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Homonationalism and the Comparative Politics of LGBTQ Rights

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In recent years, there has been a growth of scholarship in political science that seeks to explain the evolution of public policy and law on LGBTQ rights, including same-sex marriage, relationship recognition, sodomy law reform, and protection against discrimination. Scholars in this area have developed a number of theoretical perspectives to explain why some countries and jurisdictions have shifted public policies while others have not (Sommer et al. 2013), why policy change has occurred in some areas of LGBTQ rights and not in others within the same country or jurisdiction (Mucciaroni 2008), and how supranational and international forces have enacted LGBTQ-rights recognition and/or influenced domestic policy changes (Kollman 2009). At the same time, in LGBTQ studies, there has been a substantial debate over homonationalism and pinkwashing, sparked in part by the publication of Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages* in 2007. Puar and other scholars have argued that the incorporation of LGBTQ rights into normative citizenship has marginalized others, especially racialized others. Homonationalism, it is argued, is a form of nationalism in which the recognition of LGBTQ rights is used to promote a particular version of the nation at the expense of others, sometimes entailing outright racism toward others, especially Muslim others, while pinkwashing is a deliberate technique to vaunt such rights recognition to defuse criticism of the state's actions in oppressing others. "Homonormativity," a term developed by Lisa Duggan (2002), among other scholars, refers to the normalization of a racialized and classed vision of LGBTQ individuals and couples as assimilated into the mainstream of society.

In this chapter, I bring together these two perspectives on LGBTQ politics, the literature on homonationalism, pinkwashing, and homonormativity, and the literature on the comparative politics of LGBTQ rights. I ask what these literatures, which rarely speak directly, can learn from each other. In conducting this analysis, I first describe how scholars of homonationalism and scholars of the comparative politics of LGBTQ rights ask different questions about contemporary LGBTQ politics and use different research methodologies, based on specific assumptions about the relationship between facts and values. Second, I argue that scholars of the comparative politics of the Global North can and should learn from the homonationalist emphasis on racialization and postcolonialism, and I explore some of the ways in which these perspectives can be

incorporated into comparative analysis. Scholars of comparative LGBTQ politics should consider how LGBTQ-rights campaigns may exclude racialized people, may reproduce neocolonial assumptions about “other” cultures, or may be used deliberately as fodder in pinkwashing campaigns. In the concluding section of the chapter, I suggest that analyses of these intersections would offer a more complex and nuanced view of state politics on LGBTQ rights and the campaigns for and against them, and their effects on domestic and global politics.

Part I: Homonationalism and Comparative Politics

Discussions of homonationalism, homonormativity, and pinkwashing and literatures on comparative policy development have different assumptions and goals, stemming in part from their different origins. The comparative political development in the LGBTQ area has its origins in the social sciences, especially in comparative politics and international relations, subfields of political science, as well as in political sociology, especially the study of social movements and legal mobilization. In contrast, Puar’s concept of homonationalism and much of the associated discussion of pinkwashing and homonormativity stems from the humanities, specifically from cultural studies. In the following section, I present a brief outline of each approach, focusing on the types of research questions posed by each, the types of research methodology that are employed, and the relationship between normative and empirical claims.

Comparative Politics

The comparative politics of sexuality is an emerging field in political science that has been taken up by scholars of American politics, comparative politics, and international relations, as well as by scholars focusing on other areas, including Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Latin America, Africa, and Asia (e.g., Tremblay et al. 2011; Diez 2015; Haider-Markel 2010; Mucciaroni 2008; Kollman 2009). Much of this scholarship is based on describing the evolution of LGBTQ organizing and social movements, the evolution of public policy on LGBTQ issues, and legal developments at both the national and supranational levels. While this literature includes a broad range of issues and approaches, it tends to focus on a central concern of comparative politics: how we can explain policy outcomes, including policy outcomes over time in a single country or jurisdiction, cross-national similarities and differences in policy outcomes, and similarities and differences across jurisdictions within a country or supranational organization (e.g., differences across states in the United States or differences across countries of the European Union). Given the intensification of globalization in recent decades, coinciding with the rise of LGBTQ movements, scholars from international relations have also focused on describing the growth

of LGBTQ organizations at the international and supranational level as well as on explaining policy outcomes at this level, i.e., the adoption (or not) of LGBTQ rights by international and supranational organizations (e.g., the United Nations, the European Union, the International Labour Organization), or describing and evaluating the impact of international or supranational rights recognition on states (Kollman 2009; Kollman and Waites 2009).

