Summary and Keywords

Queer International Relations (IR) is not a new field. For more than 20 years, Queer IR scholarship has focused on how normativities and/or non-normativities associated with categories of sex, gender, and sexuality sustain and contest international formations of power in relation to institutions like heteronormativity, homonormativity, and cisnormativity as well as through queer logics of statecraft. Recently, Queer IR has gained unprecedented traction in IR, as IR scholars have come to recognize how Queer IR theory, methods, and research further IR’s core agenda of analyzing and informing the policies and politics around state and nation formation, war and peace, and international political economy. Specific Queer IR research contributions include work on sovereignty, intervention, security and securitization, torture, terrorism and counter-insurgency, militaries and militarism, human rights and LGBT activism, immigration, regional and international integration, global health, transphobia, homophobia, development and International Financial Institutions, financial crises, homocolonialism, settler colonialism and anti-Blackness, homocapitalism, political/cultural formations, norms diffusion, political protest, and time and temporalities.

Keywords: Queer IR, sexuality, gender, heteronormativity, homonormativity, cissexism, transgender, LGBT rights, homonationalism
Introduction

Queer International Relations (IR) is not a new field. For more than 20 years (Peterson, 1999; Weber, 1994A, 1994B), Queer IR scholarship has focused on how normativities and/or non-normativities associated with categories of sex, gender, and sexuality sustain and contest international formations of power in relation to institutions like heteronormativity,1 homonormativity,2 and cisnormativity3 as well as through queer logics of statecraft.4 Recently, Queer IR has gained unprecedented traction in IR, as IR scholars have come to recognize how Queer IR theory,5 methods,6 and research further IR’s core agenda of analyzing and informing the policies and politics around state and nation formation,7 war,8 peace,9 and international political economy.10 Specific Queer IR research contributions include work on sovereignty,11 intervention,12 security,13 and securitization,14 torture,15 terrorism,16 and counter-insurgency,17 militaries and militarism,18 human rights and LGBT activism,19 immigration,20 regional and international integration,21 global health,22 transphobia,23 homophobia,24 development and International Financial Institutions,25 financial crises,26 homocolonialism,27 settler colonialism,28 and anti-Blackness,29 homocapitalism,29 political/cultural formations,31 norms diffusion,32 political protest,33 and time and temporalities.34
Definitions, History, and Intellectual Concerns

Queer and Queer Studies

Debates about the meaning of the term “queer” and whether or not queer can be or ought to be defined rage on (Butler, 1994; Warner, 2012; Wilcox, 2014). Yet many self-identified queer scholars cite Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s description of queer as their point of departure. For Sedgwick (1993), queer describes “the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone’s gender, of anyone’s sexuality aren’t made (or can’t be made) to signify monolithically” (p. 8). Non-monolithic expressions of gender and sexuality include what are broadly called gender nonconforming, gender variant, and gender expanding expressions of subjectivities that might be read as, for example, male and/or female, masculine and/or feminine, heterosexual and/or homosexual, as well as neither/nor in relation to any of these categories.

Sedgwick’s discussion of queer clarifies the affinities queer studies has to feminist studies and gender studies, which analyze the political work that gender and (sometimes) sexualities do. It also clarifies Queer studies’ affinities to poststructuralist scholarship, which analyzes the political work that multiple significations do. Sedgwick’s discussion also nods toward Gay and Lesbian (and sometimes Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Asexuality) studies, which take the histories, lived experiences, and political mobilizations by and of those with such sexualized identifications as among their points of focus. Yet Queer studies is not reducible to Feminist studies, Gender studies, Gay and Lesbian studies, or Poststructuralism. Nor is it the sum total of these theoretical dispositions. As an academic practice, queer studies has been and remains, as Teresa de Lauretis (who coined the term the “queer theory”) described it, an attempt “to rethink the sexual in new ways, elsewhere and otherwise” in relation to but also beyond how each of these fields traditionally thought about sexualities at least until 1990 (Butler, 1990; De Lauretis, 1991, p. xvi; Rubin, 1992; although exceptionally, see Foucault, 1980).

This “otherwise” results in a move beyond traditional identity politics, which often seeks to understand the presumed authentic nature of gender nonconforming, gender variant, and gender expanding subjectivities and seeks to explain how their presumed gendered and sexualized identities function in the world. In so doing, it often reinserts what were non-binary genders and sexualities into binary terms (e.g., LGBT vs. non-LGBT or heterosexual vs. homosexual). In contrast, Queer studies is more interested in the political implications of binary and non-binary constructions of identity, by understanding identity as something that is naturalized through cultural practices rather than natural in and of itself. This leads Queer studies scholars to ask how subjectivities come to be understood in either/or terms (rather than in and/or or neither/nor terms) and to
investigate the political implications of presuming to know gendered and sexualized subjectivities in these multiple ways.

Queer studies scholars also examine how the social construction of gendered and sexualized subjectivities functions through—as well as produces—institutionalized understandings of gender and sexuality as normal or perverse as well as normal and/or perverse. Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, for example, introduced the concept of “heteronormativity” in the 1990s to capture how gender nonconforming, gender variant, and gender expanding subjectivities are produced as non-normative subjectivities in relation to “institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make [normative sexualities like] heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged” (Berlant & Warner, 1998, p. 548, fn. 2; our brackets). In the early 2000s, Lisa Duggan argued that “homonormativity”—which expands the definition of normal subjectivities to include some homosexuals—“holds and sustains” heteronormativity because it never contests the values and assumptions of heteronormativity (2003, p. 50). Most recently, Robyn Weigman and Elizabeth Wilson have suggested that heteronormative and homonormative understandings of gender and sexuality assume that “queer” is inherently antinormative. They wonder what additional possibilities might exist for queer studies if it gave up on its commitment to antinormativity (Wiegman & Wilson, 2015). Among the important questions Wiegman and Wilson’s work raises is this: Is queer necessarily transgressive (as antinormativity theorists suggest), or can queer antinormativities themselves be captured on behalf of governing social, cultural, political, and economic institutions?

