Global homocapitalism

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Temples of global capitalism have become increasingly vociferous of late in their opposition to homophobia. In February 2014, shortly after Uganda's President Museveni gave his assent to a draconian Anti Homosexuality Act, the World Bank announced that it was delaying a US$90 million loan to Uganda on the grounds that the law would adversely affect health programmes that the loan was intended to support.[1] Bank president Jim Kim justified the decision with the argument that 'when societies enact laws that prevent productive people from fully participating in the workforce, economies suffer.'[2] In the same month, the Bank published a study estimating that homophobia and the exclusion of LGBT people cost the Indian economy between 0.1 per cent and 1.7 per cent of its GDP in 2012.[3] Both the Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have contributed to the *It Gets Better* viral video campaign, launched to dissuade queer young people from committing suicide, with short films featuring LGBT staff speaking about growing up queer and being out in their personal and professional lives.[4] In August 2015 *The Economist* magazine launched 'Pride and Prejudice', which it describes as 'a comprehensive global initiative tackling the business and economic case for LGBT diversity and inclusion'. Culminating in a public event to be held in London in March 2016, the initiative aims to bring together over 200 leaders from the worlds of business, politics and society to catalyse debate on the 'economic and human costs of discrimination against the LGBT community'.[5]

In this article I ask why leading institutions of global capitalism have begun to take activist stances against homophobia, and why they have done so now. I want to understand the terms on which the figure of the queer has come to be adopted as an object of concern for the development industry. Rather than pretending to offer a 'balanced' assessment of what is being called the 'business case' for LGBT rights, I am interested in thinking through how a radical queer anti-capitalist politics might relate to this emerging discourse. Central to the initiatives mentioned above is a common-sense understanding of homophobia as a cultural disposition that might be disincentivized through the deployment of economic carrots (the promise of growth) and sticks (the withdrawal of capital). Revisiting debates over recognition and redistribution politics, I argue that viewing homophobia as 'merely cultural' enables international financial institutions (IFIs) to obscure the material conditions that incubate homophobic moral panics, and their own culpability in co-producing those conditions. Positioning themselves as external to the problem they seek to alleviate, IFIs are able to cast themselves as progressive forces in a greater moral struggle at precisely the historical moment in which austerity and capitalist crisis threaten to bring them into ever-greater disrepute. In sum, through a critical survey of recent IFI initiatives on homophobia, I attempt to delineate the emerging contours of what I call 'global homocapitalism'.

Queering IFIs

Sexuality has long been central to the development agenda, but it has tended to be implicit and framed as the driver of a host of problems, including 'overpopulation', reproductive health, sexual violence and disease. Focused on regulation and risk management, the development industry has tended to ignore the more positive and affirmative dimensions of sexuality. And it has, until recently, been deeply heteronormative in its understanding of desire.[6] As Gilles Kleitz puts it, '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. The poor just reproduce.'[7]

Nonetheless, the statements and initiatives cited at the start of this article suggest that something is beginning to change. HIV/AIDS has been pivotal in forcing an acknowledgement of the diversity of sexualities and prompting interventions targeted at communities deemed to be especially at risk. Sexual rights victories on issues such as decriminalization of same-sex conduct, recognition of same-sex marriage and adoption rights, and access to gender transition in countries across Europe and the Americas have

in turn led international development bureaucracies based in these countries to fund projects dealing with sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) elsewhere. The growing prominence of SOGI issues as a development concern is also linked to the increasing propensity of development workers themselves to identify as LGBT in their professional lives. Andil Gosine has traced how the founding in 1993 of GLOBE (the World Bank's LGBT staff association) was instrumental in getting staff to come out at work and to lobby the Bank for better benefits, but also, eventually, in prompting the Bank to exercise political leadership on HIV/AIDS and to support LGBT advocacy in the global South.[8]

Understanding the terms on which new issues are incorporated into the agenda of the Bank can tell us quite a lot about the motivations underpinning such moves. In this regard, I suggest that we have much to learn from the Bank's longer history of engagement with (cisgendered heterosexual) women as a development constituency. In a study of this engagement, Kate Bedford argues that gender work became central to the Bank's fashioning of a post-Washington Consensus. Stung by criticism of its ill-fated structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s, which typically demanded liberalization, deregulation and a downsizing of the state in exchange for Bank assistance, the post-Washington Consensus purported to recognize the importance of the state. It abandoned conditionality for a commitment to borrowing-country 'ownership' of policymaking and partnership with civil society, and it identified good governance, social safety nets and targeted poverty reduction as key priorities. The family, and especially poor women, became crucial sites for the Bank in demonstrating its commitment to a kinder, more inclusive and humane approach to economic growth.[9] In this, we might see the Bank as exemplifying the long-standing tendency of imperial governmentality to legitimate its will to power in humanitarian justification – what postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak has pithily described as 'white men saving brown women from brown men'.[10] More specifically, guardians of capitalism have always sought to anchor capitalist social relations in extra-market moral justifications, ranging from the libertarian virtues of meritocracy and individual self-worth in neoconservative defences of capitalism to more welfarist concerns such as gender empowerment in neoliberal variants thereof.[11]