This research focuses on a number of different policy areas, including decriminalization of homosexuality, legal protection from discrimination in areas such as employment and housing, parenting and adoption rights, protection from homophobia and bullying in education, protection against hate crime, same-sex relationship recognition, and same-sex marriage. A number of factors have been found to shape policy outcomes, including political culture, public opinion, the role of religion, the impact of political institutions, the impact of partisanship, and the role of courts, among others. In an early study, Frank and McEneaney (1999, 914) identified key social trends that facilitated state recognition of LGBTQ rights and developed the concept of the cultural opportunity structure as a complement to and addition to the political opportunity structure used in political process theory (on political process theory, see Tarrow 2011). By “cultural opportunity,” they referred to the emergence of new actors and new frames for action, including individualization, equality for women, and “dense linkages to world society” (i.e., globalization) that create cultural opportunity for LGBTQ-friendly state policies (Frank and McEneaney 1999, 920). Badgett’s important 2004 study of cross-national adoption of same-sex-relationship-recognition laws (including civil union, common law recognition, and marriage) explored a range of variables, some of which had been identified in previous studies of variations in LGBTQ legal recognition across the U.S. states as well as comparative studies of the adoption of LGBTQ-positive laws across Europe. These included the strength of LGBTQ social movements or interest groups, political attitudes, religiosity (often measured by church attendance), a culture of tolerance for minorities, and the extent of direct democracy measures in which opponents could stall LGBTQ recognition at the ballot box, among other variables (Badgett 2004, 96–98; see also Barclay and Fisher 2003; Stone 2012).

Unsurprisingly, political scientists have often focused on political and legal institutions, arguing that particular legal and political institutional structures facilitate legal reform and policy change for LGBTQ rights proponents (for example, Smith 2008). Beyond the impact of formal institutions themselves, others have argued for the impact of activist networks in shaping the diffusion of norms in interaction with domestic factors. For example, in comparing LGBTQ rights across European Union (EU) states, Kelly Kollman (2009) argues for the role of social movement networks in shaping policies, focusing on the emergence of LGBTQ transnational activist networks that pressure national and European elites. However, she also considers domestic factors within states that mediate the

impact of these activist networks, especially the role of religion and the extent to which international norms are viewed as legitimate by elites and the public. She also finds that pro-LGBTQ norm diffusion through activism is more effective than court decisions per se in influencing national-level policy (Kollman 2009). Sommer et al. (2013) draw on a much larger sample of countries to bring together institutional factors with a consideration of both the impact of dominant religious groups that may oppose LGBTQ rights (e.g., Catholics) and the impact of globalization, which is generally seen to have spread rights consciousness transnationally. They argue that, with respect to the repeal of sodomy laws, these factors have a greater effect on the political branches that are vulnerable to electoral and public pressure, while courts themselves, especially those operating in common law jurisdictions, have a greater chance of reversing previous precedents and repealing sodomy laws, as occurred in the United States in the *Lawrence v. Texas* case. Therefore, their research demonstrates the integration of factors such as religiosity and globalization with institutional and legal factors.

The impact of public opinion on the evolution of LGBTQ rights has also been an important area of research. In a U.S. cross-state study of public opinion and “gay rights,” Lax and Phillips (2009) find that public opinion plays a key role in the responsiveness of states to gay rights issues, although policies still lag behind public opinion in some areas. Haider-Markel and Joslyn (2013) have explored a number of dynamics of opposition to LGBTQ rights, especially the extent to which, unlike other civil rights or public policy issues, LGBTQ supporters and opponents hold different views on the causes of homosexuality (Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2013, 607–8). They point out that partisan elites, social movement organizations, and media organize information about the political world, including the causality of homosexuality. Other scholars have explored the dynamics of political advocacy and opposition over time, focusing on the backlash against the recognition of LGBTQ rights. For example, Fetner (2008) argues that the strength of Christian Right organizations in the United States has paradoxically strengthened LGBTQ NGOs in the United States. Keck’s important 2009 study of the backlash to same-sex-marriage decisions evaluates the extent of anti-LGBTQ mobilization in response to the recognition of the right to (same-sex) marriage by courts, considering whether the passage of constitutional bans on same-sex marriage resulted in setbacks for LGBTQ rights. All of these works emphasize the extent of political opposition to the recognition of LGBTQ rights in the United States and form key contributions to understanding the evolution of public policy and legal recognition from the perspective of (non-LGBTQ) opponents of LGBTQ rights.

A few pioneering studies have assessed change across policy areas, most notably across the U.S. states (Mucciaroni 2008; see also Lax and Phillips 2009). These studies aim to explain why legal and political change has come more quickly in some areas than in others. For example, Gary Mucciaroni (2008) aims

to explain differences across the U.S. states in six issue areas, including sodomy laws, marriage rights, parenting rights, civil rights (including, for example, employment discrimination), hate crimes, and military service. His explanation for these cross-state differences centers on public opinion and the role of political institutions (Mucciaroni 2008, 8–46). David Rayside (2008) points out that efforts to counter homophobia in schooling have made far greater strides in the United States in comparison to the pace of relationship recognition and parenting rights for same-sex couples. Similarly, in the Canadian case, he points out that the opposite holds true as schooling lags far behind legal recognition of same-sex relationships.