Queer Studies scholarship builds upon these and other classic texts in Queer Studies (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1979; Halberstam, 2005; Muñoz, 1999; Warner, 2000), which are increasingly read intersectionally (Crenshaw, 1991), because the actual meaning and political consequences of sexual norms, identities, and normativities are articulated through the complex ways in which they are always already entwined with formations of racism, (dis)ability, class, citizenship and migration, (settler) colonialism and Indigeneity, and anti-Blackness. Queer Studies scholars pursue these key intellectual concerns by performing the following:

• Critical genealogical investigations of powerful formations and mobilizations of sexed, gendered, and sexualized binaries (male vs. female; masculine vs. feminine; heterosexual vs. homosexual);
• Critical analyses of how these binaries are normalized (i.e., become commonsense ways of understanding and acting in the world) so that the gendered and sexualized “normal” and “perverse” subjectivities they produce appear to be normal and natural;
• Critical analyses of how (expanding) normativities are defended (Berlant & Warner, 1998), resisted (Duggan, 2003; Halberstam, 2011; Puar, 2007) and confounded (Cohen, 1997; Sedgwick, 1985; Weber, 1999, 2016A; Wiegman & Wilson, 2015) by queer subjectivities and/
or queer publics (Berlant & Warner, 1998), performativities (Butler, 1990) and logics (Weber, 1999, 2016A); and


From Queer to Queer IR

Since at least the 1990s, Queer Studies has had an increasingly explicit focus on transnational/global phenomena, producing significant insights on war, geopolitics, globalization, racism and colonialism, nationalism, citizenship, labor, migration, tourism, austerity, and the welfare state. At the same time, Queer IR scholars have continued to critically analyze how normative and/or non-normative genders and sexualities sustain and contest international formations of power.

Over time, any hard and fast boundary between Transnational/Global Queer Studies and Queer IR scholarship has eroded. What sometimes continues to distinguish these two overlapping and interconnected bodies of scholarship, though, is how Queer IR scholars often make explicit use of IR theories and concepts grounded in IR literatures and debates. These include IR formulations of security (Amar, 2011, 2013) and sovereignty (Weber, 2016A), for example, and how debates about “the practice turn in IR” are enriched by Feminist and Queer IR thinking (Wilcox, 2013). This has led Queer IR scholars to make contributions to Transnational/Global Queer Studies debates as well as to general IR debates (see also Smith & Lee, 2015).

Among the key questions Queer IR scholars ask are these:

- How do cultural ideas about gender and sexuality shape foreign policy and military operations?
- How do the security and development needs of LGBT subject become key terrains in geopolitical struggles around war and security as well as around human rights and norms diffusion?
- How do heteronormative, homonormative, and cisnormative frameworks inform the operations of the global political economy?
- How do normative understandings of gender and sexuality intersect with normative understandings of soldiering, militarism, and war to make “normal soldiers,” “normal military policies,” and “normal wars”?
- How do non-normative understandings of gender and sexuality intersect with understandings of racial difference and colonial forms of power to construct internationally dangerous figures—like “the terrorist” and/or “the insurgent”? 
• How are processes of modern state formation connected to heteropatriarchal family relations and associated normativities of sexuality and gender?
Queer IR Methods

Queer IR methods are among the latest IR methods to have been explicitly articulated within the field of IR (Weber, 2016A, 2016B; also see Weber, 1998B). Queer IR methods are necessary because the specific ontological and epistemological concerns Queer IR scholars have about queer subjectivities and other queer constructions and identifications are not always captured or capturable through other IR theoretical and methodological frameworks.

Ontologically, Queer IR scholars focus on queer ontologies that do not or cannot be made to signify monolithically in relation to genders and sexualities, and they read these ontologies intersectionally. Epistemologically, Queer IR scholars recognize that knowledge and ignorance in and about international relations are intricately bound up with sexualized knowledge and sexualized ignorance. This observation can again be traced back to Sedgwick, who observed that 20th-century Western culture depends upon knowing who and/or what it means to be, for example, heterosexual or homosexual because this knowledge produces innumerable binaries upon which we reply to understand the world. Among the binaries Sedgwick identifies that matter for IR are public/private, domestic/foreign, discipline/terrorism, secrecy/disclosure, natural/artificial, wholeness/decadence, and knowledge/ignorance (1990, p. 11).

Investigating how non-binary expressions of genders and sexualities function as and in relation to some of these important binaries is among the things Queer IR scholars investigate using Queer IR methods. Weber (2016A, 2016B) recently outlined two Queer IR theoretical and methodological approaches that Queer IR scholars and IR scholars more generally might utilize in their research. These Queer IR approaches focus on how to analyze figurations of “the homosexual” and sexualized orders of International Relations. Figurations are shared meanings distilled into forms or images. “The homosexual” as a figuration, then, is neither a real person nor a false image. It is a term that is collectively used to imagine and purport to know for sure who people called “homosexuals” and practices called “homosexuality” actually are, while we employ these unreliable understandings to map our social, cultural, political, and economic worlds.

