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## Heteronormativity and Sexuality

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### Abstract and Keywords

This article focuses on the concepts of heteronormativity and sexuality. It first discusses the recent attention given to sexuality by scholars of gender and politics along with the contributions feminist scholars have made to introduce or rethink both heteronormativity and sexuality. The article then studies four basic areas of inquiry into the relationship of sexuality to gender and politics, including the heteronormative dimensions of regional and global political institutions and policies. It also examines the historical trends in scholarship and the important modern debates that help shape the intersecting and interdisciplinary fields of sexuality, gender, and politics.

Keywords: heteronormativity, sexuality, areas of inquiry, heteronormative dimensions, historical trends, modern debates, gender and politics

Historically, scholars of politics have paid little attention to sexuality. This has changed in recent decades, however, as scholars from various fields have begun to address sexuality as a social construct, site of contestation, identity marker, and generally speaking, as a concept central to broader processes of political change. Political science as a field has been slow to address sexuality as a legitimate form of inquiry (Bedford 2004); indeed, many of the most recent insights have been made in interdisciplinary settings. Yet feminist political scientists have long addressed how women's forms of sexuality have been socially constructed and legally regulated, and many scholars have pointed out how struggles over sexuality themselves are part and parcel of broader struggles concerning, for example, national identity, citizenship, sovereignty, or human rights (e.g., Phelan 2001 Duggan 2004; Alexander 1994 Puar 2007). Likewise, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) studies scholars have long examined the socially constructed nature of sexual practices and identities. And queer studies scholars, who sometimes coincide with and sometimes differ from LGBT studies scholars in their epistemological and methodological approaches, have provided crucial insight into how normative sexuality—

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namely, hegemonic heterosexuality—has been naturalized as normal or appropriate whereas same-sex forms of sexual practice and identity, along with other lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) sexualities and forms of gender expression, have been viewed as abnormal and deviant, sometimes with serious consequences. Through these discussions, the notion of heteronormativity has become central to many scholars' analysis, both of broad societal institutions and of how (p. 190) hegemonic heterosexuality is central to people's everyday lives, forms of expression, intimate arrangements, and forms of desire.

While scholars of gender and politics have addressed sexuality to some degree, in areas ranging from, for example, women's political participation to state policies to examinations of conflict and militarization, until recently few have systematically analyzed how heteronormativity, or the privileging of heterosexual norms over all others, shapes political institutions and processes, ultimately affecting a wide range of individuals. This historical gap in the literature is due in part to the fact that, like gender, sexuality continues to be seen as secondary to discussions concerning politics and sometimes as a private matter, one even rooted in nature, that remains "outside" the realm of public political debate or inquiry. Within the feminist scholarship, it is also due to homophobic bias or lack of understanding among some researchers, a form of bias that no doubt has diminished over time and generations. Today, the study of sexuality is a burgeoning field of its own that continues to provide important insights into the scholarship on gender and politics in general. This chapter addresses four general areas of inquiry into the relationship of sexuality to gender and politics: (1) sexuality as a category of analysis and form of power; (2) the relationship of sexuality to politics; (3) LGBTQ individuals' participation in political processes, and (4) the heteronormative dimensions of global and regional political institutions and policies. It focuses on the contributions feminist scholars have made to introducing or rethinking sexuality and heteronormativity. In so doing, it aims to introduce the reader to historical trends in scholarship and to key contemporary debates shaping the overlapping, interdisciplinary fields of sexuality, and gender and politics.

# Sexuality as a Category of Analysis and Form of Power

Rather than viewing sexuality as natural or as “outside” the realm of public politics, scholars of sexuality have demonstrated how sexual identities and practices have at once been viewed as “private matters” yet regulated by public institutions (see also the chapter by Hawkesworth in this volume). Hegemonic heterosexuality is often “naturalized into invisibility” (Cooper 1995), whereas subjugated sexualities have acquired a form of hypervisibility (e.g., men who have sex with men, gay men perceived as a public health threat) yet paradoxically also sometimes a form of invisibility (e.g., lesbians who are perceived not to have health issues or not to be mothers). Thus, sexuality is itself a form of power, one that has been used both in repressive and productive ways (Cooper 1995; Phelan 2001; Bedford 2004; Duggan 2004; Lind 2010b). Recognizing sexuality as a (p. 191) form of power began primarily during the mid-twentieth century, as scholars began to embrace sexuality as an object of analysis, systematically charting the ways that sexuality was socially constructed (Bernstein and Schaffner 2005, xii). Much of the earlier academic scholarship, which emerged alongside gay liberation struggles in North America, Britain, and Europe, took place within the humanities and to some extent in the field of psychology, with one important aim of depathologizing homosexuality. In North America, political science as a field began to address sexuality—and even then, only marginally—in the 1980s (Blasius 2001, 5), coinciding with the declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973, the American Psychological Association in 1975, and the Canadian Psychiatric Association in 1982. By the early to mid-1980s, however, sexuality was not only analyzed by various scholars but also became an important, increasingly visible site of political and cultural struggle in North America and Europe, and gradually throughout other regions as well. Drawing upon a longer trajectory of feminist scholarship on sexuality and power, emergent scholars of sexuality, heteronormativity, and politics began to more systematically and explicitly address how heterosexuality is a social institution and how norms of heterosexuality are embedded in political institutions, theories, and practices in such a way that second-wave feminism itself could not always grasp (important exceptions include the work of Adrienne Rich, Carole Vance, and Gayle Rubin). Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner (1998, 548) define *heteronormativity* as referring to institutions, structures, and practices that help normalize dominant forms of heterosexuality as universal and morally righteous. Unlike the related notion of homophobia, typically defined as the irrational fear of or hatred toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, the concept of heteronormativity speaks more broadly to how societal norms, institutions, and cultural practices contribute to institutionalizing a form of hegemonic, normative heterosexuality that is discriminatory in both material and symbolic ways.<sup>1</sup> Seen from this perspective, heteronormativity (and gender normativity) has been present in various kinds of scholarship and continues to inform how political observers understand family forms, LGBT people, and broader societal institutions

including the state. Earlier scholarship emphasized the relationship among the so-called private and public realms of life, including how heteronormative notions of *the family* and intimate arrangements inform broader understandings of national identity and nation-states. In this regard, states are important sites of analysis, given their role in regulating sexuality and private life. As Elizabeth Bernstein and Laurie Schaffner (2005, xiii) point out, “the state serves to shape our erotic possibilities and to impart a particular normative vision. The state, in short, has a sexual agenda.” Davina Cooper (1995, 7) argues that states exert “power” in both repressive and productive ways: While earlier gay and lesbian and feminist writing emphasized how states repress sexual minorities, more recent work, often drawing from Michel Foucault, emphasizes how state practices can create or generate sexual-gender identities as well: for example, through laws that define gender identity based (p. 192) on biology (e.g., hormones) rather than on one’s chosen form of expression or through welfare policies that define the family exclusively in heteronormative terms. Thus, for Cooper a theory of power is central to understanding state practices as well as resistance to those practices.