As Bedford argues, previous Bank gender policy had been criticized for overlooking the double burden placed on women when they entered formal employment, and for ignoring men altogether. Nonetheless the conviction that women were empowered by formal employment remained central to Bank lending. Simultaneously, Bank research on poor men was beginning to suggest that economic hardship engendered a crisis in masculinity when men could no longer play the role of breadwinners. Bedford demonstrates how these critiques and insights produced a new model of intimate attachment that became central to post-Washington Consensus projects, wherein the Bank moved from a breadwinner-housewife model of domesticity to a two-partner sharing model of love and labour in which women were encouraged to work more outside the home while men were urged to take on greater domestic caring responsibilities.[12] Crucially, Bedford underscores that the new gender regime effectively (re-) privatized responsibility for social reproduction, consistently privileging fatherhood promotion over state provision of childcare in a number of projects. Nonetheless it appealed to a range of different constituencies because its benefits appeared unqualifiedly desirable: greater sharing of the domestic labour of social reproduction was, after all, an unimpeachably feminist goal. Ultimately, the success of the Bank's new gender regime rested on its ability to link the dual imperatives of efficiency and empowerment: greater female employment in the market promised to liberate traditional gender relations, and better gender relations promised a more efficient allocation of labour resources.[13] Thus, gender relations were reimagined in ways that purported to serve neoliberal *and* feminist goals.

Although Bedford's study suggests that the Bank was wedded to a heteronormative model of domestic intimacy, there are striking continuities between its reformulation of ideal heterosexual relations and its more recent interest in queer subjects. Describing the post-Washington Consensus interest in poor men, Bedford notes a tendency to think of poverty as engendering a humiliated masculinity, which manifests itself in irresponsible behaviour such as alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual violence and child neglect. These beliefs generate an insistence in Bank policy that 'poor countries are more sexist than rich ones, and that markets transform gender relations in unequivocally more efficient and empowering directions'.[14]

We can see in some of the Bank's LGBT initiatives the analogous premiss that poor countries are more homophobic than rich ones. While lacking the status of an official policy pronouncement, the Bank's *It*

Gets Better video (2011) is revealing of the pervasiveness of this assumption. It features an employee reflecting that 'some [of his colleagues] had it easy coming out. But some others had it difficult. Specially those from developing countries.'[15] Explaining why it might be difficult for IMF staff to come out at work, one speaker on the Fund's *It Gets Better* video (2013) notes that 'a lot of people at the Fund come from societies that are much less welcoming of gay people and that is a baggage that you don't leave at the door when you come to the IMF. It's very hard to overcome that, I think, for people who come from those societies.'[16] Yet another speaker in the IMF clip elaborates helpfully: 'We have so many people from all over the world working here, and their ideas of sexuality, of orientation, of how things are supposed to be … it's all very different. You have anything from progressive Western countries to traditional Eastern countries or African nations or Latin America. And everybody has a different perspective.'[17] The pervasiveness of these attitudes among Bank staff is borne out by Gosine's ethnographic work on GLOBE. Asking why gay white men seemed to be overrepresented in its membership relative to the gender and geographical balance in the overall makeup of the Bank's staff, Gosine teases out two barely disguised assumptions that recurred in his interviews: first, that heterosexual people who were non-white or not from Western countries were more likely to be homophobic; second, that women and non-white men who were not heterosexual hesitated to come out and to join GLOBE because they faced overwhelming 'cultural' pressures to remain closeted.[18]

Eliding 'culture' and levels of 'development', these discourses participate in what Jasbir Puar has influentially described as 'homonationalism', whereby LGBT rights have become a new marker for old binaries (civilized/savage, developed/less developed).[19] But they do considerably more. In their subversive reworking of the IMF *It Gets Better* video, the Greek conceptual audiotextual performance duo FYTA suggests that the video is also an artefact of 'pinkwashing' in its implicit yoking of its neoliberal economic mission with a 'civilizing' anti-homophobic project.[20] Overlaying the IMF video with subtitled commentary, FYTA punctures the monotonously familiar coming-out narratives of well-groomed, largely white, male, upper-middle-class professionals uttered against an aural backdrop of anodyne elevator music, with viciously snarky political and psychoanalytic critique. The most productively jarring moments in the performance come when we are reminded of the dissonance between the values that the individuals featured on the video seek to reclaim from their personal struggles, and those that they promote through their work.