The first Queer IR framework Weber outlines combines Michel Foucault’s concepts of “putting sex into discourse,” “productive power,” and “networks of power/knowledge/pleasure” (1979) with Donna Haraway’s conceptualization of “figuration” (1997), Judith Butler’s theory of performativity (1990), and Richard Ashley’s arguments about “statecraft as mancraft” (1989) to develop a method for analyzing figurations of the “homosexual” and sexualized orders of IR that are inscribed in IR as either normal or perverse. The second theoretical and methodological framework Weber outlines recombines these elements—especially Ashley’s “statecraft as mancraft”—with a pluralized rendering of Roland Barthes’s rule of the and/or, which offers instructions on how to read plural figures and plural logics that signify as normal and/or perverse. It is these figures who, following
Sedgwick, might be described as queer. By developing a theoretical and methodological framework to read queer figures as/in relation to sovereignty and the orders and anarchies sovereignties are produced through and of which they are productive, Weber offers an additional lens through which to investigate singularized and pluralized figurations of the “homosexual” and sexualized orders of IR, what she goes on to describe as “queer logics of statecraft.” As Weber (2016c) argues, her explicit IR formulation and application of and/or logics should be read in tandem with her earlier IR formulation and application of neither/nor logics to gain a fuller understanding of how to analyze queer logics of statecraft.

Key Contributions of Queer IR Research

When scholars and practitioners think about contemporary Queer IR research, they commonly think about LGBT human rights, their protection and diffusion. This is not surprising, given how the figure of “the LGBT” has been constructed and mobilized by states leaders like Secretary of State Hilary Clinton (2011) and international institutions like the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). Yet Queer IR scholarship is not limited to concerns about LGBT human rights. Like IR scholarship in general, Queer IR scholarship investigates contemporary mobilizations of international power, specifically with respect to the overlapping categories of state and nation formation, war and peace, and international political economy. However, Queer IR scholarship always also investigates these power relations as they are related to the gendered and sexualized understandings of people, states, and international organizations. This section outlines some of the key contributions Queer IR scholars make to research and policy, particularly in the areas of LGBT rights as well as to state and nation formation, war and peace, and international political economy. It concludes by noting new areas of research.

LGBT Rights Promotion and Diffusion

How does Queer IR scholarship help us understand human rights promotion and diffusion? Like other IR scholarship on human rights, Queer IR contributes to debates about norms, ethics, activism, and the (geo)politics of human rights. Queer IR extends feminist insights on gender and women’s rights to sexuality with a focus on the rights of gay, lesbian, and bisexual subjects.

The recent elevation of LGBT legal equality as a marker of modernity and “civilization” has made “the LGBT” an important figure in geopolitical struggles, an increasingly important battlefield in various geopolitical struggles. Queer IR research on LGBT human rights politics and norms demonstrates the central role of states and the political (rather
than simply moral, personal, or cultural) character of much anti-LGBT rights politics across the globe and contributes to IR theory debates on the universality and particularity of human rights (Birdal, 2015).

Research on the uneven diffusion of (often contentious) LGBT rights legislation across the globe or across EU-member states offers insights into processes of threat perception, state socialization, state-building, and norm transfer in international politics. Geopolitical struggles around LGBT rights also play out among EU states (Western vs. Eastern Europe) and between Europe vs. Russia (Baker, 2016; Wilkinson, 2014). Contrary to facile imaginative geographies of gay-friendly vs homophobe states and regions and associated diffusion models, some Queer IR research explores the transnational production of homophobia (Rao, 2014B, 2015A), and the ways in which LGBT rights have been harnessed in support of hegemonic projects not only by Western powers but also by elites in the Global South, such as in India (Rao, 2010).

In conversation with Transnational Queer Studies research, Queer IR explores how demands for LGBT equality by state and non-state actors are all too often anchored in problematic homonormative or racist rescue narratives—specifically Islamophobic, anti-Black, homocolonial, and/or settler colonial frameworks. And yet, some Queer IR research challenges monolithic critiques of contemporary global LGBT human rights activism as simply animated by racist rescue fantasies and as therefore irredeemable. For example, Rao (2010) in his book Third World Protest: Between Home and the World offers a more differentiated analysis of various queer activists, including in the “West.” While he identifies the racist gay rescue narrative as important among LGBT rights actors, he also shows that “there is no single politics” to the “Gay International” identified by prominent postcolonial critics like Joseph Massad (Rao, 2010, p. 177). Work by Amy Lind and Cricket Keating, which analyzes Ecuador’s recent move away from neoliberalism, supports Rao’s conclusions. In Ecuador, contrary to the global push for inclusion of same-sex couples into the institution of marriage, activists successfully fought for a redefinition of family and citizenship by challenging the postcolonial state’s liberal notion of equality (Lind, 2014; Lind & Keating, 2013).

State and Nation Formation

How does Queer IR scholarship help us to understand state and nation formation? Like Mainstream IR scholars, Queer IR scholars study the historical rise of the modern interstate system, contemporary examples of state-building, and the politics of nationalism and national political identification practices. Like the work of Feminist and Gender scholars, Queer IR scholarship examines the role of gendered norms and identities in past and present processes of state and nation formation and thus the social
construction of states, nations, and national identities. Taking these concerns further, Queer IR scholars study these in the register of sexuality.

A classic argument in Queer IR on state and nation formation is V. Spike Peterson’s (1999, 2013) scholarship on “nationalism as heterosexism.” Peterson’s research investigates how state and nation formation is not only socially constructed but works through ongoing processes of reproduction, resistance, and reconfiguration. Peterson’s Queer IR scholarship evidences the central role of gender and heteronormative norms and institutions in imagining or inventing nations, nationalism, and national identities.

Drawing attention to how gendered and sexualized normativities fuel political identification processes and conflict, Peterson challenges state-centric conceptualizations of national groups and political identities found in Mainstream IR. Her queer analysis also challenges the implicit heterosexism underwriting much of the feminist scholarship on the fundamental role of gender identity and hegemonic masculinity for national identity construction. Peterson argues that early state-making processes were generative of gendered and sexualized norms and normativities, including heteropatriarchal marriage and family. In short, “making states makes sex” (Peterson, 2014A, p. 390). Peterson’s most recent work pursues these concerns through registers of intimacy in relation to heteronormativities and homonormativities (2014a, 2016).