Some scholars address how, historically, states have always regulated sexuality and people’s intimate lives, from colonial times to the present, including through so-called archaic sex laws. For example, many countries have had archaic sex laws concerning sexual practices (e.g., interracial marriage, prostitution, sodomy), sexual identities (e.g., homosexuality), or appropriate gender norms (e.g., gender segregation) as a way to institutionalize a hegemonic, heteronormative moral code, to control and define their national populations, and to maintain racial and political hegemonies (e.g., Guy 1991; Smith 2006; Hoad 2007). Given that sexuality was and continues to be naturalized and essentialized (as in Darwinian arguments of sex selection), this legislation has had the effect of institutionalizing a kind of nation, state, and citizenship based on an ideal, proper heterosexual, gender-normative citizen, typically defined in white, middle-class, Eurocentric terms. Feminist scholars of color, including scholars of intersectionality, have addressed how the control of black female and male sexuality was key to maintaining slavery and racially segregated societies (e.g., Davis 1983; Hill Collins 2005) and likewise how sexual violence has been central to colonization and racial domination strategies, both in the North and South (Crenshaw 1991; Smith 2007). Postcolonial studies scholars have pointed out that in colonized territories and postcolonial nations, archaic sex laws often eroded indigenous notions of sexuality and gender that, in some cases, were much less dichotomous in nature than colonial discourse (this analysis does not necessarily preclude an analysis of inequality in precolonial contexts). Neville Hoad argues that any “African” understanding of intimacy has been eroded by colonial discourses and practices that historically coded local, indigenous same-sex sexual practices and forms of desire as “sodomy” and as abnormal and deviant, such that in the current context, sexuality in Africa “has been made in line with a vision of white Western truth” (xv). He points out that “homosexuality is definitionally nonprocreative,” thus making it “difficult to convey as a metaphor of social reproduction” (xvi). At the same time, in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Hoad notes that despite the fact that the HIV transmission rate is highest amongst heterosexuals in sub-Saharan Africa, discourses, and consequently policies

continue to demonize men who have sex with men (MSMs) as traitors to the nation and continent, as contributing to an unhealthy nation and as the primary source of the problem. Thus, while homosexuality is typically viewed as nonprocreative, particularly in discourses of development and poverty in the global South, the nonprocreative, sexually deviant citizens are seen as the transmitters of the disease, despite strong empirical evidence to the contrary (Hoad 2007; also see Gosine 2005).

In a similar vein, scholars have begun to examine not only how notions of homosexuality travel and inform national contexts in the global South and North (p. 193) but likewise how notions of homophobia and heteronormativity travel in ways that serve to create newly articulated forms of homophobia as (an often naturalized) part of national discourse. In contrast to the claim or assumption in some Western scholarship that progress toward sexual-gender justice is linked to economic and social modernity (e.g., Altman 2001), scholars such as Michael Bosia and Meredith Weiss (forthcoming) have pointed out how homophobia itself is being produced and articulated in new, modern ways that have no relationship to economic progress or cultural modernity. Rather, as they argue:

Both where same-sex intimate behavior was previously unnoticed or accepted and where it has never been openly tolerated, the well-studied spread of “gay” identities has been followed or even preceded by new, more aggressive, and more clearly politicized forms of [homo]phobia, even where such a phobia is not clearly rooted in traditional beliefs, attitudes, or practices. (P. 1)

Thus, crucially, it is not necessarily homosexuality that is being exported by the West but rather homophobia, as in the case of the proposed death penalty for homosexuals in Uganda; a case heavily backed financially and ideologically by foreign, especially U.S.-based religious Right organizations. Furthermore, states themselves are homophobic, thereby requiring scholarly attention to the further comparative analysis of “homophobic states” and their consequences for LGBT and other nonnormative individuals (Bosia and Weiss forthcoming).

Scholars have also noted how sexuality becomes a site of contestation particularly during times of crisis and in places of conflict, both in the past and present. As Bernstein and Schaffner (2005, xiii) note, “In times of economic and cultural flux, sex may become an easy and frequent target of campaigns for state regulation.” For example, Dagmar Herzog (2005) argues that rather than dismiss sexuality as an important category of analysis in Holocaust studies and German historiography, scholars must necessarily examine sexuality as central to the success of Nazism’s horrific crimes and to recurrent reconstructions of the memory and meaning of Nazism in contemporary postfascist German politics. If we overlook sexuality, Dagmar argues, “we lose opportunities to comprehend the extraordinary appeal of Nazism both to those Germans who sought the restoration of conservative family values and to those who benefited from Nazism’s loosening of conventional mores” (1–2).

Herzog (2005), like other scholars, uses the notion of *sexual politics* to frame her study. David Bell and Jon Binnie (2000) define sexual politics as the terrain in which contemporary actors struggle for the right to self-determination as sexual beings, freedom of sexual and gender expression, and the right to control one's own body. Sonia Correa, Rosalind Petchesky, and Richard Parker (2008) define the term as including not only the conventionally understood formal political arena but also, for example, the economic and cultural effects on sexual-gender identity of modern capitalist consumer cultures, globalization, transnational media campaigns, and neoliberalization. The increased coupling of political enfranchisement with (p. 194) one's market position under neoliberal capitalism is a recurring theme in the literature. This is because unlike earlier social movements (e.g., feminist, new Left) contemporary LGBT movements emerged through, and sometimes as a result of, neoliberal policies and practices, including state as well as civil society practices (Lind 2010a).