This literature makes particular assumptions about facts and values. Very largely, it is based on positivist assumptions and seeks to explain policy development, not evaluate it. Whether same-sex marriage or LGBTQ-rights recognition is good or bad according to some abstract standard is not the concern of this literature, although much of it is clearly sympathetic to and favorable to the recognition of LGBTQ rights in a context in which opponents are viewed as outsiders who are hostile to the LGBTQ communities. This literature does not consider critiques from the LGBTQ communities; it mainly conceives of opponents as those outside the LGBTQ community, typically the Christian Right or other defenders of traditional family who view LGBTQ rights as a violation of religious values or traditional family mores, rather than as internal critics from within LGBTQ communities. For example, Thomas Keck's analysis of the backlash against same-sex marriage litigation in the United States emphasizes the use of defense-of-marriage statutes or state constitutional amendments in rolling back or forestalling recognition of gay marriage. Such measures were mainly backed by right-wing Republicans, sometimes with moderate Democratic support (Keck 2009).

When normative factors do enter into this literature, they often tend not to be about LGBTQ rights themselves but rather about broader questions of democratic politics. For example, the Sommer et al. (2013, 429) comparative study highlights the normative implications of the study in the conclusion. For these authors, the normative implications concern the appropriate role of courts in democratic political systems or, to put it another way, the evaluation of the legitimacy and efficacy of judicial activism, not the question of whether or not repealing sodomy laws is a good idea. Kollman's work explores how norms of LGBTQ recognition circulate and spread across and among the member states of the EU in transnational and supranational circuits of ideas and norms. In this case, Kollman treats norms as the subject of the research. She wants to know how and why norms spread cross-nationally. She is not herself arguing for or against the norms in question in any explicit way, although, again, we can infer from the tone of the article that Kollman is favorable to LGBTQ-rights inclusion.

Nonetheless, with most of these scholars, there is an underlying assumption that they favor the LGBTQ-rights recognition they are exploring and, specifically,

that they favor it against the LGBTQ-rights opponents from outside the community, especially the traditional conservatives and the Christian Right. However, this is usually not explicitly mentioned, and it is not the point of their articles. From their methodological perspective, a scholar who is pro-LGBTQ rights (whether LGBTQ person or ally) would reach the same conclusions about the analysis of norm translation and circulation or the role of religiosity in driving opponents of LGBTQ law reform as would a scholar who is opposed to LGBTQ-rights recognition from the political Right or from a traditional conservative perspective. Causal relationships are tested against empirical evidence, and this knowledge is open to anyone, regardless of his or her stance or positionality.

Puar, Homonationalism, and Pinkwashing

In contrast, Jasbir Puar's work on homonationalism, which has been widely cited and discussed in relation to contemporary LGBTQ-rights movements, argues that liberal inclusion of LGBTQ citizens reinforces heteronormativity, as LGBTQ people and same-sex couples are described in normalized terms as similar to straight people and straight couples and, therefore, deserving of rights. While previous work on nationalism and sexuality had described the ways in which LGBTQ rights fit in with nationalist projects (e.g., Stychin 1998), Puar's concept of homonationalism took this a step further by emphasizing how the national and nationalist inclusion of LGBTQ people and same-sex couples marginalized and demonized others, such as those who did not belong to the nation or those who are "other" to the projects of normative sexuality and liberal inclusion (Puar 2007, 50–51).

Puar is centrally concerned with racialization and Islamophobia. The concept of homonationalism is inspired by theorists such as Foucault and, therefore, it has radically different philosophical and theoretical origins than the comparative politics approach. Homonationalism focuses on the valorization of LGBTQ rights at the expense of racialized others, especially Muslims in the wake of the war on terror. Western nations and especially the United States, which is the main focus of Puar's work, are seen as incorporating LGBTQ or queer subjects into a regime of legal and political recognition while, at the same time, drawing a stark contrast with other nations of the world, especially Muslim nations, in which rights for LGBTQ citizens are not recognized. Therefore, the queer subject is normalized as part of the "tolerant" West that forms part of the narrative justifying the war unleashed in Afghanistan and Iraq following 9/11. As Puar argues, homonationalism is more than just state practices but also encompasses the actions of civil society actors such as LGBTQ NGOs that may participate in the construction of a homonationalist narrative, such as equating support for same-sex marriage or the abolition of "don't ask, don't tell" with American military objectives or positing a normalized gay citizen or same-sex couple in

contrast to the lack of rights for queers in Muslim countries, including those with which the United States is at war. In other words, homonationalism is not just an affair of states, according to Puar; it is a set of practices that facilitates the Islamophobia that is characteristic of the post–Cold War and post-9/11 period.

However, homonationalism is more than the cynical embrace of gay rights. Puar's analysis also makes clear that the celebration of gay rights involves the sacrifice of the human rights of others. To cite one of Puar's main examples, the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court struck down state sodomy laws in the 2003 *Lawrence* decision is seen as a celebration of liberal individualism, which contrasts sharply with the surveillance and security state of the post-9/11 period. Indeed, there is a contrast between the actions of the U.S. state in engaging in surveillance, drone attacks, and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, on the one hand, and the celebration of private sexual behavior in *Lawrence*, on the other. These are linked through the U.S. state's deliberate valorization of the tolerance of Western nations in recognizing women's rights and LGBTQ rights in comparison to Muslim societies (Puar 2007, 114–55).