A prominent example for Queer IR scholarship that shows how state and nation formation is not a one-off occurrence but an ongoing process is the work of Cynthia Weber (1998A, 1999, 2016A). Weber’s Queer IR scholarship on U.S.-Caribbean relations after the Cuban Revolution, for example, demonstrates how sovereign nation-states mobilized what she calls “queer performativities” in practice. Weber agrees with mainstream IR theorists that many U.S. policymakers and military officials perceived the Cuban Revolution as a crisis that jeopardized U.S. hegemony in the Caribbean region. By extending Mainstream, Feminist, and Gender analyses into the realm of Queer IR, Weber argues that this crisis of hegemony was related to two further U.S. crises—a masculinity crisis (which feminist and gender scholars identify) and a heterosexuality crisis (which Queer IR scholars identify). Weber reads key U.S. foreign policy documents and speeches to show how, contrary to what one would expect, the United States addressed these crises of hegemony, masculinity, and heterosexuality by using what she called “queer compensatory strategies”—strategies that refigured the U.S. state in its Caribbean relations as queer (i.e., non-normative in relation to the gender and sexuality of the figural U.S. body politic that appears in these documents) in order to appear to be hegemonically heteromasculine.50

Weber followed up on these classic Queer IR texts in her recent book *Queer International Relations: Sovereignty, Sexuality and the Will to Knowledge*, where she explains some of the broader domestic and international sexualized logics at work in both state and nation formation and in the organization of international politics. Through her queer reconsideration of Richard Ashley’s work on “statecraft as mancraft” (see Queer IR Methods section above), Weber explains how what she calls “queer logics of statecraft”
function in domestic and international politics to create what she calls “sexualized organizations of international relations” (2016a, 2016b).

Recent Queer IR scholarship on sexual justice struggles show that contestations over LGBT rights have come to constitute a key terrain of state- and nation-building and the construction of supranational identity—both among proponents and opponents of LGBT rights. For example, Lind and Keating’s (2013) work on postcolonial state-building in the context of Ecuador’s recent turn away from neoliberalism shows that in the quest to centralize authority, the Ecuadorian state relied on a mix of state homophobia and what they call state “homoprotectionism.”

Other Queer IR research on state- and nation-building argues that “the international” consists not only of states and international organizations but also non-state institutions and queer popular culture. Catherine Baker (2016), for instance, conceptualizes the Eurovision Song Contest as a popular-cultural text/event produced by a non-state international actor as an important sight and site of international relations.

War and Peace

How does Queer IR scholarship contribute to the study of war and peace? Like Mainstream IR, Queer IR examines the use of military force in international politics, including its effects and conditions of possibility. Like Feminist Security Studies, Queer IR approaches war and the use of armed force as embedded in a larger continuum of (gendered and sexualized) violence challenging analytical binaries like war/peace, international/domestic, and public/private. Queer IR research furthers Feminist Security Studies’ inquiries into the constitutive role of the “low politics” of the (allegedly) “merely” private, intimate and/or cultural by drawing attention to how geopolitics and military operations are shaped not only by gendered norms but also by sexualized norms and normativities, specifically heterosexuality and associated ideas about heteromasculinity and cissexism.

Gender, Peace, and Security

Queer IR research on war, peace, and security brings into focus the security needs of LGBT subjects. For example, Queer IR has revealed security problems faced by LGBT people that are rendered invisible even in feminist analyses of human security (Amar, 2013), sexual and gender-based violence (Hagen, 2016), and post-conflict reconstruction (Jauhola, 2010, 2013; McEvoy, 2015). Both feminist and non-feminist analyses of International Relations commonly rest on assumptions about gender and sexuality that are damaging to LGBT individuals in a range of conflict and post-conflict related settings.
Queer International Relations

For example, scholars’ and practitioners’ common assumptions about heterosexuality as the default sexuality and kinship norm (“heteronormativity”) and the twin assumption of two “opposite” and complementary gender positions are cissexist because they leave out subjects whose sexuality, familial relations, and/or gender expression (“cissexism”) do not align with these gender and sexual norms. While there is increasing awareness of certain non-normative sexualities (“homosexuality”) and sexual practices (“Men-who-have-Sex-with-Men”), with few exceptions, key international actors and policy frameworks in the area of peace and security rest on what Queer and Transgender theory describes as cisprivilege. Cisprivilege refers to people whose gender assigned at birth matches their gender identity (“cisgender”).

As Jamie Hagen (2016) explores in the context of the UN’s Women, Peace and Security (WPS) architecture, heteronormativity and cissexism obscure a wide set of practices of violence and exclusions negatively affecting people that are not straight or cisgender. Hagen shows how deploying a limited understanding of a heteronormative gender binary allows WPS policy and monitoring to account for the security needs of heterosexual cisgender women, while obscuring LGBT subjects and their safety. This framework also reproduces insecurities for the “women” it is meant to protect, in particular those with queer sexualities and non-normative gender expression. For instance, trans people and gender non-binary people are typically refused medical care, safe access to bathrooms in shelters, and refugee camps (see also Jauhola, 2010, 2013). Neither is sexual and gender-based violence against gay men recognized and accounted for under the WPS architecture, even though their presumed lack of masculinity makes them vulnerable to rape during conflict (Hagen, 2016, p. 315f.).
Military Masculinities and Soldiering

Queer IR builds on the rich body of Feminist IR scholarship on the seemingly inextricable linkages between modern militaries, war, and masculinities. Queer IR agrees with Feminist Security Studies [link] about the significance of gendered norms and discourses of masculinity for producing soldiers, militaries, and militarism and extends this research by inquiring in more depth into the “heterosexist premises of military masculinity.”

