

## Michael Kimmel “Masculinity as Homophobia”

- **Thesis:** Fear of being ridiculed as too feminine perpetuates exclusionary masculinity
  - **Solution:** Inclusionary/broadened definition of ‘manhood’
- **Claim: Manhood is socially constructed**
  - Constantly being played out, acted upon, reasserted and over time, redefined
  - Ability to be shifted and changed – encompass much larger definition
    - Does NOT have to be rooted in:
      - Insecurity
      - Opposition to anything NOT seen as pinnacle of macho manliness
      - Competition
- **Claim:** Masculinity = **homosocial enactment** = competition/show
  - Built up in G-action & G-language
  - Exaggerated to hide signs of so called weakness
    - Defines feminine = opposition
  - Everything NOT viewed as pure masculinity = lower on the hierarchical scale
    - Scale = put in place as measurement of [HEGEMONIC] masculinity
    - Includes everything that is NOT male, white, heterosexual, middle/upper-class, physically & mentally abled
- **Claim:** Homophobia = root of masculinity = **fear of being emasculated**
  - Informs racism/sexism
  - Causes silence, insecurity, fear, shame, & isolation within/amongst men
- **Claim: Violence** = used as clear & very visible sign of masculinity
  - “Othered” groups = always in contention with the definition of pure masculinity [over history this has shifted]
  - **Faulty Assumption:** because men as a group hold power, individual men must feel powerful
    - **Contradiction** – symmetry between public/ private or social/psychological reality RARELY exists
    - **Paradox** – many men live with – men benefit greatly from institutional power but do not necessarily feel individually empowered
- **Claim:** Desire/insurmountable need to be viewed masculine affect all areas of society
  - Escape/exclusion = often used by men to keep/regain power
  - Create change = the **silence MUST be broken** → form allies w/ people regardless of gender, sexuality, race, class, ability, etc