The term “homonationalism” can also be contrasted with pinkwashing, which Puar sees as deliberate actions by states to deploy “gay rights” to depict themselves as virtuous in contrast to their enemies (Puar 2013). The main contrast between homonationalism and pinkwashing is that pinkwashing is a deliberate action of states, while homonationalism is based on a wider range of actions, including the actions and discourse of nonstate actors. In Puar's view, homonationalism is an analytic category “deployed to understand and historicize how and why a nation's status as ‘gay-friendly’ has become desirable in the first place. Like modernity, homonationalism can be resisted and re-signified, but not opted out of: we are all conditioned by it and through it” (Puar 2013, 336).

Drawing on Foucault, Puar's analysis of homonationalism might best be thought of as a genealogy of the concept, guiding us to consider such questions as, How did the concept arise? How is it used and for what purposes? How does it become part of the truth regime in a given historical context? These questions underscore the specification of the conditions for truth claims, rather than the pursuit of truth per se, i.e., the genealogical project is interested in the meta or epistemological rules that govern the making of truth claims in a particular context. In contrast, the mainstream comparative politics approach takes a traditional social science approach in which claims are tested against empirical developments using specific indicators. In other words, comparative research takes place within what Foucauldians would see as a particular truth regime, which is not itself identified or problematized. From this perspective, it might appear that Puar's analysis and the comparative politics analysis are incommensurable.

While it is true that a genealogical approach differs markedly from a traditional social science approach, social scientists use concepts such as norms, values, discourse, and ideas to describe and explain the ways in which certain

norms and discourse become dominant. Analyses of public policy drawing on a range of approaches, including agenda setting (Kingdon 2010), frame analysis (Hulst and Yanow 2016), interpretivism (Fischer 2003), and historical institutionalism (Béland 2009) broadly defined, have all sought to explain why a particular discourse arose at a certain time and how and why it acquired the influence it did. There are some poststructuralists in policy studies—such as Gottweis (1998) and, to a lesser extent, Vivien Schmidt (2008), an advocate of “discursive institutionalism”—who emphasize that concepts cannot be understood as existing outside of the world of ideas and that, in this sense, ideas and interests cannot be separated (see also Fischer 2003). This would be closer to Puar’s analysis. However, tellingly, few poststructuralist or interpretivist scholars in comparative politics or comparative public policy have studied LGBTQ topics. There is a striking lack of interest in sexuality as a topic among scholars in this area, thus heightening the gap between Puar’s concept of homonationalism and her approach to studying it, on the one hand, and the comparative literature on LGBTQ movements and shifts in LGBTQ public policy, on the other. Nonetheless, there are potential areas for conversation between proponents of the concept of homonationalism and the mainstream approach, in their attention both to discourse and to the role of normative ideas. In the next sections, I will critically assess each approach from the stance of the other and suggest some specific ways in which each could benefit from considering the perspective of the other.

Part II: Critiques

Critique of Puar

Turning to Puar first, from the perspective of comparative politics, Puar’s work does not make reference to one of the major political actors that animates the comparative analysis of LGBTQ-rights policies, namely, the political and Christian Right opponents of such recognition. While Puar draws on critiques and debates from queer theory and from within queer communities, her discussion of what she sees as links between homonormativity and racism fails to consider the domestic, transnational, and global mobilization of heterosexual activism against LGBTQ-rights recognition. It is not clear where or how this opposition might fit into Puar’s argument. While there are some Arab states that are linked to this agenda and that have occasionally allied with the Roman Catholic Church and with evangelical Protestant organizations in opposition to the international recognition of LGBTQ rights in instruments such as the UN-organized Yogyakarta Principles, systematic explorations of the sources and spread of anti-LGBTQ political mobilization often emphasize the role of American evangelical Protestants, not the Muslim “other” (Buss and Herman 2003).

Because Puar does not explore the role of these active political opponents from outside the LGBTQ community, she does not racialize them. That is, she does not examine the role of race in anti-LGBTQ-rights movements. On the flip side, as I will discuss further below, because the comparative literature does not directly consider the racialization of LGBTQ rights, it does not explore or describe racialization among non-LGBTQ critics and opponents of LGBTQ rights either. The result is that there have been few discussions of the racialization of non-LGBTQ opponents of LGBTQ-rights inclusion. Yet, we see important forms of racialization among such movements. For example, secular conservatives in North America are articulating claims around defending families and protecting women and children's health, all the while aiming to dismantle women's rights as well as LGBTQ rights. These new forms of contention and opposition to LGBTQ rights are themselves highly racialized, i.e., white dominated, although white leaders in these opposition movements also advance narratives that claim to mobilize traditional religious leaders and "ethnic groups" in support of attacks on women's and LGBTQ rights (Saurette and Gordon 2013). For example, in the United States, Republicans have claimed that Hispanics will support their socially conservative agenda, as some Hispanic immigrants to the United States share socially conservative values, including opposition to LGBTQ rights (Valenzuela 2014). Relationships between and among gender, sexuality, race, religion, and "ethnicity" are complex and highly charged. Puar's idea that LGBTQ rights are used by states and other civil society actors such as NGOs or other social institutions to legitimate themselves or to justify their own actions is certainly one important dynamic, but it is not the only one. LGBTQ-rights *opponents* also deploy race, ethnicity, and religion to further their political ends and, in so doing, present a homogenized view of racial, ethnic, and religious groups, analogous to homonationalism itself.