Queer IR demonstrates the foundational role of particular normativities around sexuality and gender in producing soldiers and war, while it simultaneously complicates understandings of the modern military and military masculinity as structured by clear-cut gendered and sexualized dichotomies, such as male/female and heterosexual/homosexual.

Contrary to commonsense understandings of soldiering involving only “manly” tasks, modern militaries (including the U.S. military) rely on service members to also perform unmasculine practices and inhabit subjectivities commonly coded as feminine. Examples for this embrace of the “unmasculine” range from cleaning toilets and polishing boots to enduring anal rape during hazing. Queer IR adds to our understanding of these seeming contradictions by demonstrating how these practices and subject positions get recoded as affirming a soldier’s overall military masculinity (Belkin, 2012; Cohn, 1998). In conversation with Feminist Security Studies, Queer IR argues that the military may in fact provide men the rare opportunity to safely transcend the boundaries of acceptable heteromasculinity. The military is among the very few institutions where men are allowed to engage in emotional, erotic, and sexual encounters and impulses otherwise suppressed in the civilian world for fear of being seen (by others or themselves) as queer and therefore not real men (Cohn, 1998, p. 17).

A burgeoning body of Queer IR scholarship examines the increasing inclusion of LGBT people and associated representational practices in modern militaries. These works offer important insights for IR theory and policy, challenging in particular dichotomous frameworks regarding the agency of LGBT recruits, such as subversion/co-optation (Bulmer, 2013) or power/resistance (Richter-Montpetit, 2014B). Agathangelou, Bassichis, and Spira’s (2008) groundbreaking work coined the concept of “intimate investments” to understand how queer soldiers—historically themselves cast as threats to the nation and national security—seek to actively participate in the military and military violence. Queer IR scholarship examines whether the inclusion of LGBT soldiers in the United Kingdom (Bulmer, 2011, 2013) and the United States (Agathangelou et al., 2008; Richter-Montpetit, 2014B) or homoerotic visual representations of soldiers (Caso, 2016) challenge the heteropatriarchal character of the military and/or contribute to militarization and imperial geopolitics. Finally, Queer IR also speaks to the generative character of war and the military in shaping sexual and gender identities, practices, and normativities (Crane-Seeber, 2016; Howell, 2014; Wool, 2015).
Security Governance/Regimes

Queer IR demonstrates that certain normativities around sexuality and gender also play a central role in global security governance, including security regimes in the Global South. For example, Paul Amar’s work explores how the governance of stigmatized sexualities and gender expressions plays a key role in shifting figurations of global security regimes. Amar’s (2013) most recent book *The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism* focuses on Cairo and Rio de Janeiro, two megacities said to be at the forefront of new and innovative security practices, actors, and governance structures. Amar traces a range of new and complex securitization projects and practices and the ways in which they are shot through with sexual and gender normativities. Central to the consolidation and expansion of these security regimes is the rise of a new doctrine of human security that casts human rights as beneficial to both national and societal security. Military and police security apparatuses and associated parastate actors prosper by focusing their efforts on constructing non-normative sexualities and gender expressions as threats to public safety. These new security regimes bring together a set of strange bedfellows, including ultra-conservative and self-identified progressive mass movements around morality, sexuality, and labor. For other Queer IR scholarship examining the construction of men who have sex with men as national security threats, see Nicola Pratt on the Queen Boat case in Egypt (2011).

Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of Military Interventions

Over the past decade, the thesis that powerful and otherwise highly heteronormative and patriarchal states in both the Global North and South increasingly harness queer sexualities and LGBT populations for their geopolitical ambitions has ushered in a rich and vibrant research agenda in Transnational Queer Studies and more recently, Queer IR. This shift has given rise to two dominant figurations of homosexuality and the homosexual—“the perverse homosexual” and “the normal homosexual” (Weber, 2016A). Progressive discourses recognize the latter as a “normal” sexual subject looking for love within the framework of monogamous couplehood, making “‘the LGBT’ as normal as any other loving human being” (Agathangelou, 2013; Agathangelou et al., 2008; Weber, 2016B).

Much of Queer IR scholarship has been critical about the ways in which queer sexualities and increasingly also the rights of trans people have been taken up as tools of chauvinist or imperial statecraft. To make sense of what they see as problematic practices of diplomacy and foreign policy, critics in Queer IR have deployed the influential concepts of “homonationalism” (Puar, 2007) and “pinkwashing” developed in Transnational Queer Studies and activism (Puar & Mikdashi, 2012; Schotten & Maikey, 2012) and/or developed new terminology, such as “homocolonialism” (Rahman, 2015). Other Queer IR scholarship examines how the production of the figure of the respectable homosexual is made...
possible through structures of settler colonialism (Leigh, 2015; Richter-Montpetit, 2014B) and anti-Blackness (Agathangelou, 2013; Richter-Montpetit, 2014B).