Some scholars emphasize how sexual politics often occur through ideologies of moral panic; again, in times of crisis. As Gilbert Herdt (2009, 3) states:

Panics produce state and nonstate stigma, ostracism, and social exclusion—the opposite of what liberalism or neoliberalism has envisioned. Sexual panics, when effective, are liminal and generate images of the monstrous. In media representations...sexual panics may generate the creation of monstrous enemies—sexual scapegoats. This 'othering' dehumanizes and strips individuals and whole communities of sexual and reproductive rights, exposing fault lines of structural violence (e.g., racism, poverty, homophobia, etc.).

Contemporary sex panics surrounding abortion, AIDS, sex, homosexuality, pornography, contraception, population control, gender-appropriate norms, and sexual rights have occurred across countries and regions and often reflect broader struggles concerning sovereignty, empire, citizenship, Westernization, and globalization. Diane di Mauro and Carole Joffe address the Religious Right and the reshaping of sexual policy in the United States during the George W. Bush years (2000–2008), which had significant impacts of nonnormative households and individuals both within and outside the United States. They point out that the United States has a long history of sexual conservatism that dates back to its colonial origins, at which time a “regulatory framing of moral and sexual behaviors and values” was instilled in notions of the “American Dream” and the “American way” (di Mauro and Joffe 2009, 47). More recently, as feminist and LGBT rights movements have challenged normative sexuality, a countercurrent has emerged to defend sexual conservatism. Current sex panics continue today, as increased legal rights and legitimacy are given to fetal subjectivity, whereas LGBT rights are simultaneously being acquired and repealed or blocked on a state-by-state basis. In February 2011 in the state of Ohio, a fetus was allowed to be called as a witness in a legal hearing (Wing 2011; also see Morgan and Michaels 1999); proposals are in committee in several states to define rape more narrowly and to disallow plaintiffs in rape trials to call themselves “victims” (e.g., CNN 2011); and gays, lesbians, and transgendered people continue to be victims of hate crimes in disproportionate numbers, all in the name of defending appropriate

reproduction and heteronormative family ideals. But while this form of legislative power is repressive, that of LGBT social movements continues to work in a productive sense (albeit repressive at times as well), and increasingly more states are passing same-sex partner recognition laws, including same-sex marriage or civil unions. This geopolitical arena of sexual politics, like many others, necessarily calls for scholars to approach the topic of sexuality and politics from an interdisciplinary perspective, one that takes into (p. 195) account formal as well as informal political processes and that goes beyond single-issue politics to address a wide range of structural inequalities (e.g., sexism, racism, class oppression, homophobia).

## The Relationship of Sexuality to Politics

Studies of sexuality have contributed in numerous ways to rethinking key political categories such as citizenship, nationality, and governance. This section addresses how scholars have examined *sexual citizenship* and the heteronormative underpinnings of legal and cultural discourse concerning the family and the nation (Bell and Binnie 2000; Richardson 2000; Plummer 2001). In periods of crisis, heteronormative citizen practices and state policies are often encouraged or enforced alongside conventional masculine and feminine constructions of the *good citizen* (Richardson 2000); these constructions are sometimes referred to as *hypermasculine* or *hyperfeminine* because they involve an explicit reassertion of traditional gender roles and values. In these instances, an appeal to traditional gender roles typically undergirds broader societal anxieties concerning crisis, conflict, or change. Economic practices of neoliberalism reinforce traditional interpretations of the family in similar ways, as evidenced in the appeal by some states to reinforce and strengthen the traditional family and associated parental gender roles (e.g., mother as child rearer and household caretaker; father as financial provider for the family) in welfare reform legislation (Smith 2001; Duggan 2004). Yet even in noncrises contexts, gendered constructions are central to notions of citizenship, as feminist scholars have long pointed out; what is most interesting, then, is how particular constructions are invoked in political discourse as a way to garner political support or appeal to a sense of citizenship, security, or national belonging. Yet struggles for sexual citizenship have yielded great advances for LGBTQ people as well, as witnessed in the constitutional reforms of South Africa, Ecuador, and Fiji (Lind 2010a) and as evident in several nation-states' adoption of same-sex marriage laws (Bernstein, Marshall, and Barclay 2009). Sometimes these gains coincide with feminist gains; sometimes they do not, as witnessed in "new Left" countries in Latin America where governments have adopted antidiscrimination clauses on the basis of sexual orientation yet continued to limit access to abortion (Friedman 2007; Lind 2012). Institutions of global governance also regulate sexual practices and identities, often creating complex, transnational arenas of power within which actors must necessarily operate (Bedford 2009; Lind 2010b).

To begin, debates on sexual citizenship have opened a new discursive terrain for understanding how liberal democracies are fundamentally heteronormative (p. 196) or are structured according to rules and norms that privilege heterosexuals over all other nonnormative individuals such as gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, and, generally speaking, transgendered people.<sup>2</sup> Since the 1980s, activists and scholars in the United Kingdom and the United States began to use the term more widely as a way to politicize the meaning of citizenship in response to both state securitization and neoliberalization and in light of developments such as the HIV/AIDS crisis and radical queer politics that emerged during that period. Whereas traditional conceptions of citizenship, pioneered by the work of T. H. Marshall (1950), emphasize the state's role in securing the welfare and rights of its citizens (the civic liberalist tradition) or the obligation of citizens to participate politically in common affairs (the civic republican tradition), contemporary feminist, poststructuralist, and queer studies scholars emphasize a broader notion of citizenship that lends itself to creating a more participatory democracy, one that includes sexual dissidents. Indeed, a central tenet of the research on sexual citizenship is that "all citizenship is sexual citizenship" (Bell and Binnie 2000, 10) and that all citizens are sexed through political discourses of the family as heteronormative and gender normative—discourses that frame many of the debates on national identity, welfare, marriage, immigration, and labor rights, to name only a few. Thus, scholars have attempted to redefine the family in policy and the law and to further scrutinize how heteronormativity is an assumed part of state practices of citizenship and very much frames who counts as a good or bad citizen (Seidman 2001).