Moreover, the domestic emphasis of much American scholarship on LGBTQ rights is ironically shared by Puar's own work. Scholars outside the United States have adopted the American concept of homonationalism and then applied it to their own contexts, which are often very different, especially with regard to foreign policy. American global hegemony renders American nationalism quite different from Canadian or Dutch nationalism. While these countries certainly encapsulate forms of homonormativity and homonationalism, the concepts need to be adapted for countries that are differently situated in the global power structure, and scholars seeking to use these concepts elsewhere should adapt them to local circumstances in countries that are not hegemonic global superpowers (e.g., Murray 2014). Homonationalism is a concept that can be used comparatively, but it needs to be deployed in relation to specific empirical studies rather than solely as a blunt device of condemnation.

While Puar emphasizes that she conducted interviews and observed LGBTQ activism and discourse, it is not clear that she followed a specific methodology

in doing so, and she does not explore or cite the relevant sociological or political science literature on LGBTQ social movements in the United States. Grassroots activism has played an important role in pushing forward litigation and rights-based political campaigns in the United States on LGBTQ rights. An excellent example of this is provided by the case of same-sex marriage. In the early 1990s, lawyers in the United States gathered to consider a legal strategy for the recognition of same-sex couples and, potentially, same-sex marriage. They decided against the pursuit of such a strategy, given that they thought it likely that any cases brought forward would lose. Despite this “decision,” made at the top of the LGBTQ movement, plaintiffs came forward to lodge cases claiming that the recognition of same-sex relationships was constitutionally mandated. The concepts of homonormativity and homonationalism risk ignoring the views and agency of ordinary LGBTQ people who are actually responsible for putting these demands into action “from below.” LGBTQ NGOs, lawyers, and other elites may not always be able to control and direct the agenda of the movement in a preferred political direction (Wolfson 2007; Becker 2014). The concepts of homonormativity and homonationalism are surprisingly flat and “top down” and fail to capture the contested and complex processes of LGBTQ rights-claiming, either globally or within specific countries. This can be seen in the end point of the homonationalist and homonormative process in which we are forced to distinguish opponents of LGBTQ rights who are non-LGBTQ (e.g., the Christian Right) from those who are LGBTQ (e.g., critics of the rights agenda from within the LGBTQ communities). Yet surely LGBTQ people, even radical critics of same-sex marriage, would be interested in opposing the homophobia of the Christian Right. This is the question posed in a recent article on pinkwashing in the United Kingdom in which critics of homonormativity in the LGBTQ community in London questioned an antihomophobia campaign that targeted racialized people in the community. Others in the LGBTQ community then critiqued this campaign for failing to emphasize the safety of LGBTQ people in the community during a spate of gay bashings (Zanghellini 2012; for another view, see Douglas et al. 2011). This study empirically examines the different points of view at work and highlights the complexities of internal community debates, rather than creating a homogeneous and unitary concept of homonationalism that is disconnected from specific sites.

Another way to understand the concept of homonationalism is to reinterpret its central question. Instead of viewing homonationalism as a concept that is designed to help us understand LGBTQ politics, we can see it as a concept that is designed to help us understand racism, neocolonialism, and Islamophobia. Puar is interested in how the recognition and valorization of LGBTQ rights (and the human rights template in general) has reinforced or sparked Islamophobia and racism. In other words, she is exploring the effects of LGBTQ rights recognition, rather than its causes. The idea of exploring effects, and in particular

the effects of recognition for intersectional or other groups and their impact on racialization, is important. In doing so, however, Puar draws on a selective number of examples of discourse around queer rights, without providing any methodological justification for the choice of sites or cases (Puar 2007, xiv–vi).

In her book and in other subsequent work, Puar juxtaposes the recognition of LGBTQ rights in the United States against other actions of the U.S. state, as if to suggest that they are connected to each other because they happened at the same time. In doing so, Puar suggests that one is the condition of the other, i.e., that the racist actions of the U.S. government, for example, are conditions for the recognition of gay rights. While it is evident that, in some times and places, states such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and other EU countries have deliberately used gay rights and women's rights to depict Muslims as the enemy, these governments have used a range of justifications for the war on terror, gay rights among them. Most observers of U.S. foreign policy would be surprised to hear that LGBTQ rights played any role in the U.S. war in Afghanistan, let alone that it was a necessary condition for the war. A proper analysis of the relationship between LGBTQ rights and Islamophobia or U.S. foreign policy should examine the entire discourse of Islamophobia and/or foreign policy and then situate that discussion of gay rights/women's rights within the universe of Islamophobia or foreign policy, rather than citing selected incidents or elements of discourse to illustrate the proposed association. Despite some of these criticisms, Puar's questions are of central importance and need to be taken up with urgency in the mainstream literature, as I will argue below.