When a lesbian Haitian staffer bemoans her upbringing in a Haiti where 'you don't hear people talking about gays and lesbians in a very positive way', FYTA reminds us that Haiti's contemporary political predicaments can, in quite significant measure, be traced back to the devastation of its agricultural sector by IMF policies foisted on the country in 1986 in return for desperately needed financial assistance. When IMF managing director Christine Lagarde appears on the video to affirm that she wants to head an organization where 'everybody has to be able to be who they are, and they have to be comfortable, respected, proud of their difference', FYTA reminds us of Fund policies imposing 'user fees' that made education and health care inaccessible to the poorest in many borrowing countries. Beyond the specific instances of hypocrisy that FYTA draws our attention to, there is something apposite about this critique being offered by queer *Greek* voices in the current conjuncture. Although FYTA is deeply invested in deconstructing Greek nationalism, committing itself in its self-description to 'wiping out notions of Greek tradition and Greekness', it is not incidental that its critique should have emerged from Greece. Indeed it does not take much to imagine how self-evidently absurd it must appear to queer Greeks to hear the IMF promise that 'It Gets Better', even as it participates in imposing draconian austerity measures on their country.

If the *It Gets Better* videos can be dismissed as amateur efforts that are unrepresentative of IFI policy, this certainly cannot be said about the Bank's more recent attempts to build an economic case against homophobia. Its 2014 report estimating the cost of homophobia to the Indian economy, authored by economist Lee Badgett, is revealing of the Bank's emerging interest in queer sexuality. The basic argument is simple enough. Homophobia imposes avoidable costs on economies by lowering productivity and output as a result of employment discrimination, reducing investment in human capital as a result of discrimination in education, and widening health disparities between heterosexual and queer people thanks to the disproportionate risk of HIV/AIDS, violence, depression and suicide borne by the latter. Offering a conservative estimate of these costs as amounting to 0.1–1.7 per cent of 2012 GDP in its chosen case study India, the Bank seeks to incentivize governments to end homophobia by quantifying the economic growth that they would enjoy as a consequence of doing so.[21]

Once again, the Bank advances an efficiency rationale for gender empowerment, which appears incontrovertibly good because ending homophobia is desirable for its own sake. Yet in unpacking what is at stake here we must ask not only what the Bank is doing for queers but also what queers are doing for the Bank. As FYTA's pinkwashing critique of the IMF suggests, a radical agenda is effectively conscripted in the service of the capitalist imperative of expanding output, productivity and markets. Queer visions of the good life become mortgaged to limitless growth, which is itself further insulated from environmental, equity, and other critiques. Beholden to capitalism, the prospects for a queer Green or a queer indigenous politics become increasingly remote. In the political context of the Bank's work in India, the Bank's overtures to queers should invite us to interrogate the queer movement's relations with other social movements – those of farmers, fishworkers and adivasis (forest dwellers) to name only a few – that have struggled against the effects of Bank-led policies for decades. As with queer Greeks and the IMF, it is sobering to imagine what queer adivasis might make of a Bank project that hailed their participation (as queers) in the very processes that are destroying their lifeworlds (as queer adivasis). That the intersectionality of queer and adivasi is virtually unthinkable in the imaginary of the Bank and possibly the mainstream of the queer movement in India begs important questions that I cannot do justice to here.

A second problem concerns the deeply reductive account of freedom as participation in the market which appears to animate this project. There is something profoundly troubling about a strategy that makes respect for personhood contingent on the promise of that person's productivity were their personhood to be fully recognized. To do so is of course not to treat persons as ends in themselves. But it should also prompt us to wonder about the implications of strategies that premiss full citizenship on productivity for those who find themselves unable or unwilling to be 'productive' within the terms of the market – the disabled, the unemployed, the elderly, the 'development'-induced displaced. One consequence of the increasingly tight link between personhood and productivity is that public support for welfare for the 'unproductive' becomes increasingly difficult to sustain, especially in a climate of austerity.