The concept of sexual citizenship opens up the possibility for better understanding the public-private dichotomy in political theory and practice. Scholars have noted that sexual citizenship is based on a set of dichotomies, most notably the dichotomy of public versus private space (Giddens 1992; Plummer 2001; Evans 1993, 2007). The metaphor of *the closet* serves as a case in point. The closet is evoked as a metaphor of privacy and secrecy; "coming out of the closet" evokes the idea that individuals enter the realm of public life as "out" individuals, workers, and citizens. Ken Plummer (2001, 238) uses the concept of *intimate citizenship* to reframe the public-private division. He defines intimate citizenship as including the "...rights, obligations, recognitions and respect around those most intimate spheres of life—who to live with, how to raise children, how to handle one's body, how to relate as a gendered being, how to be an erotic person." In a similar vein, Mauro Cabra, A. I. Grinspan, and Paula Viturro (2006, 262) argue that sexual citizenship involves "...that which enunciates, facilitates, defends and promotes the effective access of citizens to the exercise of both sexual and reproductive rights and to a [non-heteronormative] political subjectivity." In this sense, sexual citizenship is about the right to control one's body, experience of embodiment, and (gendered and sexed) identity in the broadest sense, despite hegemonic discourse to the contrary that naturalizes gender expectations and identities into invisibility or assumes that citizens' sexual lives, identities, and intimate arrangements are "private" and therefore outside the realm of formal politics.



(p. 197) Central to this spatial logic is the exclusion of the homosexual from public life, in part through repressive strategies aimed at preserving the division between the “pure heterosexual” and the “polluted homosexual” (Seidman 2001, 322). Historically, laws regulating sexuality in northern, industrialized countries and in colonized territories and postcolonial nations were passed precisely to set up this division between good and bad, pure and polluted, healthy and unhealthy, legal and criminal, as many scholars have noted (Guy 1991; Seidman 2001). In postcolonial nations in Latin America, for example, sodomy, antiprostitution, and miscegenation laws all worked hand-in-hand to construct the ideal citizen as of Spanish or *mestizo/a* origin (i.e., as “not Indian”), middle-to upper-class, respectable, and heterosexual (Clark 2001; Prieto 2004). While many of these laws have been overturned, some remain in effect and have consequences for all individuals, heterosexual or otherwise, who do not fit within the prescribed heterosexual norms of their societies. As Steven Seidman (2001, 322) points out, “...Regimes of heteronormativity not only regulate the homosexual but control heterosexual practices by creating a moral hierarchy of good and bad sexual citizens.”

Immigration studies scholars have pointed out how nation-states operate in heteronormative (as well as racialized and gendered) ways to allow “good” immigrants in and keep “bad” immigrants out. Eithne Luibhéid (2002) addresses how the U.S. border has served as a site for controlling sexuality, including of pregnant women, Chinese immigrants, prostitutes, and lesbians and gay men, all of whom have been deemed as national threats at various times in history. Indeed, in many countries, immigration and political asylum claims depend much upon the broader political climate with regard to sexual politics and citizen laws (also see Luibhéid and Cantú 2005). Siobhan Somerville points out that contemporary immigration laws, framed largely in heteronormative terms, often shadow earlier miscegenation laws that banned interracial marriage (Somerville 2005). Similarly, post-9/11 processes of securitization in North America have sometimes created convivial, paradoxical relationship among queer individuals and the post-9/11 security state, as Jasbir Puar (2007) powerfully argues in *Terrorist Assemblages*. The increased securitization of states has led to new regimes of heteronormativity, which are typically racialized and often equate certain queers with terrorism while others with the national ideal. In this way, as Puar argues, new forms of homonormativities have emerged, which privilege “respectable” gays and lesbians (read: white, middle-class, gender-appropriate) against those that fall outside the realm of normative gay sexuality and gender identity (also see Aganthalagelou, Bassichis, and Spira 2008). Thus, political and cultural hegemonies exist among LGBT people as well, a point that Cathy Cohen (2001) also addresses in her research on sexuality, race, and class in LGBT communities within the United States, in which she argues for a politics “where the nonnormative and marginal positions of punks, bulldaggers, and welfare queens...[be] the basis for progressive transformative coalition work” (201). And as Puar notes, the U.S. state has

(p. 198) publicly supported the human rights of queers under some circumstances, as in the case of Iran or other nations demonized as “evil” or as “terrorist,” whereas the same state works to repress queers at home, thus raising the issue of how states operate as simultaneously homophobic and repressive yet also as productive and creative of LGBT

identities. In a similar vein, Anna Aganthalou et al. (2008) argue that there has been a “homonormative turn,” as part of a broader imperial logic, which “recodes ‘good’ forms of national kinship (monogamous, consumptive, privatized) while punishing those that fall outside them, particularly those forms of racialized and classed kinship that continue to be the target of state violence and pathology...leaving the foundational antagonisms of capitalist liberal democracy unscathed” (122). An example of this is the emphasis on same-sex (normative) marriage as the primary mainstream political strategy pursued by gay and lesbian activists in the United States and elsewhere, an emphasis that leaves the institution of marriage and additional repressive state practices, including the criminalization of other forms of legally defined “deviant” sexual practices, unexamined and intact.

Some scholars have addressed the consequences of neoliberal states practices and policies for sexual citizenship. In neoliberal contexts, the reassertion of conventional, heteronormative family forms has taken precedence in public policies and laws, as in the U.S. “welfare reform” process, which had at its core a notion of preserving the patriarchal, heterosexual, two-parented family while simultaneously demonizing single parents and nonheterosexual family forms (Smith 2001). This occurred through linking mandatory marriage education to welfare eligibility and through related fatherhood initiatives. In this context, the privatization of the economy has occurred alongside the privatization of care and family survival in such a way that nonnormative individuals do not have access even to the newly privatized points of service in the same way that married heterosexuals do; this includes lesbian, gay, and bisexual households but also single mothers and mothers deemed “unfit” to care for their children (Smith 2001). Lisa Rofel (2007) argues that in postsocialist China, neoliberal subjectivities are created through the production of various desires—material, sexual, and affective—and that it is largely through these means that people in China are imagining their identities and practicing appropriate desires for the post-Mao era. The emergence of gay and lesbian identities in this context is thus linked to the postsocialist state and to people’s quest for a new kind of citizenship.