Critiques of Mainstream Literature

In contrast to Puar's work and to the concept of homonationalism, the literature on the comparative politics of LGBTQ rights is not explicitly interested in racism or Islamophobia and largely fails to undertake intersectional analysis of the evolution of LGBTQ rights. Certainly, the comparative politics literature rarely considers or links domestic political developments, especially within the United States, to global and transnational politics or transnational policy mobility or norm circulation. In contrast, Puar is correct to ask us to think through the relationship between domestic legal developments in the United States (e.g., *Lawrence*) and narratives of U.S. foreign policy. The concept of pinkwashing calls attention to the idea that LGBTQ rights can be used as a political cover for other unpalatable policies, a point that is not considered in comparative LGBTQ analyses, which largely neglect the links among policy areas, especially in foreign policy. In addition to this failure to link domestic and international developments, some of the U.S. literature that has made major contributions to understanding the causality of LGBTQ-rights developments are studies of the United States as a single case or comparisons across the U.S. states that do not

consider developments in relation to U.S. foreign policy or in relation to the development of LGBTQ politics beyond borders. The exception here is the literature on the recognition of LGBTQ rights in the EU, which, for understandable reasons, has linked domestic developments to those at the supranational level.

Puar's work draws attention to the effects and impact of LGBTQ rights in contributing to the racialization of the other. While she asserts that such rights are recognized at the expense of the other, she implies that there are causal relationships between the recognition of rights and the other dynamics in which she is interested, such as racism, Islamophobia, and neocolonialism. This is an area to which the comparative LGBTQ research could contribute much more systematically than it has to date. Much of the literature focuses solely on the "why" of LGBTQ policy and not on the impact of LGBTQ policy outcomes on social life, whether that is socioeconomic inequality or racism or colonialism. Yet, there are examples of other scholarship that has empirically studied the effects of rights recognition. Among many examples, Rosenberg's *Hollow Hope* (2008) asked if court decisions such as *Brown v. Board* actually resulted in desegregation. The scholarship on the impact of court decisions is an example of the type of research that would take on Puar's intervention on racism and colonialism and potentially integrate it into comparative scholarship. Moreover, the study of comparative LGBTQ rights could take a much broader look at the impact of rights recognition from an intersectional perspective, including the ways in which LGBTQ recognition by the state shapes the politics of race, nation, and class. In addition, studies of racism, racialization, and intersectionality could integrate LGBTQ perspectives into the study of racism, considering and evaluating Puar's claims about the impact of LGBTQ-rights recognition on racism. This type of empirical exploration would permit a more careful evaluation of Puar's claim that LGBTQ-rights recognition contributes to racialization in the United States and, by extension, elsewhere. The political science approach tends to emphasize recognition by states or in formal law as the end point of the LGBTQ-rights struggle, while Puar is considering a much broader set of relationships that extend globally and that place LGBTQ-rights struggles in relation to other actions of states such as state surveillance and war, which would not normally be framed in terms of LGBTQ rights (with the possible exception of the U.S. military policy of "don't ask, don't tell").

In summary, while the work of homonationalism focuses on values and the normative stances that we should take in relation to various claims about race and nationalism that are made in the name of LGBTQ people, comparative politics scholars do not directly discuss values in most cases. Yet, both types of work actually deal with both facts and values but without making this clear. Homonationalism deals with facts and causality and, in fact, is inundated with causal and descriptive assumptions and assertions, despite Puar's roots in cultural studies and interest in the Foucauldian approach. On the other hand, mainstream social

science work largely assumes that the recognition of LGBTQ rights is good, but without saying so. Further, mainstream social science does not ask who benefits from the recognition of LGBTQ rights, while Puar asks this question rather pointedly.

Part III: Directions for Future Research

Despite the differences in normative stance highlighted in the last section, there are ways in which the two literatures can learn from each other and in which we can draw on both literatures to highlight the complexities of contemporary LGBTQ politics. We can recognize that, in some places, LGBTQ movements are still beleaguered by right-wing opponents while at the same time recognizing that normative LGBTQ citizenship may have some or all of the deleterious effects cited by scholars of homonationalism and homonormativity. We can recognize that, in terms of normative debate, LGBTQ-rights recognition can be both good and bad for the same groups of people or that it can be good for some and not so good for others. In relation to political science as a discipline, debates on homonationalism and pinkwashing need to be tempered with consideration of the strength of anti-LGBTQ movements and of the ongoing problems with the acceptance of sexuality studies in mainstream social science, especially in political science (Novkov and Barclay 2010). The question of who benefits and who does not from LGBTQ-rights recognition is complicated, and its complexity is not captured by some of the claims of scholars of homonationalism, who present these claims in relatively stark terms. However, this complexity is also not captured by mainstream analyses that fail to take account of race and colonialism. Margaret Denike's analysis of Puar highlights the complexities of the situation:

