering achieves “involved fathering,” an emerging practice within hegemonic masculinities, it deviates from breadwinning, a core and entrenched practice. Fathers who practise primary caregiving have consequently felt stigmatised, and judged themselves, as emasculated, failures, freakish, bludging and inferior (Grbich, 1997; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Smith, 1998). We argue the discursive and policy invisibility of primary caregiving fathering amounts to not ignoring them as non-threatening complicit masculinities, but suppressing and silencing them as pariah masculinities. The flagrant non-conformance of primary caregiving fathering warrants particular suppression because it constitutes failures on

two fronts: to contribute as citizen-workers, and to practice breadwinning fathering. Moreover, primary caregiving fathering represents a direct threat to hegemonic masculinities internally and complementary and hierarchical capitalist-patriarchal gender relations externally, because, in the absence of stigmatisation, it could present to individual men an appealing and fulfilling alternative to breadwinning that actively and directly subverts complementary and hierarchical gender relations. Furthermore, pariah masculinities configured around primary caregiving fathering are the symbolic “complements” to (we will argue) pariah femininities configured around full-time working mothering: they enable each other and the threats they pose to hierarchical gender relations.

Turning to subordinated femininities, femininities configured around full-time (married, heteronormative, middle-classed, white, working-aged, abled) mothering were (like their symbolic “complement,” masculinities configured around traditional breadwinning fathering) once hegemonic. However, unlike traditional breadwinning fathering, full-time mothering is not now configured within femininities as complicit, but explicitly subordinated as compliant. While femininities configured around full-time mothering are configured as acquiescing to traditional complementary and hierarchical gender relations, neoliberal reconfigurations take them beyond the minor shortcomings of complicit femininities, such that they are subordinated as “just” mothers who are idle, not contributing economically to society, and poor neoliberal role models for children (Pocock, 2003). Nevertheless, non-conformance to part-time working, an emerging and contested practice of hegemonic femininities resulting from intersections with capitalist power relations, does not render full-time mothering practices “non-compliant” or “pariah” femininities, as they do not represent a challenge to hegemonic femininities internally or capitalist-patriarchal gender relations externally. Indeed, femininities configured around full-time mothering, and their “complements,” masculinities configured around traditional breadwinning fathering, take up each other’s working and caregiving slack, and maintain traditional gender relations, despite not strictly upholding the neoliberal-patriarchal compromise.

Femininities configured around involuntary and circumstantial childlessness appear to be further subordinated as non-compliant: desperate, pitiable, incomplete and unintentionally failing to conform to mothering, the core feature of hegemonic femininities; and thus, failing to achieve the pronatalist purpose of complementary, hierarchical, heterosexual relationships. However, they also passively challenge complementary and hierarchical gender relations through their default configuration, in the absence of children, around career-orientation and full-time working (Graham & Rich, 2012a; Wager, 2000). Like masculinities, nuances exist within femininities configured around childlessness. While femininities configured around involuntary and circumstantial

childlessness may, due to their unintentional non-conformance to mothering, be less subordinated than (we will argue) pariah femininities configured around childfreeness, circumstantial childlessness may be more stigmatised in femininities than involuntarily childlessness and verge on pariah status, as a consequence of being configured as contributing to and thus culpable for the circumstances in which they have no children, such as being “too choosy” about partners or “prioritising careers” (Cannold, 2005; Turnbull et al., 2016; 2017).

The evidence suggests femininities configured around the practices of breadwinning (full-time working) mothering and childfreeness are stigmatised as pariah femininities, whose brazen and culpable internal deviation from the qualities and practices of hegemonic femininities, is of a nature that represents an active, direct and substantial threat to the capitalist-patriarchal gender order externally. Despite conforming to mothering, femininities configured around breadwinning are stigmatised as selfish “bad mothers” who prioritise careers, independence, personal fulfilment and financial rewards (in short, themselves) over intensively nurturing children (Raith, 2008). Due to their refusal to have children, the core element of hegemonic femininities, femininities configured around childfreeness are stigmatised as unnatural, selfish, greedy and career-oriented (Gillespie, 2000; Graham & Rich, 2012a). The similarities are obvious: femininities configured around breadwinning mothering and childfreeness are stigmatised as selfish career-women. The differences are nuanced: breadwinning mothering deviates from maternalist ideologies mandating intensive mothering (Goodwin & Huppatz, 2010), while childfreeness deviates from pronatalist ideologies positioning women as mothers and childfree women as not women at all (Gillespie, 2000). In these ways, femininities configured around breadwinning mothering and childfreeness reject hegemonic femininities and actively threaten hierarchical capitalist-patriarchal gender relations by refusing to appropriately nurture or reproduce future workers or remain subordinated to and financially dependent upon men.