Emergent scholarship on sexual citizenship in countries that have shifted away from neoliberal development models to socialist or “post-neoliberal” models of development point toward somewhat similar conclusions, despite major shifts in economic policy. That is, heteronormativity typically remains central to post-neoliberal forms of governance. For example, particularly in Latin America’s shift to the Left in the 2000s, some socialist-leaning governments continue to rely upon homophobic, heteronormative narratives of national citizenship and development; indeed, these are relics of the “old Left” past.

(p. 199) Venezuela President Hugo Chavez (1999–present), probably the most well-known of Latin America’s “new Left” leaders, has from the start framed his Bolivarian revolution in maternalist, heteronormative terms and, despite political support from LGBTQ sectors, has blocked repeated attempts to pass pro-LGBT legislation (Friedman 2007; Adrian 2008). In contrast, post-neoliberal governments in Bolivia and Ecuador have included new legislation that provides mechanisms for nontraditional households to access state resources, thereby paving the way for a broader notion of redistribution based on a newly

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defined family that is not based entirely on kinship or blood-based relations (Lind and Pazmiño Arguello 2009). Thus, sexual citizenship claims depend upon the broader political climate, the historical trajectory of postcolonial nation-building, and the ways activists and other individuals and groups negotiate the terms of citizenship within the broader arena of sexual politics and politics in general.

# LGBTQ Participation in Political Processes and Social Movements

One way to understand the relationship among sexuality, gender, and politics is to examine how nonnormative groups of people have made political claims and participated in political processes. This section addresses how scholars of politics understand LGBTQ participation in local, national, and international politics; how LGBT voter behavior and standards of living are understood, sometimes in misguided ways; how the notion of *identity politics* has been key to understanding how LGBTQ identity markers are mobilized in given contexts; the role of LGBTQ social movements in influencing decision-making processes; and how heteronormativities as well as homonormativities are produced in and through LGBT political struggles, thereby creating new hierarchies based on race, class, and nationality, even as they acquire new forms of rights for marginalized groups of people.

To begin, as scholars have observed, LGBTQ individuals participate in formal political processes like any other group of people: as voters and sometimes as candidates, policy makers, legal experts, lobbyists, or advocates. As existing research on LGBT political participation, public opinion polls, and same-sex partner recognition legislation has shown, there is still a great need for normative empirical research documenting the lives of individuals and households that do not fit the hegemonic heteronormative and gender normative ideals of their societies or nations. For example, the 2000 U.S. Census revealed some interesting information about lesbian and gay voter participation: the census reported that self-identified gays and lesbians lived in 99.3 percent of all counties in the nation. Prior to the 2000 census, some politicians did not believe that gays and lesbians existed in their districts: As noted in the Urban Institute's publication, *The Gay and Lesbian Atlas*, "When informed that 55 same-sex couples were counted in his hometown in Mississippi, Republican State Sen. Dean Kirby told *The Clarion-Leader* (Jackson, MS), 'Surely you jest. Wow! I have never met any of these people'" (Gates and Ost 2004). Thus, the most conventional form of bringing visibility to lesbian and gay lives is potentially political in and of itself. Not surprisingly, data from the 2000 census indicate that statistically, states with more gay- and lesbian-supportive laws have higher concentrations of gay and lesbian couples (Gates and Ost 2004), and that gay and lesbian voters tend to vote for the liberal Democratic rather than the conservative Republican Party, although this too depends upon location and individual ideological affiliations that go beyond narrowly defined gay and lesbian "identity politics." The Log Cabin Republicans, a gay and lesbian political arm of the Republican Party, for example, has an increasing presence in Republican and Right-leaning politics, albeit often with great resistance from other conservative individuals and groups.

Scholarly research on gay- and lesbian-supportive laws demonstrates that often, in political and cultural battles concerning the family, there is much misinformation in the media. Thus, research documenting the socioeconomic status of LGBT individuals and

their related needs for access to material resources and legal rights, both in public and private sectors, has been key to developing a clearer, more accurate understanding of LGBT populations. M. V. Lee Badgett's research on the economic status of gays and lesbians in the United States is a case in point: she reports that, contrary to popular belief, gay men and lesbians are not generally in a higher-income bracket than their heterosexual counterparts. While some gay men have acquired wealth, the majority have not; this is even less so for lesbians, who continue to face structural biases in the labor market on the basis of their gender and sometimes their race or social class (Badgett 2001). This research has implications for how future federal and state public policies and laws are created, being that historically they have been based on a heteronormative notion of the family or household, which excludes poor LGBT individuals from access to state resources.

In contrast, in the Global South, postcolonial studies scholars have attempted to counter discourses of homosexuality as "foreign" to the needs, desires, and identities of individuals who do not fit within the culturally prescribed gender and sexual order within their countries. A dire amount of research exists that documents gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender lives in regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia, despite the fact that major culture wars are taking place, often supported by conservative antigay transnational networks, in several countries. On one hand, some countries such as South Africa and Argentina have national same-sex marriage laws, and others have antidiscrimination clauses on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in their constitutions (e.g., Ecuador, South Africa, Fiji), making them among the most progressive constitutions worldwide. On (p. 201) the other hand, as has been widely publicized, antihomosexuality agendas have dominated political processes in some nations, such as Uganda, where gay activists have been murdered and where the state, backed in part by the U.S.-based Religious Right, nearly made homosexuality a crime punishable by death (Gettelman 2011). In other cases, such as in Egypt, the homophobic state has worked to repress gay sexualities as a way to erase any notion of same-sex desire as "Egyptian" (Human Rights Watch 2004). This raises the additional issue that "visibility," while important, is not always positive; it can be productive yet also repressive, depending upon the national context (Bosia and Weiss forthcoming).

Scholars have also conducted research on LGBT participation in social movements. Wald, Button, and Rienzo (1996, cited in Bedford 2004) found that, in the United States, variation in the expansion of legal protection for LGBT people was influenced by the strength and political mobilization of both the gay and lesbian community and Protestant fundamentalist groups, the presence of sympathetic political elites, and the existence of a political environment responsive to new claimants. David Rayside (2001) points out in his research on LGBT activism in Britain, Canada, and the United States that while activists have made important claims, particularly since the 1980s, "...elected politicians and their parties are reluctant to take unequivocal stands on sexual orientation even when they are favorably disposed to do so. In most countries, they are prone to view gay-positive measures as vote losers" and "tend to see pro-gay sentiments as strong only for gays and lesbians themselves" (24). And even when gay-positive measures are passed, Urvashi Vaid

(2004, 4) points out that access to political processes and benefits from whatever favorable decisions emerge from courts, administrative agencies, and legislatures “are not evenly spread across lines of class, race, gender and region.”