A classic example in Queer IR on the central role of cultural ideas about heteromasculinity—and performances of queer masculinities—in legitimizing military interventions is Cynthia Weber’s work on U.S. relations with various Caribbean states in the wake of the Cuban Revolution (1959–1994). Feminist analyses of military interventions typically show the critical role gendered “rescue” narratives play in producing the conditions of possibility for so-called humanitarian interventions. These gendered “rescue” narratives typically frame (post)colonial spaces and peoples as variously feminized and in need of forceful yet benign masculine intervention by major powers like the United States. Weber shows that the U.S. state did not simply seek to project itself as hyper-masculine and hyper-heterosexual. Rather the U.S. state relied upon non-normative codes of gender and sexuality—queer performativities—as an unlikely strategy to pacify the Caribbean region, regain its heteromasculine national identity, and thus reclaim its status as a potent and virile global super power. Other Queer IR scholarship explores how to techno-strategic discourses about nuclear warfare (Cohn, 1993) are shot through with heteronormative cultural logics.
Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency

Building on the pathbreaking work by Jasbir K. Puar and Amit Rai (2002) and Puar’s later solo work (2004, 2005, 2006, 2007) in Transnational Queer Studies, Queer IR scholarship has demonstrated the role of non-normative understandings of gender and sexuality in representations of the figure of the Muslim terrorist and/or insurgent and the ways in which these knowledges have shaped security practices in the War on Terror. Queer IR draws our attention to how the will to knowledge about sexuality and gender in this context is deeply shaped by cultural ideas about racial difference and colonial forms of power to construct internationally dangerous figures—like “the terrorist” and/or “the insurgent”—and those who need to be secured from them like “the docile patriot” (Puar & Rai, 2002).

For example, Queer IR scholarship on U.S. and British Counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts in the so-called War on Terror shows how Orientalist discourses about Afghan, Arab, and Muslim men’s (allegedly) failed masculinity and perverse sexualities shaped COIN practices at the operational and tactical level. In her study of Western representations of Afghan—in particular Pashtun—men, Nivi Manchanda (2015) identifies a strong preoccupation with the alleged prevalence of “illicit sex” among Pashtun men in both U.S. counter-insurgency documents and U.S. and British media reports. Manchanda shows how that “truth” about Pashtun men’s sexualities informed both operational and tactical considerations in U.S. counter-insurgency in Afghanistan. For instance, COIN training materials for U.S. soldiers contains information about queer sexualities and effeminate gender presentation, including the use of eyeliner among the local population. These knowledges produce the figure of the “Queer Pashtun” or “perverse” “terrorist” masculinities, which make it possible for both official COIN and media discourses to frame “violence against Americans [.º.º.] as a much-needed release of the terrorists’ bottled-up sexual rage” (Manchanda, 2015, p. 12).

Other Queer IR scholarship shows how associated Orientalist ideas about “the Arab mind” and its monolithic moral framework of honor and shame anchored in a distinctly heteropatriarchal Islamic sex-gender regime shaped many of the actual torture techniques documented in the Senate Torture Report about the U.S. post-9/11 torture regime (Owens, 2010; Richter-Montpetit, 2007, 2014A, 2015). Featuring prominently among reported torture practices are highly sexualized carceral practices aimed at feminizing male prisoners. The underlying assumption is simple: The concerted effort at humiliating and destroying Muslim/Arab prisoners’ (presumed) sense of masculinity would “soften them up” and getting them to “confess” terrorist crimes they had committed, were planning to commit, and/or share valuable intelligence about other terrorists/insurgents (Owens, 2010; Richter-Montpetit, 2007, 2014A, 2015). At the center of these feminizing torture techniques were forced nudity; rape and sexualized assault; forced simulation of anal and oral “gay sex”; and forcing otherwise naked male prisoners to wear “women’s”
underwear, including on their head. These sexualized carceral practices did not “simply” apply Orientalist stereotypes about Islam and Arabs but in fact produced Muslim prisoners as sexually deviant—they cast the tortured “as racially queer” (Richter-Montpetit, 2014A, p. 56).

Taking seriously the influential role of cultural logics about racialized sexuality and gender in counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency practices helps IR make sense of the large number of prisoners that were detained and tortured for years even though they were officially known to be “innocent” and/or without any intelligence value (Richter-Montpetit, 2014A, 2015). This research opens up critical IR analyses beyond explanatory and moral frameworks such as failed intelligence gathering, “state of exception,” or “human rights abuses” toward a more comprehensive understanding of seemingly illiberal security practices in the War on Terror. Finally, like Postcolonial and Decolonial IR, Queer IR contributes to IR debates on the ongoing raciality and coloniality of international relations by showing how counter-terrorism practices and the larger War on Terror they are part of are not only shaped by Orientalism, but also anti-Blackness and settler colonialism (Agathangelou, 2013; Leigh, 2015; Puar, 2007; Richter-Montpetit, 2014A, 2015).

Securitization Theory

Queer IR has also contributed to debates about the conceptual and empirical validity of securitization theory. For example, Alison Howell’s work on Global Health challenges the argument that health has been securitized. In fact, Howell questions the validity of analytics of securitization generally. Bringing Critical War studies into conversation with Queer theory and Critical Disability studies or Crip theory, Howell argues that modern warfare and modern medicine emerged in tandem rather than medicine and psychiatry being “abused” by military actors. Howell evidences her understanding of medicine as an instrument of violence by exploring medicine’s role in the violent management of “abnormal” populations, such as homosexuals and trans women. Taking queer and trans people seriously in global politics renders visible the routine character of practices of force inherent in—and indeed constitutive of—liberal rule and its use of “social warfare” (Howell, 2014, p. 970). Howell’s queer analysis thus contributes to IR theory and Critical Security Studies by rethinking the validity of the norm/exception and politics/security distinctions underwriting securitization theory.
Border Security

Queer IR scholarship shows that ideas about normative sexuality and gender are also central to everyday security practices at the border (Frowd, 2014). The management of border security is based on calculations about risk and danger of certain bodies and relies on and is productive of certain normativities around gender. For instance, airport security assemblages with their use of biometric data and body scanners mobilize knowledges of gender to assess the truth about travelers’ bodies, which produces trans and non-binary people as deceptive, deviant, and dangerous bodies (Sjoberg & Shepherd, 2012; Wilcox, 2015). In conversation with Transgender theory, Queer IR approaches to border security thus extend the insights of feminist and critical race analyses on the role of gendered and racialized knowledges to problematic ontologies of cisnormativity.