[I]n defence of the discourses of rights that Puar's project puts on the line, one of the few tools that has worked to chip away at the hold of homophobia in the public domain, and to grant access for queers to one normative domestic institution at a time, has been local, national and international human rights claims—the form and logic of which are fundamentally dependent on the very identity categories and grounds that Puar's critique of queer theories of subjectivity aims to trouble. While Puar clearly demonstrates the urgency of critically reflecting on the clearly troubled bio-necro context of our discourses and strategies, and on the human cost of rendering others expendable savages and victims, they remain indispensable in temporal and spatial domains where homonationalism is indeed an illusion. (Denike 2010, 98)

In other words, heterosexism and homophobia are still virulent and, therefore, the project of queer human rights is still needed to challenge anti-LGBTQ discourse and mobilization. However, on the other hand, Puar's analysis calls

attention to the extent to which LGBTQ rights claims may come at the cost of others by “rendering others expendable savages and victims” (Denike 2010, 98). At the same time, it is important to make a distinction between the extent to which LGBTQ activists deploy the language of turning others into “savages and victims” and the extent to which others deploy this for their own political ends. We see both in operation; we need to distinguish these dynamics empirically and explore the relationship between them. When political and state elites deploy pinkwashing, how does this influence LGBTQ movements and communities? What is the relationship between top-down, state-driven narratives of homonationalism, on the one hand, and the adoption of homonationalist discourse and action by LGBTQ civil society groups or communities, on the other?

Another important question for future research is the relationship between and among different sectors of the LGBTQ communities where pinkwashing campaigns take place or where pinkwashing or homonationalist discourse and actions are questioned, whether within or without the community. In the example of the British pinkwashing campaign (Zanghellini 2012), the LGBTQ community resisted the critique of pinkwashing and homonationalism in the name of asserting concerns about violence against LGBTQ people in the neighborhood. This is one of the few pieces of research that attempts to document the claims and counterclaims among LGBTQ communities and their neighbors in a specific place over pinkwashing and homonationalist claims and counterclaims. These examples highlight a fact overlooked in some of the mainstream LGBTQ political science literature, namely, that the binary focus on advocates and opponents of LGBTQ rights eclipses discussion of the complexities of LGBTQ communities and, in particular, their relationship to particular places and their situatedness in local urban spaces. Traditionally, this would have been told as the story of LGBTQ rights seeking to secure police protection against gay bashing and perhaps to secure a rainbow community policing presence. However, in this case, this traditional narrative is complicated by debates over the nature of policing gay bashing in a multiracial context in which the struggle against gay bashing and homophobic violence may be tied to racist political agendas at the local level. Puar’s work highlights these complexities and calls attention to them; however, the mainstream approach, with its fine-grained empirical methods, can provide useful methodological tools to explore empirically the dynamics of these campaigns. The problem is that the comparative politics literature has not examined these internal debates, especially around race. However, it would be worthwhile to bring the two approaches together in order to produce such an exploration.

Further, it is still centrally important to ensure that a focus on homonationalism does not obscure the continued political role of homophobia. The recent collection *Global Homophobias* (Weiss and Bosia 2013) takes up this type of work. While recognizing homonormativity and homonationalism, the contributors

explicitly consider the phenomenon of political homophobia as a deliberate strategy taken up by states in discourse and policy, one that transcends borders in a “modular” way (Bosia and Weiss 2013). The collection explores this phenomenon, considering the interrelation between movement and countermovement and considering cases in which state homophobia precedes LGBTQ organizing (Weiss 2013). These approaches highlight the idea that LGBTQ-rights developments are not linear, that the state can recognize LGBTQ rights in one area while not recognizing rights in other areas, and that some states, like the United States, have a history of deliberately deploying homophobia as well as deliberately deploying homoprotectionism, i.e., the idea of a national government (e.g., the United States) as a protector of LGBTQ rights (Weiss and Bosia 2013; Keating 2013). The contributions in the *Global Homophobias* volume are sensitive to the complex dynamics surrounding the relationship between LGBTQ rights and the state across space and time.

In sum, there is a disciplinary, theoretical, and empirical gap in LGBTQ studies. On the one hand, we have new concepts that have emerged—pinkwashing and homonationalism—that generate new research questions about LGBTQ politics and, especially, about the links between what used to be called domestic and foreign policy and the role of racial, national, and religious diversities within LGBTQ communities and moments. Yet, by and large, empirical scholars in political science have not taken up these questions. At the same time, we have a growth of LGBTQ empirical scholarship that seeks to establish causal relationships among the forces that have facilitated LGBTQ-rights recognition. However, this literature has more or less treated the LGBTQ communities as homogeneous and has not considered the role of rights recognition within particular states (especially the United States) in relation to global politics or transnational and national dynamics of racialization. As a result, even its most important insights about the dynamics of rights recognition have been largely ignored in the literature on homonationalism.