Some social movement scholars have addressed the nature of LGBT social movements as *new* identity-based versus *old* strategy-based movements. The long-standing *identity* versus *strategy* debate within the social movement scholarship tends to separate struggles for recognition (typically viewed as identity based) from struggles for redistribution (typically viewed as class or material based) (Cohen 1985; Fraser 1996; Gamson 2008). While LGBT movements are often framed as “identity-based” movements, much of the recent scholarship documents the multiple ways LGBT people have limited access to material resources as a result of their second-class or noncitizen status and have struggled for broader agendas that include redistribution. This, however, is a point of contention within LGBT movements as well. On one hand, movements that wish to work within the defined boundaries of liberal democracy tend to focus on single-issue politics and fight exclusively or primarily for a normative set of gay and lesbian rights. These rights often include same-sex marriage, the right to serve in the military (in countries where gays and lesbians are not allowed to openly serve), parental rights (e.g., legal guardianship, adoption), employment rights, and inheritance and property rights. Yet movements that have effectively acquired some level of (p. 202) sexual citizenship—as in countries where same-sex marriage laws exist—often do so without questioning the institution of marriage or democracy within which inequalities continue to exist. Thus, more radically oriented LGBT movements challenge the very institutions of marriage and democracy (among others), question why liberal LGBT supporters wish to be part of what they view as oppressive institutions, and struggle for an alternative to marriage, military, and the family as legally defined and regulated by the state and/or by religious institutions (see Aganthagelou et al. 2008). For better or for worse, these widely contrasting political strategies and ideologies are often framed in terms of LGBT versus queer politics, particularly in the U.S. context (Gamson 2008).

Yet challenges to this dualistic understanding of LGBT social movement organizing also exist, both within the United States and transnationally. In his widely cited article, “Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma,” Joshua Gamson (1995) argues that while some segments of the LGBT movement have adopted the notion of “queer” to challenge and broaden an understanding of identity that transcends normative categories (e.g., heterosexual vs. homosexual; cisgender vs. transgender), identity-based social movements necessarily must grapple with the essentialist paradox of fixed identity categories. “Fixed identity categories are both the basis for oppression and the basis for political power,” he argues, pointing out the contradictions and messiness of identity politics. Other scholars address how identity politics are derived from and also sometimes challenge the broader political context within which political identities are constructed. Jan-Willem Duyvendak (2001), for instance, argues that in France the pursuit of a specific group identity and the representation of particular desires and interests conflicts with prevailing republican notions of egalitarianism and universalism, making it difficult for the gays and lesbians to create a movement of their own, separate from neo-Marxist and

other radical leftist traditions. He contrasts this with the Netherlands' historical practice of "pillarization," which existed through the 1970s and provided an organizational framework for politics and social life (parties, schools, sports associations, the media) within carefully delineated groups (usually by religious denomination). Unlike France, this historical state practice allowed for LGBT people to organize more readily as a group. Thus, despite the fact that the Netherlands has been "depillarized" since the 1970s; the social and political legacy has nonetheless allowed for LGBT movements to organize independently (Duyvendak 2001).

Miriam Smith compares LGBT organizing processes in Canada and the United States and argues that, while gay and lesbian rights claimants in the two countries have framed the issue of same-sex marriage in similar ways, the outcomes have been quite different due to how the framings have been interpreted within the broader political climate: Whereas Canada passed federal same-sex marriage legislation in 2005, the United States continues with its legacy of federal and state Defense of Marriage Acts (DOMAs); thus, activists are forced to work toward repealing DOMAs and to propose same-sex marriage legislation at the state, rather than the federal, level (Smith 2007).<sup>3</sup>

(p. 203) In the Global South, identity politics take on different sets of meanings, ones that are typically embedded in broader struggles concerning (post)colonization, Westernization, sovereignty, and imperialism. Dennis Altman (2001) addresses the "universalizing of gay identities" as a process by which new forms of sexual expression and identities emerge throughout the world alongside the broader process of globalization. In his view, gay identities are increasingly visible in countries where material progress has occurred—a view that supports John D'Emilio's earlier claim (with regard to his historical research on the United States) that gay identities have emerged, albeit paradoxically, as a result of capitalism (D'Emilio 1984; Altman 2001). Some scholars such as Ronald Inglehart (1997) claim to find evidence of a shift from what he terms *materialist* to *postmaterialist* values in several countries. In his study, Inglehart shows significant shifts toward a more permissive view of abortion, divorce, homosexuality, and extramarital sex in all but two of twenty countries surveyed between 1981 and 1990. The two exceptions were South Africa and Argentina, which, interestingly, are now two of a small set of countries in the global South that have same-sex marriage laws.<sup>4</sup>

Other scholars address the complex transnational context within which local decisions are made about sexuality. Rather than attempting to create a barometer of sexual progress, these scholars focus instead on describing and analyzing relationships among local, national, and transnational actors in the making of public discourses concerning sexuality in their home countries. These accounts allow for an understanding of how newly articulated forms of homophobia emerge in both rich and poor countries and, likewise, how some countries in the global South, despite their economic poverty as nations, have advanced more progressive legislation than some of their northern counterparts. Thus, while some patterns of LGBT-friendly legislation may exist worldwide, there are examples of social movement organizing that point the discussion in a different