A third worry about the Bank's homophobia costing exercise arises out of the images of love and labour that suffuse the report's key claims. To its credit, the Badgett report is candid about the lack of data on LGBT working conditions in India. To fill in

the gaps, it makes the questionable move of extrapolating from studies of analogous questions in the USA and Western Europe. Thus, finding that gay and bisexual men tend to earn 11 per cent less than their heterosexual counterparts and that lesbians enjoy a wage premium of 9 per cent in the West, the report averages out these numbers to suggest that ending LGBT employment discrimination would increase labour market productivity by 10 per cent.[22] The report justifies these transnational extrapolations by stressing that this is likely to be a conservative estimate in the Indian context, given that the figures are taken from countries that have extensive legal protections for LGBT workers, and given also that employment discrimination against transgendered workers is likely to be more severe.

It is curious that in measuring the gap between the status quo and a hypothetical non-discriminatory scenario, the report posits that gay and bisexual men's wages would attain parity with those of heterosexual men, but that lesbians would continue to enjoy a wage premium. Indeed the section on lesbians is illustrative of my critique. Noting that the pressures of compulsory heterosexuality tend to force Indian lesbians into straight marriage and childbearing, the report speculates that were they to be freed from these pressures, Indian lesbians might also benefit from the wage premium enjoyed by their counterparts in the West.[23] Although the reasons for the lesbian wage premium in the West are not discussed in the report, the 'dual income, no kids' phenomenon is a spectral presence in this part of the discussion. The report seems to assume that ending discrimination in India would have effects on family formation and household decision-making that produce something resembling queer lives in the Western contexts from which the quantitative data is drawn in the first place. In doing so, it seems incognizant of the radically diverse social structures within which actually existing gender non-conforming lives in India are embedded.[24] Leaving aside the matter of children, there is no recognition, for example, that the lesbian wage premium – were it to be enjoyed in a non-discriminatory India – might well be offset by the claims of ageing parents, dependent siblings, and the array of other relationships that constitute the web of obligations within which even professional middle-class nucleated family lives are lived. If Bedford's work on the gendering of the post-Washington Consensus Bank revealed a heteronormative two-partner sharing model of working woman and caring man, the Bank's latest regendering has produced its homonormative counterpart in the image of happily partnered (or single) and highly productive LGBT workers choosing to pursue the good life in radically autonomous and unencumbered style.[25]

In contrast to critics such as Joseph Massad, I do not wish to suggest that Western homonormativity is forced on countries like India by a 'Gay International', whether that 'international' is understood as Western human rights organizations, states or – as is my focus in this article – IFIs.[26] Rather, homonormativity is enthusiastically embraced by significant internal constituencies. Nor can these constituencies be reduced, in the narrow terms offered by Massad, to a class of 'native informants' (elite local LGBT activists) who stand to gain personally from state recognition of (their) particular performances of queer life. This account may be true enough but it is trivial, for homonormativity derives its power not simply from the material wherewithal of its proponents, but from its ability to shape desire by making itself synonymous with modernity, giving it mass appeal or, in a word, hegemony. Attending to the politics of two recent representations of queer life in India would make this point clearer.

In July 2013 the United Nations Human Rights Office launched a year-long global public education campaign for LGBT equality called 'Free & Equal'.[27] As part of the campaign it released a Bollywood-style music video in April 2014 featuring Indian actor Celina Jaitly, which went on to become one of the UN's most watched videos.[28] Titled *The Welcome*, the video depicts a young man bringing his boyfriend home to meet his family for the first time. The family are not expecting a 'special friend' of the same sex and are initially frozen in disbelief. But thanks to a deft and tactful musical intervention from Jaitly referencing the changing times, the mood shifts decisively and they all live happily ever after. Queer critics of the video fastened immediately on the stratospherically elite milieu in which it was set – the pretext for the gay couple's homecoming is their attendance at a lavish wedding at which even the family dog is wearing a silk coat – as evidence of the detachment of mainstream gay activism from the lives of the overwhelming majority of queer subjects in India.[29] Indeed the choice of setting could, at one level, be seen as rather puzzling, given that homophobic voices in India already discredit LGBT rights as an elite issue. Nonetheless, the campaign's decision to embed its pedagogical mission in the deeply familiar idiom of the 'big wedding' – whose recent cinematic genealogy might be traced back through films such as *Monsoon*

Wedding (2001), *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* (*Who Am I To You?*) (1994), and beyond[30] – was a clear play for hegemony, co-produced with Indian artists in the full understanding that such texts depicting the lives of the super elite are avidly consumed by Indian cinemagoers of all classes in a range of affective modes including identification, aspiration and escapism. In this sense, what the queer critics were calling 'homonormativity' was also deeply 'authentic', conforming as it did to the canons of mainstream Bollywood cinema.

