

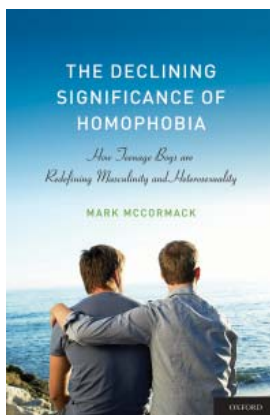
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The Declining Significance of Homophobia

How teenage boys are redefining masculinity and heterosexuality

MARK MCCORMACK, Lecturer, Brunel University



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- The first book to document the presence of high schools that are receptive of homosexual youth
- Presents original and innovative theories to examine the changing nature of masculinities in high school settings
- Provides a new model for understanding homosexually themed language and demonstrates how it can be used for educators and sociologists

Research has traditionally shown high schools to be hostile environments for LGBT youth. Boys have used homophobia to prove their masculinity and distance themselves from homosexuality. Despite these findings over the last three decades, *The Declining Significance of Homophobia* tells a different story. Drawing on fieldwork and interviews of young men in three British high schools, the author shows how heterosexual male students are inclusive of their gay peers and proud of their pro-gay attitudes. He finds that being gay does not negatively affect a boy's popularity, but being homophobic does.

This accessible book goes beyond documenting this important shift in attitudes towards homosexuality as it examines how decreased homophobia results in the expansion of gendered behaviors available to young men. In the schools he examines, boys are able to develop meaningful and loving friendships across many social groups. They replace toughness and aggression with emotional intimacy and displays of affection for their male friends. Free from the constant threat of social marginalization, boys are able to speak about once feminized activities without censure. *The Declining Significance of Homophobia* is essential reading for all those interested in masculinities, education, and the decline of homophobia.

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