direction. Suparna Bhaskaran (2004), for example, addresses how the struggle in the 1990s and 2000s to repeal Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, an antisodomy law originally passed under British colonial rule in 1860, occurred through a confluence of local and transnational networks aimed at challenging the contemporary state's usage of the code against sexual minorities. As part of social movement opposition to the penal code language, activists argued that the contemporary homophobic state was disproportionately using the code against sexual minorities. As another part of the legal argument that was constructed, activists argued that forms of same-sex desire and nonheterosexual identities have existed in India prior to colonization and that modern conceptions of homosexuality as deviant and unnatural came about only with British colonization (note that this legal argument was proposed as a way to counter the idea that homosexuality is merely a "Western import" rather than to argue necessarily that sexual hierarchies and inequalities did not exist prior to colonization). Combined, these arguments (alongside others) helped create a legal argument for the High Court of Delhi to decriminalize same-sex behavior in 2009. And Jacqui Alexander's (1991, 1994) now-classic articles linking sexuality to neoliberal state practices in (p. 204) the Bahamas and in Trinidad and Tobago demonstrate this as well. Among others, she argues that neoliberal economic reform relies on women's heterosexual love to pick up the slack of state cutbacks, a process that has led to the scapegoating of gays, lesbians, and sex workers as "threats" to Caribbean postcolonial nations and colonized territories (ibid.; also see Bedford 2009, xi-xix). In these Caribbean contexts, *postmaterial values* are viewed as foreign and as "outside" the nation. There is evidence in the scholarship of other examples as well that do not necessarily correspond to a country's shift to postmaterial values. For example, whereas Ecuador continues to be a Latin American country with the highest number of churchgoers (Xie and Corrales 2010), since 1997 legislation has been passed both in neoliberal and post-neoliberal contexts that defy any logic of the "march of history" as an indicator of sexual progress (Bosia and Weiss in press; Lind in press). In 1997, homosexuality was decriminalized in the country, following a widely publicized systematic, targeted beating of four transgendered individuals in Cuenca, the country's third largest city. First beaten on the streets of Cuenca, local police then arrested them and brought them to a local jail where more than one of these individuals was raped by police. This incident drew strong support from Ecuador's generally conservative national population and was the impetus needed for activists to push for legal change and recognition. Following the decriminalization of homosexuality, in 1998 the new constitution, redrafted largely by a conservative national assembly, included antidiscrimination legislation on the basis of sexual orientation. And in the 2008 constitution, redrafted under the leadership of socialist president Rafael Correa (2007–present), additional legislation was included to protect individuals on the basis of gender identity and to provide further mechanisms for sexual-gender minorities not only to receive recognition but also to access state benefits and other material resources typically reserved for heterosexual citizens, as part of heteronormative families and households (Lind in press). All of these examples demonstrate the complexity of framing sexual politics, including LGBT rights, in postcolonial contexts.



# The Heteronormative Dimensions of Global Political Institutions and Public Policies

As scholars have moved away from state-centric analyses, and as the fields of postcolonial and critical development studies have grown additional attention has been paid to how heteronormativity is embedded in institutions of global and regional governance (e.g., United Nations [UN], World Bank, World Trade Organization, European Union) and in international economic and social (p. 205) policies and laws (e.g., gender mainstreaming, gender and development, human rights, disaster relief, trade liberalization, national security). In addition, new forms of scholarship on heteronormativity and sexuality have emerged in the fields of international relations and international political economy. Cynthia Weber's (1999) pioneering work on "queering" U.S. state hegemony draws from various fields, including not only international relations but also psychoanalytic feminist and queer theory, to address the performative nature of U.S. imperial power through an examination of foreign policy. She analyzes the U.S. invasions of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama to understand how the U.S. state sustains its imperial superiority through gendered representations of itself as hypermasculine (hence the emphasis on the state's performative nature) and of the invaded countries as feminine and subservient. Alongside this, she introduces readers to an understanding of how hegemonic heterosexuality holds a central, rather than a marginal or nonexistent, place in international relations discourse and practice. At the time of its publication in 1996, *Faking It* was a unique and cutting-edge contribution to the field of international relations.

Scholars of international political economy IPE have also addressed how sexuality, intimacy, heteronormativities, and homonormativities shape scholarly understandings of global restructuring and international politics. J. K. Gibson-Graham (2006) argues that discourses of globalization, both those of supporters and proponents, tend to view globalization as a "rape script," in which powerful nations and corporations have extreme power over poor nations. Seen as a rape script, globalization feels "omnipresent and inevitable," but, as the authors argue, when viewed as one form of economic practice among others, we can begin to imagine alternatives to capitalist globalization. Kimberly A. Chang and L. H. M. Ling (2000) argue that globalization has an "intimate other" that serves as what Saskia Sassen calls the "underbelly" of globalization. This intimate other, which in Chang and Ling's case refers to Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong, helps sustain (what we can now call) regimes of heteronormativity alongside political and economic forms of power. These studies provided important bases for later, more explicit examinations of heteronormativity as a form of power and social institution. Amy Lind (2011) argues that the gender and development (GAD) field is inherently heteronormative in that many GAD policies assume that poor women and their households—the typical recipients of GAD policies—are necessarily bound to heterosexual familial arrangements,

an observation that Chandra Mohanty (1991) hinted at years earlier in “Under Western Eyes” and that other scholars have critiqued as well (e.g., Harcourt 2009).

Scholars have also observed how institutions of global and regional governance, like nation-states, are inherently heteronormative, in addition to being largely Eurocentric institutions. Recent research on the World Bank, the world’s largest and most influential development institution, is a case in point. Andil Gosine’s (2005, 2010) research on Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Employees (GLOBE) of the World Bank demonstrates how employees’ gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) identities do not necessarily translate into a particular set of GLB interests or (p. 206) concerns. As an important institution in the global development industry, the World Bank offers perhaps the best set of domestic partner benefits to its GLB employees. At the same time, the bank is known for its conventional heteronormative policies and practices in the Global South. Gosine’s findings suggest that while the Bank may have considered changing some of its policies as a result of GLB presence among its employees (most notably, with Hans Binswanger’s influence in the bank funding HIV/AIDS projects in Africa and elsewhere), for the most part GLB employees themselves did not see a correlation between their own interests and those of LGBT people in the Global South, the recipients of bank policies (Gosine 2010). Kate Bedford’s (2009, xii) research on World Bank policy framings aims to “look at the sexual nature of Bank gender policy...and at the sexualized politics of the Bank as a global governing body.” Her study “identifies the Bank as a key global actor in forging normative arrangements of intimacy, and it links that process to international political economy.” As part of her analysis, she reveals how the Bank, while it claims to have little or no business in sexuality, is always necessarily invested in and working to create or rearticulate notions of femininity, masculinity and heteronormativity as part and parcel of their broader economic modernization agenda, even in the “kinder, gentler” post-Washington Consensus era. The bank’s PROFAM project, piloted in Argentina and Ecuador, which aimed to promote family strengthening among the poor, is a case in point: As Bedford argues, the project essentially asked women to “work harder” (following the long-standing liberal WID tradition of “integrating women into development”) and men to “love better,” as they were asked to join workshops addressing paternal responsibilities in domestic labor as a way to “make them better partners” in normative familial arrangements (xx).