The second representation, described on social media as India's first lesbian advertisement, was produced for Anouk – a line in contemporary Indian 'ethnic' apparel. Titled *The Visit* and released in June 2015, the video quickly went viral, notching up 3 million views in ten days.[31] This video portrays a cohabiting lesbian couple also preparing for a first encounter with the parents of one of the women. In its aesthetic, this clip is quieter and more quotidian than the previous one. And it is transgressive in more than one sense as it becomes evident that, in addition to both being of the same sex, the women are from different ethno-linguistic communities – a difference that could arouse anxiety in the kinds of parents who might prefer to arrange the marriages of their children. The couple converse intimately but casually about what to wear and what to serve the parents, but there is an undertone of trepidation about whether the visit will go well. For all its understatement, this narrative is also set in a comfortably upper-middle-class milieu. The women are surrounded by their possessions – books, make-up, antique furniture – many of which signify their cosmopolitan tastes ('tribal' art, a framed poster of *A Clockwork Orange*). And, of course, filling every frame subtly but unmistakeably are tasteful fabrics – clothes, cushion covers, rugs, curtains – that are presumably the products that Anouk seeks to market. Produced in and for a country in which homosexuality remains illegal, thanks to a retrograde 2013 Supreme Court decision,[32] the advertisement offers a seductive reminder of the still extant possibilities for queer self-expression through consumption in the market. We are invited to engage in what Puar calls 'homonational spending', in which the market proffers placebo rights to (some) queers who are hailed by capitalism but not by judges or state legislators.[33] In its depiction of this comfortably self-determining existence, this advertisement produced by and for an Indian company, provides almost the perfect visual representation of the lesbian futures that the Badgett report anticipates.

In discussing these widely consumed contemporary representations of queer Indian life, I want to suggest that – in India at least – far from imposing norms on an unwilling recipient, international institutions are pushing against something of an open door, collaborating with local actors in co-producing activist narratives and interpellating subjectivities that already enjoy considerable social even if not state recognition. The new homonormativities congealing within such contexts are not simple transplants of Western homonormativity but are culturally legitimated in locally recognizable idioms: indeed this is what makes them *normative* in their respective locales. Nonetheless, the cultural diversity of queer life fostered by international governmentality should not blind us to one of its underlying and unifying imperatives, namely that of folding queers into capitalism.

Moral panic, material precarity

Given the centrality of the notion of 'homophobia' to recent IFI forays into struggles for sexual and gender justice, it is worth unpacking how they understand this term. Focusing on the Bank, in this section I will suggest that 'homophobia' is conceptualized in an impoverished manner that allows the Bank to present itself as external to the problem and therefore as a potential force for good, rather than one that is implicated in its production. To illustrate this, I attempt to think through the conditions that have incubated a virulent public discourse around homosexuality in Uganda in recent years, while paying attention to the Bank's interventions in, and influence over, the country.

The Badgett report defines homophobia as 'negative responses to and prejudice against LGBT people, as well as structural manifestations of that prejudice in institutional settings such as workplace and the law'.[34] Indeed it notes that the otherwise heterogeneous category 'LGBT' derives its conceptual coherence from the experience of 'stigma and prejudice' experienced by people who are read into this category because of their attraction to people of the same sex and/or their gender non-conformity. 'Stigma' in turn is defined, citing psychologist Gregory M. Herek, as 'the negative regard and inferior *status* that society collectively accords to people who possess a particular characteristic or belong to a particular group or category'.[35] While Herek expresses reservations about the term 'homophobia' on account of its tendency to individualize and pathologize the affect it seeks to describe, the report decides to run with the term

anyway on account of its widespread usage. I want to take issue not so much with the choice of term as with its understanding as status differentiation.

Nancy Fraser has advocated a 'bifocal' conception of gender as both a class-like differentiation, rooted in the economic structure of society, and a status differentiation that privileges masculinity over femininity, rooted in the status order of society.[36] These dimensions, she insists, are analytically distinct and irreducible to one another, even if they may interact with each other. Gender justice, in Fraser's view, requires both an objective redistribution of material resources to ensure that all participants in society can exercise voice, and an intersubjective cultural recognition of equal standing vis-à-vis fellow participants. Although Fraser notes that virtually all injustices perpetrate both maldistribution and misrecognition, she leaves open the question of whether the two dimensions are of equal weight. Indeed she constructs a spectrum of possible proportions in which the two dimensions might be combined, with injustices tilting more heavily in the direction of maldistribution at one end and those entailing primarily misrecognition at the other. Crucially, like the Bank, Fraser understands heterosexism as a status injustice entailing largely misrecognition.[37]

