

Men at Work: Poverty, Families, and the Assault on Masculinity

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The purpose of this paper is two-fold: first, to establish the contours and significance of the contemporary “war” on men; and second, to illuminate the link between it and the hopes we all share for the well-being of women and families in the 21st century. I argue that there is no way to achieve the latter without adequately addressing the former and, further, that an understanding of both the meaning of work and the importance it has in the lives of men is essential if we are to grasp the causes of poverty and create the social conditions that lead to authentic human flourishing. Our hope to lay the foundations of a culture that supports women in their quest to become most fully themselves itself depends in large measure in doing the same for men. An authentic “feminism” accepts the call to care for all of humankind. And since humanity consists only of men and women, our destiny is irrevocably linked to that of men – without whom our own lives are impoverished and, indeed, barren.