International Political Economy (IPE)

How does Queer IR scholarship help us understand International Political Economy (IPE)? Like orthodox and critical approaches to IPE, Queer IR explores the intricate connections between states and markets and the ways in which global power is shaped by the mutual imbrication of political and economic power. Like Feminist IPE, Queer IPE takes seriously both productive and reproductive dimensions of global economic activities. Feminist IPE has drawn attention to the myriad ways in which the masculinist biases of modern economic (development) theories, policies, and orders affect men and women differently as well identified the central role of gendered cultural norms for constructing certain forms of labor and workers as valued, un(der)valued or invisible. Queer IPE pushes these inquiries further in two main ways. First, Queer IR demonstrates the heteromasculine and cissexist assumptions and biases underwriting economic policies and Development studies. Second, Queer IR examines the differential—and productive—impact of processes and policies associated with neoliberal globalization on non-normative sexualized and gendered subjects, practices, and kinship relations. Most recently, Queer analyses of IPE have addressed how the operations of global political economy are animated not only by heteronormative but also homonormative (Duggan, 2003) logics and frameworks.
Production and Social Reproduction

Queer approaches to IPE have challenged the often implicitly heteronormative assumptions of orthodox, critical, and Feminist IPE on states and state formation, markets, households, and familial relations. For instance, Nicola Smith’s work draws attention to the negative impact of financial crises and austerity on LGBT subjects, who are often disproportionately affected, including in the areas of employment, social services, and housing (Smith, 2016). Furthermore, Queer IR scholarship shows the critical role of heteronormative logics of gender and sexuality for (re)producing the neoliberal capitalist order. For example, narratives about “individual responsibility” in the context of crisis and the dismantling of the welfare state draw not only on market logics but also often evoke heteronormative notions of family, intimacy, and sexuality (Smith, 2016). The good liberal subject is produced not only in relation to hegemonic notions of productivity (i.e., surplus value, property) but also reproduction (i.e., children) (Smith, 2016) and slavery (Agathangelou, 2013; Richter-Montpetit, 2014B). Other Queer IR scholarship on IPE explores how these connections between (non)normative family and kinship arrangements and the transmission of property and entitlement to citizenship claims affect transnational migration (Nayak, 2015; Peterson, 2010, 2014B). Agathangelou’s work on homonormative and queer economies evidences the central role of Whiteness and “economies of Blackness” in making possible neoliberal states and markets (2009, 2013).

Development Studies and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs)

Historically, Development theory and practice excluded women as agents of development and ignored the gendered effects of development policy and Structural Adjustment on women (as challenged by Feminist IPE). Queer IR has extended these insights and shows that the dominant development model rests not only on patriarchal assumptions about the male breadwinner but also on “institutionalized heterosexuality” (Lind & Share, 2003). Support among international development actors for projects around sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) has grown dramatically in the wake of recent legal reforms in countries of the Global South and North ranging from the decriminalization of sodomy to same-sex marriage and anti-discrimination legislation for trans people. Queer IR scholarship on Global Development has critically interrogated this sudden rise in interest for matters of (homo)sexuality. For example, Queer IR has examined how development policy in the context of HIV/AIDS has turned the spotlight on the sexual practices and desires of so-called Men who have Sex with Men (MSM). Queer IR scholarship has explored the conditions of possibility for the seemingly progressive uptake of LGBT rights concerns in global development as well as examined the effects on local sexual and

Most recently this interest in queer sexualities extends also to International Financial Institutions (IFIs) (Bedford, 2009; Griffin, 2007, 2009; Lind, 2010A, 2010B; Rao, 2015B). Both World Bank and IMF have made the case for governments to support homosexual equality by quantifying the effects of homophobia on economic growth. Currently, the UN Development Program Team on Gender, Key Populations and LGBTI is developing an LGBTI Inclusion Index. In the spirit of the World Bank’s concerns about “the economic costs of homophobia,” this index will collect data on “the LGBTI” worldwide, in relation to national indicators that seek to measure the success or failure of LGBTI inclusion. Queer IR scholarship critically interrogates this newfound support for LGBT inclusion among leading international development actors.

For example, Rahul Rao’s (2015B) work on “global homocapitalism” argues that LGBT rights in the context of the IFIs have become “a new marker for old binaries” like civilized/uncivilized and developed/backward. Rao challenges hegemonic discourses among both international development actors and academic researchers that treat homophobia as a “merely” cultural phenomenon. Rao’s study of recent IFI initiatives on homophobia demonstrates how neoliberal policies initiated by the IFIs in Uganda and India contributed to the material conditions that have given rise to homophobic moral panics in both countries. In Uganda, the dramatic ascendancy of Pentecostal Christianity and their aggressively anti-queer agenda became possible because the shrinking state delegated crucial social services like health care and education to faith-based organizations (Rao, 2014B, 2015B).

Despite the growing prominence of LGBT populations in development discourse, even feminist approaches to development and humanitarian aid often still rely on a heteronormative framework of family, reproduction, and citizenship. For example, recent work by Marjaana Jauhola on post-tsunami reconstruction in Indonesia critically examines gender mainstreaming efforts at the intersection of development aid and humanitarian relief in a (post)conflict setting. Jauhola’s (2010, 2013) Queer IR analysis shows how the limited heteronormative gender matrix that informs gender mainstreaming efforts (1) obscures wider relations of power and normalization and (2) contributes to the reproduction of existing social inequalities and insecurities.
Trends and Directions for Future Research

Beyond empirical studies on LGBT people as right-holders as well as on the differential impact of security practices and economic policies on non-normative sexual and gendered subjects, Queer IR has rendered visible sexual politics and queer sexualities as key terrains and animating logics of past and contemporary geopolitical struggles. Treating queer as an analytical category, Queer IR scholarship explores how state and nation formation, global security and the operations of the international political economy are shot through with heteronormative and homonormative cultural logics. And Queer IR increasingly pays attention also to cissexist norms and normativities. A growing body of Queer IR scholarship also challenges the facile celebration of sexualized and gendered non-normativities in recent international policy initiatives and certain LGBT research.