This aspect of Fraser's argument has provoked a sharp rebuttal from Judith Butler, who criticizes Fraser's relegation of certain oppressions to the derivative and secondary status of the 'merely cultural'.[38] In Butler's view, movements against heterosexism attack the normative regulation of sexuality within central institutions of the capitalist order such as the family, thereby setting themselves up as threats to that order. Indeed Butler questions the distinction between recognition and redistribution that lies at the heart of Fraser's argument, noting that homophobic cultural norms that misrecognize queers also have maldistributive effects – by denying benefits or property to same-sex partners, for example. Fraser counters by acknowledging that while queers suffer economic harm, such harm is a maldistributive consequence of a more fundamental injustice of misrecognition. Moreover she accuses Butler of an indifference to history, arguing that the relationship between queers and capitalism cannot be asserted by definitional fiat, and observing that in late capitalist society the links between sexuality and surplus value accumulation have been weakened. The enemies of queers, she points out, are not multinational corporations seeking to extract their labour, but religious conservatives invested in denying their personhood. Capitalism, Fraser concludes, no longer needs the heteronormative family as a central stabilizing institution.[39]

Fraser is both right and wrong. History matters, as does geography. While anti-homophobic movements (in the USA and Western Europe, which is where the Butler–Fraser debate is implicitly situated) may indeed have attacked capitalism at a certain historical juncture, capitalism responded to that attack in ways that attenuated the force of the critique. Indeed the story of this shifting relationship is central to Lisa Duggan's influential critique of mainstream LGBT politics in the USA in the 1990s. As Duggan explains it, neoliberals blunted the sharp edge of progressive critique by recognizing claims to equality while minimizing potential redistributive consequences: in essence, they embraced a non-redistributive identity politics. The distinction between recognition and redistribution, far from marking a real separation between different kinds of injustices as suggested by Fraser, is essentially the ruse through which neoliberal capitalism pretends to become more inclusive.[40] In its conceptualization of homophobia as a status differentiation, distinct from injustices of maldistribution (which find no mention in any of the IFI initiatives on homophobia to date), the Bank reproduces this ruse.

But it also does something more that cannot be grasped through the narrow terms of the Butler–Fraser debate. One of the striking things about this debate and the numerous subsequent treatments of it is the highly agent-centred view that the arguments on both sides take. Focusing on queers or the putative enemies of queers (neoliberals, religious conservatives), the argument proceeds as if things might have turned out differently if only these agents had thought or acted in ways other than those in which they actually did. Thus, following Butler and Duggan, we are tempted to fantasize that if LGBT movements had refused the recognition/redistribution distinction, they might not have succumbed to homonormativity in the way that they did. I am sceptical of the high degree of voluntarism implicit in this argument. Accordingly, I want to think about the wider structural conditions within which narratives about sexuality produced by particular agents acquire salience. It is in thinking about these structural conditions that the implication of the Bank in the production of homophobia becomes more visible. I shift the geographical terrain of discussion to Uganda here for two reasons: first, because Uganda has become the site of multiple contending discourses about sexuality

thanks to its passage of the Anti Homosexuality Act, 2014; and second, because the Bank's suspension of its US$90 million loan to Uganda in response to the passage of this legislation constitutes perhaps the single most coercive response by an IFI to a member-state action perceived to be homophobic.

Introduced in the Ugandan parliament in 2009, the Anti Homosexuality Act was given presidential approval in February 2014.[41] The text of the bill that was first circulated earned notoriety for its proposed introduction of the death penalty for a select category of offences.[42] The version of the bill that was eventually passed amended the death sentence to life imprisonment, while enhancing existing punishments for same-sex conduct and criminalizing advocacy in support of LGBT rights. Following a concerted domestic and international campaign, the Act was struck down by the Ugandan Constitutional Court on 1 August 2014, on the procedural ground that it had been passed without the requisite parliamentary quorum.[43] Activists fear that supporters of the legislation will attempt to have it passed again.

Scholarly analysis of these developments has tended to focus on a set of elite relationships involving Ugandan politicians and clergy and mainly US-based Christian evangelical activists. The drafting of the original Anti Homosexuality Bill is believed to have been inspired by a 'Seminar on Exposing the Homosexual Agenda' held in Kampala in March 2009 by a group of US anti-gay evangelical activists, of whom Scott Lively is perhaps the most well known.[44] For conservative Western evangelicals, Africa provides new terrain on which to fight the 'culture wars' – in which LGBT rights remain a crucial wedge issue – that they find themselves losing in the USA and Western Europe.[45] Political alliances with African clergy enable Western Christian conservatives to block progressive moves towards embracing, say, the ordination of women as bishops or same-sex marriage, in global Christian norm-setting forums such as the Anglican Communion's Lambeth Conference. Paying attention to the evolution of these relationships also explains why an issue that had hitherto had no salience in Ugandan public culture became controversial at the same time as it threatened to split the worldwide Communion.[46]