Another area in which these two literatures might speak to each other is with respect to the way in which they pose normative questions. On the one hand, homonationalism critically evaluates the project of LGBTQ rights and asks who is marginalized by such rights recognition while, on the other hand, the empirical literature is interested in why such recognition occurs. The homonationalism literature suggests that the mainstream literature should move beyond the “why” of rights recognition to the impact of rights recognition, including the impact of rights recognition in global politics and in relation to racialization and neocolonialism. This would also deal with some of the weaknesses of Puar’s perspective, the way in which it makes causal assumptions while rejecting the methodological and epistemological approaches that would permit a more robust analysis of the dynamics of these causal relations, an empirical project that might actually strengthen its claims and widen its gaze.

The concepts of homonationalism and pinkwashing can be useful to scholars of LGBTQ rights who are interested in the transnational and global circulation of LGBTQ norms. They draw attention to the idea that states are deploying queer rights for the purpose of distracting from other issues or for the purpose of asserting their moral authority in the international community. The process by which states and other international and transnational actors, including international organizations and NGOs, may draw on LGBTQ rights for the purpose of pinkwashing or in the course of advocacy for rights recognition is an area of empirical study that can be taken on by social scientists. In particular, it would be possible to build more conversations around concepts such as homonationalism, pinkwashing, and homonormativity in a comparative public policy approach grounded in poststructuralist or even discursive approaches to policy. In this, it would be useful to distinguish homonationalism and pinkwashing from the recognition of LGBTQ rights or law reforms that extend particular forms of state sanction to same-sex relationships or protection from discrimination to LGBTQ people. It is an empirical question to evaluate the extent to which or the ways in which the changes in public policy amount to pinkwashing or are part of a homonationalist agenda.

This leads to another important direction for future research, which is already underway in social science, namely, the effects of LGBTQ-rights recognition or the effects of changes in state policy for LGBTQ and other communities. Do homonormative policies disadvantage people of color in the same country or community? What are the economic and social implications of recognizing same-sex marriage for those who are economically and socially marginal within LGBTQ and other communities? How are LGBTQ rights used in the service of foreign policy goals or state-sanctioned racialization projects? In particular, building on past work by socio-legal scholars such as Carl Stychin (1998), public policy scholars could consider the relationship between nationalism, especially nationalist claims made by state elites, and the recognition of LGBTQ rights. In addition, exploring how homonormative narratives of state recognition reinforce nationalism in a particular site is also an important potential trajectory of research. Interview material on American and Canadian same-sex couples in relation to the construction of legality in same-sex relationships often emphasizes the extent to which couples seek marriage or marriage-like relationships in order to be the same as everyone else or to fit in with society (Nicol and Smith 2008, 677). This would seem to emphasize the homonormative dynamic of same-sex marriage. On the other hand, some people of color argue that state regulation of same-sex marriage is analogous to laws that prohibited interracial marriage and note the use of state law that dated back to slavery days to prevent the legal recognition of same-sex marriages (see Nicol and Smith 2008, 676). The role of the social scientist should be to present these diverse views and explore connections between and among diverse LGBTQ political and social actors as well as political and social actors outside the LGBTQ community.

Conclusion

The concepts of homonationalism and pinkwashing have become central to the discussion of queer rights in cultural studies and allied disciplines. At the same time, political scientists have increasingly considered the trajectory of LGBTQ-rights recognition in comparative perspective, attempting to explain why some countries have adopted LGBTQ-rights recognition while others have not. This burgeoning comparative literature could benefit from engagement with Puar's ideas and the debates surrounding them. Such an engagement, especially by scholars based in the United States, would encourage the exploration of the relationship between American hegemony and the increasingly global project of LGBTQ-rights recognition. At the same time, comparative scholars would benefit from considering the links among and between LGBTQ-rights recognition, racism, and national claims. These complexities go far beyond the intersectional approaches that are sometimes cited in the socio-legal literature. Indeed, the idea that recognizing the rights of LGBTQ people as citizens in the United States, the EU, and other Western countries or that recognizing global principles of LGBTQ rights such as those encapsulated in the *Yogyakarta Principles* contributes to racism, right-wing nationalism, heightened surveillance, torture, and technologically based warfare is a contention that should be taken seriously by comparative scholars and explored empirically. Further research using the concepts of pinkwashing and homonationalism, more attention to the impact of LGBTQ-rights recognition and not only its causes, as well as more systematic attention to racism as a factor in rights recognition would contribute to a more complex and nuanced understanding of LGBTQ comparative politics. In this sense, Puar's approach has contributed greatly to the contemporary understanding of queer politics and, potentially, to the comparative politics of LGBTQ rights.

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