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## No Need for a Father?

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Britain's government is set to revise the nation's Fertilisation and Embryology Act next year and the new law will represent a cultural shift that reaches far beyond the issue of reproductive technologies.

The new law will replace the words "need for a father" with the words "need for a family" when determining the welfare of a child to be conceived through IVF or sperm donation.

Consider how *The Times* [London] reports the development:

*Gay and feminist pressure groups have applauded the crucial word change as an overdue modernisation of an "anachronism" that was "judgmental and insulting". No surprise there. But how judgmental and insulting to men trying to be good dads is the implication that a family doesn't need a father anyway? How much damage does this "easy come easy go" attitude to fatherhood inflict on the work and morale of community leaders trying to make feckless young males acknowledge responsibility for the children they carelessly spawn? And what general message does this send out to men? We may have had 40 centuries of domination. But if we are surplus to requirements in the parenting field, and losing our grip at work too, what are we good for?*

More good material here from Richard Morrison, the article's author:

*People said of 20th-century Britain that it had lost an Empire but not yet found a role. The 21st-century male is in much the same rudderless boat. We are physically stronger than women, but manual force isn't much needed in our post-industrial age. We are better equipped, emotionally and physically, to fight old-fashioned wars, kill by brute force, charge unquestioningly over trenches. But wars are now fought by technology or terrorism — and neither of these are necessarily areas of male domination.*

*We can father children, but we live in a society that holds mothers in much greater esteem. And we have lost the intellectual edge. It's extraordinary to recall that, within living memory, genius in the arts or sciences was widely regarded as overwhelmingly a male preserve. Today you would be locked up if you suggested any such thing. The ratio of females to males in British universities is now 3:2, and widening. In state schools girls are generally expected to flourish in their studies, while boys are expected to struggle.*

*All of which has contributed to a serious loss of self-esteem in young males particularly. They feel like society's spare parts: out of the loop, out of favour. Young men are five times more likely to commit suicide than young women, four times more likely to be addicted to drugs or alcohol, nine times more likely to be sleeping rough.*

*Yet the archetypal male desire to dominate, to flaunt physical strength, hasn't gone away. It simply has too few legitimate outlets. So it transmutes into surly displays of negative energy, such as gang violence.*

This development says a great deal about how contemporary trends fly in the face of both human experience and revealed wisdom. A society that would define fathers as unnecessary will reap what it has sown — an unfathered generation.

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