Useful as these accounts are, they have been incomplete in several respects. As I have argued at length elsewhere, the emphasis on US evangelical proselytization has tended to evacuate such accounts of African agency.[47] African elites bear significant responsibility for the virulently homophobic public discourse that circulates in many parts of the continent. To cite an example from just one – albeit the politically most influential – Christian denomination in Uganda, namely the Anglican Church, Ugandan clergy were receptive to the overtures of US conservative evangelicals within the Communion because this was perhaps the first moment in the history of this imperial holdover, in which African voices (and votes) were being courted as significant in shaping the future trajectory of Christian doctrine.[48] Spearheading the opposition to greater tolerance of homosexuality at the 1998 Lambeth Conference offered African clergy a way to symbolize the inexorable reality that power was shifting within the Communion towards the more populous African constituencies.[49] For their part, Ugandan politicians in the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) have stoked and benefited from the furore over homosexuality, which has conveniently distracted domestic and international publics alike from other vexing issues such as political repression, corruption and bad governance.[50] Yet even accounts that weigh African agency more heavily have been relatively silent on two counts. First, neoliberalism is never part of this story, missing the very profound effects that it has had both on the institutional landscape in Uganda as well as on everyday attitudes. Second, in focusing disproportionately on the collaborative US–African elite production of homophobic discourse, such accounts have neglected to explain subaltern receptiveness to these discourses.

Scholars of religion and sexuality in Uganda have noted the central role that Pentecostal-charismatic churches are playing in the production of homophobic discourse.[51] Now believed to command the allegiance of up to a third of the country's population, the spread of Pentecostal Christianity from the late 1980s onwards was enabled by two factors: war and neoliberalism. In the aftermath of the devastation wrought by the brutal reign of Idi Amin and the 'bush war' against the government of Milton Obote, Pentecostalism's promise of temporal rupture and renewal through 'born again' Christianity provided the perfect spiritual complement to the victorious NRM's mission of reconstruction from 1986 onwards. In contrast to the mainline Anglican and Catholic churches, the new Pentecostal churches were also less tainted by association with the previous dispensation.[52] Taking over the reins of power in a highly indebted country, the NRM eagerly implemented the neoliberal prescriptions of the Bank and Fund, imposed as part of the structural adjustment

programme that Uganda underwent in the 1980s and 1990s: indeed, Uganda is widely regarded as the African country in which the neoliberal project was most enthusiastically embraced.[53] As structural adjustment gathered pace, the new Pentecostal churches moved into the space vacated by the shrinking state, becoming major providers of social services such as education and health.[54] By the early 2000s, the burgeoning HIV/AIDS epidemic offered the perfect pretext for their interventions in the public sphere with a conservative, moralizing and virulently homophobic discourse.

Their efforts were given a shot in the arm by equally conservative donor initiatives such as the US Bush administration's President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Informed by theological prohibitions on extramarital, commercial and non-heterosexual sex, PEPFAR diverted funding from progressive public health organizations to faith-based organizations among which US evangelical and African Pentecostal-charismatic churches were prominent. As Melinda Cooper argues, PEPFAR 'served to institutionalize the presence of Pentecostal-charismatic churches in the very social infrastructure of sub-Saharan Africa, turning them into indispensable conduits to healthcare in the now largely privatized welfare sector'.[55] Accounting for 94 per cent of Uganda's total HIV/AIDS budget at one time, PEPFAR funding had pernicious effects on the country's HIV prevention efforts, transforming a programme that had emphasized condom use to one that promoted faith-based messages of abstinence.[56] At the same time, the World Bank was itself promoting the involvement of faith-based organizations in development and humanitarianism. In 1998, then Bank president James Wolfensohn and Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey convened a World Faiths and Development Meeting, which produced an advocacy group called the World Faiths and Development Dialogue, devoted to promoting collaboration between international development agencies and faith-based organizations.[57] Virtually ratifying the effects of neoliberalism, the Bank noted that since faith-based organizations provided up to 50 per cent of social services in places like sub-Saharan Africa, they should be recognized as key partners in development work.[58] Bank policy therefore opened up space for, and legitimated the work of, the very actors who are leading purveyors of homophobic discourse in Uganda today.