Taking their cue in particular from Queer and Trans of Color Critique, Black feminist thought, Crip theory, and associated social movements, Queer IR theorists focus on how queer no longer (if ever it did) simply designates the abject and/or excluded. Instead, it demonstrates how certain figurations of the homosexual and homosexuality have been harnessed by hegemonic actors, from the geopolitics of the War on Terror to neoliberal development policies. This research seeks to explore how these international and transnational contestations are structured by heteronormative, homonormative, and cissexist logics and desires beyond facile gendered binaries and dichotomies like homophobic vs. gay-friendly practices, policies, and actors. Part of this (self)-critique challenges the problematic ways trans people have been taken up by Queer IR as figures that are read as transgressive and resisting of orthodox gender relations and larger gender orders, and thus as “raw materials” to improve IR theory (Weber, 2016C). More recent Queer IR research offers a more sustained engagement with the rich body of Transgender theory produced by academics and activists (Howell, 2014; Weber, 2016C).

Emerging Queer IR research provincializes Western sexualities—and Queer IR. With much of the canon in LGBT studies and Queer theory in Western universities grounded in what postcolonial and Queer of Color theorists identify as White and Eurocentric life worlds and theories, a growing body of Queer IR foregrounds sexuality and gender in racialized and colonial technologies of power and/or centers the geo/political agency, sexual, and gendered desires and practices of actors in the Global South or at the various peripheries of the Global North. Queer IR scholarship increasingly studies how sexualized and gendered formations in IR emerge in conjunction with discourses and structures of Orientalism, and most recently anti-Blackness (Agathangelou, 2013; Richter-Montpetit, 2014A, 2014B, 2015) and settler colonialism (Leigh, 2015; Richter-Montpetit, 2014B, 2016A).

Finally, one of the most prominent debates in Queer theory in recent years centers around inhabiting and strategically evoking seemingly negative and/or shameful queer affects and subject positions, such as “deviance,” “marginality,” “melancholy,” and
“failure” to challenge the status quo and offer new and innovative political imaginaries. Queer IR has begun to bring these concepts to bear on the study of ethics in world politics, time and temporality, Democratic peace theory, the practice turn in IR theory, as well as to disciplinarity knowledge production in IR more generally.

Conclusion

Given the importance of Queer IR scholarship for IR research and for foreign policy, why has Queer IR scholarship been largely neglected until recently? One answer is that IR scholars do not usually read the work of their Queer Studies colleagues (and vice versa). Yet there are arguably three additional reasons for this state of affairs, which are rooted in the understanding and conduct of the discipline of international relations.

First, grounded (in part) in Martin Wight’s description of international relations as “the study of the state’s system itself” and Wight’s positivist inclinations for determining what counts as knowledge about “the state’s system itself” (Wight, 1966), what we might call “Disciplinary IRs” are able to employ a number of strategies to make it appear as if there is no queer international theory and as if there is no need for queer international theory.

Second, even though some Feminist IR and “Queer IR” scholars have long argued that sexuality is a fundamental organizing aspect of international politics, it was only recently that examples of powerful international mobilizations of “queer sexualities” became so obviously integrated into foreign policy that so-called Disciplinary IR could no longer ignore them. Primary among these is U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s 2011 declaration that “gay rights are human rights,” and the Obama administration’s leveraging of this declaration as a fundamental aspect of its foreign policy.

Finally, as more IR scholars have begun to recognize the importance of “queer” sexuality and its relationship to international relations, they have until recently often lacked theoretical and methodological frameworks that would allow them to explore these questions in a rigorous analytical fashion (although see, for example, Browne & Nash, 2016).

As Queer IR theories and methodologies demystify how all manner of IR scholars can better comprehend and perform Queer IR research, Queer IR contributions to IR are increasingly viewed as vital to understanding core IR concerns.

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Western and Eastern Europe for equality. *Comparative European Politics, 10*(1), 23-47.


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Notes:

(1.) Peterson (1999).

(2.) Agathangelou, Bassichis, and Spira (2008), and Lind and Keating (2013).

(3.) Shepherd and Sjoberg (2012).


(9.) Hagen (2016).


(14.) Howell (2014).

(15.) Owens (2010), and Richter-Montpetit (2014a).


(17.) Manchanda (2015), and Owens (2010).


(22.) Howell (2011, 2014).

(23.) Howell (2014), Shephard and Sjoberg (2012), and Wilcox (2015).

(24.) Weiss and Bosia (2013).

(26.) Smith (2016).

(27.) Rahman (2014).


(29.) Agathangelou (2013).


(31.) Baker (2016).


(33.) Rao (2010).


(36.) Lorde (1984), and McRuer (2003, 2006).

(37.) Ferguson (2004); Hennessy (1994), and Sears (2005).


(47.) Agathangelou (2013), and Richter-Montpetit (2014b).


(49.) Leigh (2015), and Richter-Montpetit (2014b).


(56.) See also Peterson (2014a, 2014b), and Rao (2015b).


(59.) Baker (2016), and Wilkinson (2014).

(60.) Amoureux (2016).


(62.) Sjoberg (2014).

(63.) Wilcox (2013).
(64.) Langlois (2015b), Peterson (2016), and Weber (2016b).

(65.) For a similar discussion in Political Science, see Smith and Lee (2015).


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