Furthermore, the extant evidence reflects our argument that, because they “deviate” from implied and compulsorily married and heteronormative characteristics of hegemonic femininities and masculinities, and threaten complementary and hierarchical gender relations (both in their own right, and also by threatening the reproduction of children who perform adequately heteronormative, complementary and hierarchical femininities and masculinities), femininities and masculinities configured around being unmarried, single or queer, are automatically “precluded” from achieving hegemonic configurations, regardless of their conformance or otherwise to the current qualities, characteristics and practices of hegemonic femininities and masculinities, and are judged against a conflicting set of standards. For example,

rather than being expected to conform to the procreation imperative and in turn judged against femininities configured around intensive mothering and part-time working and masculinities configured around breadwinning and involved fathering, femininities and masculinities configured around single, lesbian, gay and transgender mothering and fathering (the last of which are symbolically attached to birth-assigned female and male bodies respectively in order silence and to suppress the validity of transgender performances and identities) are judged against a different set of standards, including the interdiction on having children, and being stigmatised as harmful to children's wellbeing and depriving them of "natural" heteronormative parents and role models for future sexual and gender identities and relationships (Charter et al., 2018; de Souza, 2013; Poulos, 2020; Rich et al., 2011; von Doussa et al., 2015; Wolfinger, 2014). Again, there is heterogeneity among precluded configurations. For example, femininities and masculinities configured around lesbian and gay parenting, tend to be more stigmatised than those configured around unmarried or single parenting, while femininities and masculinities configured around transgender parenting are silenced and suppressed.

Finally, the extant evidence confirms gender, class, race, ability and age intersect with each other at Australia's regional-level (hegemonically middle-classed, individualised, white, English-speaking, abled and working-aged), to configure marginalised femininities and masculinities around being working-classed, communal, non-white, non-English speaking, disabled, "too young" or "too old", which are automatically excluded from hegemonic configurations regardless of their conformance or otherwise to the currently idealised practices of part-time working and intensive mothering, and breadwinning involved fathering. Interestingly, while arising from different power relations that produce symbolic hierarchies of socially constructed qualities, characteristics and practices within themselves, these marginalised characteristics share similar subordination as failing to conform to neoliberal configurations of self-reliant, independent, individualised citizen-workers; and threatening the reproduction of individualised, self-reliant, future workers. Moreover, subordination, preclusion and marginalisation interact in complex and nuanced ways, augmenting stigmatisation. For example, femininities configured around working-classed and single mothering are automatically excluded from hegemony due to marginalisation by intersecting class relations as working-classed, and preclusion within gender relations as single. At the regional level, such femininities are configured against different and more stringent expectations compared to married and middle-classed mothering femininities, regardless of their conformance or otherwise to intensive mothering and part-time working. Because single mothering removes them from complementary and hierarchal gender relations in the domestic sphere, and working-classed mothering removes the working and mothering "choices" available to middle-

classed mothers (Cannold, 2005), femininities configured around working-classed and single mothering are judged and configured against neoliberal-capitalist rather than patriarchal standards: all value is stripped from their “mothering” practices, and they are coerced into economically supporting themselves and their children in order to avoid being penalised as under-serving, lazy, morally corrupt welfare cheats (Blaxland, 2010; Graham, McKenzie, & Lamaro, 2018; Holdsworth, 2017; Van Acker, 2005). Finally, sometimes conflicting and sometimes complementary regional and local-level configurations (for example, regionally hegemonic femininities configured around part-time working mothering conflicting with locally hegemonic femininities in some communities configured around full-time mothering; regionally subordinated or pariah femininities configured around childlessness or childfreeness exacerbated by more extreme stigmatisation of femininities configured around childlessness in some communities (Hawkey et al., 2018; Liamputtong & Benza, 2019); or locally hegemonic configurations of full-time, dedicated, unencumbered workers in some organisations complementing regionally hegemonic breadwinning in masculinities, but conflicting with part-time working and intensive mothering in femininities (Turnbull et al., 2018) complicate individual performances of femininities and masculinities, producing complex, challenging and inequitable conditions for individuals’ performances of incompatible or complementary locally and regionally idealised practices, and placing them at risk of stigmatisation within communities or broader societies.

5.2. Internal and External Hierarchies

In the foregoing discussion, we explored relations between femininities and masculinities by discussing “complementary” configurations. These provide some idea of internally and externally hierarchical relations within and between femininities and masculinities. Within masculinities we suggest a tentative hierarchy, in roughly descending order, of hegemonic masculinities configured around breadwinning and involved fathering, complicit masculinities configured around traditional breadwinning fathering, non-compliant masculinities configured around childlessness (where involuntarily childlessness is more subordinated than childfreeness and circumstantial childlessness), pariah masculinities configured around primary caregiving fathering, and precluded and marginalised masculinities, whose stigmatisation may be exacerbated by intersections between precluded, marginalised and subordinated qualities, characteristics and practices. Within femininities are, in descending order, hegemonic femininities configured around intensive mothering and part-time working, compliant femininities configured around full-time mothering, non-compliant femininities configured around involuntary and circumstantial childlessness (the latter verging on pariah status due to “cul-

pability”), pariah femininities configured around breadwinning mothering and childfreeness, and precluded and marginalised femininities, whose stigmatisation may be amplified or complicated by intersections between precluded, marginalised and subordinated qualities, characteristics and practices.