Scholars have addressed heteronormativity in other institutions as well, including in the United Nations and international development agencies. Unlike the World Bank, United Nations employees who participate in United Nations Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Employees (UNGLOBE) must comply with the laws of their countries of origin, thereby making it difficult to organize at an employee level. At the same time, “out” UN LGBT employees and their allies have made an effort to address discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity on a global scale; in this sense, their strategy as an employee’s association diverges greatly from the bank’s GLOBE (Lind 2010a). Similarly, as scholars such as Gilles Kleitz (2000) point out, international development agencies

generally assume that sexuality is an attribute of the wealthy: “The poor simply can’t be queer, because sexual identities are seen as a rather unfortunate result of western development and are linked to being rich and privileged” (2; see also Bedford 2009; Lind 2010a).

Studies have been conducted of regional governing bodies as well. For example, European studies scholars have analyzed how the European Union (EU) has integrated gender and sexuality concerns into its regional governance agenda (Bell 2002; Kantola 2010). In fact, the first legally binding international (p. 207) treaty addressing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, approved by the then fifteen leaders of the EU member states as a way to update the EU’s original 1992 Maastricht Treaty. While the provision addressing sexual orientation in the treaty does not outlaw discrimination per se, it requires member states to abide by it to acquire and maintain EU membership. Among others, the Amsterdam Treaty paved the way for the EU’s Employment Equality Directive, which serves as a guide for national governments to implement nondiscrimination policies in the workplace.

International gender policies are also being analyzed in new ways by scholars of sexuality and gender studies. For example, Jauhola (2010) provides a critique of heteronormativity in gender mainstreaming (GM) policies that aim to integrate women into political and economic processes as a way to achieve gender equality. Defined in a conventional sense, gender mainstreaming also leads to the heteronormalization of societal institutions and daily life, a fact that feminist proponents of GM have not always addressed. Jauhola addresses GM policies and practices in post-tsunami Indonesia and argues that as GM documents and gender equity policies draw from heteronormative sex-gender divisions and gender binaries, they (however unwittingly) reproduce heteronormative boundaries. Thus, even in seemingly gender-neutral policy processes such as disaster relief, heteronormativity shapes the outcome of who gets access to relief and how. One important concrete outcome of this research is that whereas heterosexual women have been the “targets” of various forms of gender equity politics, these policies, which tend to overlook the social institution of heterosexuality as an important site of heteronormalization, often erase lesbian identities and livelihoods, thereby averting as well any discussion of lesbian rights or redistributive justice (Mohanty 1991; Lind and Share 2003; 2011). Likewise, these policies, even in their explicitly defined feminist variations, can overlook or erase the identities and livelihoods of heterosexual women who do not fit within a heteronormative understanding of family life: this sometimes includes sex workers, single mothers, transnational migrant households, or women who do not fit within societal (including feminist) notions of respectability and are therefore overlooked, left out of policy processes, or have little or no legal recourse or access to resources.

# Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the trajectory of scholarship on sexuality and heteronormativity as it relates to the field of gender and politics and to politics more broadly. Its aim has been to introduce the reader to four general areas of inquiry: notions of sexuality as a form of power; the relationship between sexuality and politics; LGBT political participation; and the heteronormative (p. 208) dimensions of state and global policies, laws, and institutions. Although scholars' emphases differ in their epistemological and methodological approaches, there are at least four central tenets that run through this interdisciplinary scholarship: First, scholars tend to agree that sexuality is socially constructed and politically contested, despite hegemonic views that sexuality remains "outside" the realm of politics or the public domain (note that this does not mean that there is no biological aspect to sexuality but rather that even biological sex is mediated through social relations). Second, this literature sheds light on how political conceptions of citizenship and governance have historically been defined in heteronormative terms, thereby rendering individuals who do not fit into culturally prescribed sexual or gender roles as second-class (or non-) citizens. Third, it reveals how political institutions reproduce heteronormative bias and are in the business of sexuality, even when they claim otherwise, as the aforementioned examples of sexual regulation reveal (e.g., fetal subjectivity laws, abortion and homosexuality laws, World Bank and other economic development policies). Finally, this scholarship calls our attention to the largely underdeveloped research on how LGBTQ individuals understand their identities, needs, and political visions and to how historically oppressed communities of color and colonized communities perceive and experience sexual regulation and regimes of heteronormativity and homonormativity as well. Seen from this angle, sexuality is clearly central to broader processes of social change and is best understood alongside and as part and parcel of other forms of inequality and struggle.

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### Notes:

(1.) As an important parallel, transphobia is defined as the irrational fear of or hatred toward gender-variant individuals and is similarly aligned with a broader notion of gender normativity that privileges traditional gender norms and expectations over all others. Indeed, gender identity bias often overlaps with and is conflated with sexual identity bias (for example, a hate crime against a perceived homosexual is sometimes based on the attacker's perception of the victim's gender identity, as in the victim being "too feminine" or "too masculine," not on his or her same-sex intimate attachments). While the two are closely related, it is important to understand them as separate forms of phobias and normativities as well. In this chapter, although I focus primarily on heteronormativity, I discuss gender normativity to the extent possible.

## Heteronormativity and Sexuality

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(2.) Here I am using *transgender* as an umbrella term to include several disparate groups of individuals who do not fit within culturally prescribed gender roles, including cross-dressers, biologically born males or females who do not “pass” as their medically assigned gender, nonoperative transpeople, and also transsexuals. I use this term with the caveat that because it has become almost axiomatic when used politically, it obscures important differences between these groups as well (Currah 2006, 4–5).

(3.) In February 2011, however, the Obama-backed U.S. Department of Justice announced that it will no longer legally defend DOMA, thus paving the way for legal challenges to the federal policy.

(4.) South Africa was the first country in the global south to legalize same-sex marriage in 2006, following the country’s earlier passage of the 1996 post-apartheid constitution, which provided legal protections for sexual minorities and paved the way for later gay- and lesbian-supportive legislation. Argentina’s same-sex marriage law went into effect in 2010.

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