By taking the body of evidence as a whole, we also tentatively suggest an external symbolic hierarchy across the gender order of (married, heteronormative, middle-classed, white, abled, working-aged) femininities and masculinities. In descending order, this loosely consists of masculinities configured around hegemonic breadwinning and involved fathering; then complicit traditional breadwinning. At this point, masculinities configured around “non-compliant” childlessness deviate from an emerging feature of hegemonic masculinity, and passively threaten the gender order by enabling childlessness within femininities. However, with the exception of perhaps “emasculated” masculinities configured around involuntarily childlessness, the evidence does not suggest they are relegated below externally emphasised femininities configured around intensive mothering and part-time working, which, simply by *being* femininities, as well as inadequate economic citizens, are subordinated to all but the most stigmatised masculinities. Below emphasised femininities in the external hierarchy are compliant femininities configured around full-time mothering and non-compliant femininities configured around involuntary then circumstantial childlessness. Next, we suggest pariah masculinities configured around full-time caregiving fathering, despite *being* masculinities, are relegated to the depths of the external gender hierarchy, because their deviation from hegemonic masculinities directly threatens and subverts the capitalist-patriarchal gender order. However, in light of their invisibility and suppression rather than overt stigmatisation, they appear to be less stigmatised than “pariah” femininities configured around full-time working mothering and childfreeness, which represent direct and brazen threats to Australia’s capitalist-patriarchal gender order.

While precluded and marginalised configurations are too complex and heterogenous to position within this tentative external regional-level hierarchy, femininities and masculinities configured around precluded (including queer, single and unmarried) and marginalised (including working classed, non-white, non-English speaking, disabled, too young and too old) qualities, characteristics and practices, are judged against conflicting standards that result in: stigmatisation that would not exist for non-precluded and non-marginalised femininities and masculinities with otherwise similar characteristics; deeper stigmatisation when subordinated, precluded and marginalised qualities and practices intersect; and potential subordination of some configurations of precluded or marginalised masculinities, such as gay fathering masculinities, to some configurations of non-precluded, non-marginalised femininities.

6. Conclusions, Limitations and Implications

In order to demonstrate our integrated theory, we have presented existing multidimensional, regional-level evidence on employment and parenting, to explore regional-level hierarchies of and relations between femininities and masculinities in Australia. Discursive and policy configurations do not exist in a vacuum: evidence of gendered divisions of labour and attitudes and aspirations regarding paid work and parenting reveal the majority of heterosexual, cisgender, white, abled, middle-classed, working-aged Australian adults aspire to, or attempt to enact, the characteristics, qualities and practices of hegemonic femininities and masculinities, and perceive and judge themselves and others against symbolically hierarchical configurations of hegemonic, compliant, non-compliant, pariah, precluded and marginalised femininities and masculinities.

While this paper focuses on regional-level hierarchies, it also confirms regional-level configurations influence, but are not necessarily replicated by, local-level configurations, which are influenced by nuanced, intersectional local contexts (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Thus, despite regionally hierarchical femininities and masculinities configured around diverse parenting and employment practices, the evidence of sometimes conflicting and sometimes complementary regional and local hierarchies suggests unique and intersectional local-level hierarchies can be influenced by the contextual salience of pronatalist, maternalist, citizen-worker and other intersectional discourses.

Furthermore, although individual enactments are influenced, constrained and complicated by sometimes conflicting and sometimes complementary interactions between regional and local hierarchies of femininities and masculinities, individuals who perform qualities, characteristics and practices of hegemonic or non-hegemonic configurations do not themselves constitute hegemonic or non-hegemonic femininities or masculinities, and may not necessarily identify with, or experience themselves as enacting, idealised or stigmatised configurations. Conversely, individuals can internalise such configurations and judge themselves accordingly. They may also be rewarded or penalised by others against the standards of hierarchical configurations, with ineluctably embodied performances by transgender, intersex and non-binary individuals in particular being judged against the idealised qualities, characteristics and attributes attached to their birth-assigned sex, rather than individuals' gender identities.

We must also point out some limitations. The hierarchies we have discussed are based on an incomplete body of evidence which includes older and grey literature where more recent peer reviewed literature is limited. Additional research is required on interactions between: regional-level con-

figurations, particularly those currently “invisible” configurations, whether through lack of research, lack of discursive or policy representation, or both; intersectional local-level configurations; and individual performances and experiences in the context of regionally and locally hierarchical configurations. Furthermore, a fully intersectional perspective might require doing away with hierarchies of femininities and masculinities, in favour of hierarchical configurations of intersectional qualities, characteristics and practices.

Given the constraints imposed by symbolic hierarchies of femininities and masculinities on individual experiences and performances, and the stigmatisation of performances of subordinated, precluded and marginalised qualities, characteristics and practices, it is essential to promote non-hierarchical reconfigurations: by which none of the many combinations of parenting or non-parenting and working or non-working, is configured as more or less valuable than another; and which empower individuals to live and contribute to society according to their diverse preferences and strengths rather than imposed ideals.

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