I want to turn from the production of homophobic discourse, on which the literature has been almost exclusively focused, to what we might think of as the 'consumption' side of this problem. Here, too, the changes wrought by neoliberalism are relevant. Analysts have recently begun to draw on the notion of 'moral panics' to theorize homophobia.[59] Stanley Cohen famously defined moral panics as widespread and volatile concern about the potential or imagined threat posed by a set of actors (folk devils) out of all proportion to any objective harm that they may be likely to cause, which fuels reactions of moral outrage and hostility against those actors.[60] The concept seems especially appropriate to homophobic discourses in Uganda, given the way they construct queers as paedophiles, 'recruiters' of children into homosexuality, and threats to social morality.[61] In their work on moral panics around 'mugging' in inner-city Britain, Stuart Hall and his colleagues reframe their inquiry in the following way. 'The question', they insist, 'is not why or how unscrupulous men work … but why audiences respond.'[62]

Asking why elite discourse on homophobia has popular purchase in Uganda, Joanna Sadgrove and a team of collaborators have argued that rather than echoing popular concerns, elite state and evangelical positions map onto and manipulate other widely felt anxieties, 'many of which relate directly or indirectly to the profound economic insecurity and fears for the future (especially in the context of the HIV crisis) experienced by ordinary Ugandans'.[63] Sadgrove et al. identify a deep imbrication of discourses about morality and money in media and popular discourses about homosexuality. They find widespread concern that moral values are under threat from a pervasive preoccupation with material gain. This is borne out by the work of Jörg Wiegratz, who has argued that neoliberalism in Uganda has, in restructuring the state and economy, also entailed a project of moral restructuring, inculcating a utilitarian, egoistic, market rationality in everyday life that has sought to displace 'traditional' values and cooperative practices. While Wiegratz is concerned mostly directly with explaining a spurt in malpractice in the rural agricultural economy, he detects a more pervasive worry among ordinary Ugandans that the privations of life under neoliberalism have made it increasingly necessary for them to prioritize money-making over morality in the interests of survival, making it increasingly difficult – in their self-perception – to live up to their own moral standards, and feeding panics about moral degeneration and decay.[64]

As Sadgrove et al. report, the link between money and morality manifests itself more specifically in

relation to homosexuality in a common understanding of same-sex loving Ugandans as having being lured into such relationships by wealthy Western tourists, or into proselytizing on behalf of same-sex love by funding from Western donors and human rights organizations. Such narratives conflating love and money carry considerable credibility in a society where family is understood as much in economic as in affective terms. Thus, marriage is not simply a romantic contract, but also an economic transaction involving the exchange of wealth and establishing material relationships between kin groups. The production of children secures inheritance and the transfer of property within kin groups, while also ensuring the survival of the family as an economic entity by providing labour (especially in rural areas) and security for parents in their old age. Newly emerging individualized sexual identities, such as LGBT, are difficult to make sense of against the backdrop of these understandings because they exist outside formalized networks of exchange and indeed threaten to redirect resources to new networks. In this regard, homophobic discourses that portray queers as succumbing to the lure of filthy lucre provide culturally legible explanations for these new identities. The key point that frames this account of everyday homophobia in Uganda is the reminder that the profound economic and existential insecurities that ordinary Ugandans face reinforce the tendency to view social and kinship relations in inextricably moral and material terms. Perhaps in circumstances of less profound insecurity, investment in marriage and procreation as indispensable welfare and social security mechanisms would decline, weakening the force of compulsory heterosexuality.

The Bank's decision to suspend its $90 million loan to Uganda in retaliation for the passage of the Anti Homosexuality Act was not universally welcomed, even by friends of LGBT rights. *The Economist* published a scathing editorial arguing that while the decision was well intentioned, it undermined the Bank's authority as a technocratic institution by embroiling it in political controversy, while also being capricious in singling out Uganda and gay rights for attention.[65] LGBT activists countered with the claim that ending SOGI discrimination was vital to ending poverty and therefore integral to the Bank's core mission.[66] Missing in this curious debate about whether the Bank should concern itself with LGBT rights was a recognition of the degree to which it was *already* implicated in their disavowal. As I have argued, neoliberal policies urged on the Ugandan state by IFIs and powerful donors such as the USA have had profound consequences that are directly relevant to explaining contemporary homophobia in Uganda, opening up space for and empowering the very actors that are at the forefront of the production of homophobia, and generating anxieties that nourish the moral panics in which queers (but also sex workers, 'witches' and others) have provided easy scapegoats. For reasons that are too obvious to belabour, the links between neoliberalism and homophobia in Uganda have never been acknowledged in IFI and donor pronouncements on the subject, or in their efforts to pressure the Ugandan government into moderating its stance on homosexuality. Welcome as these efforts have been from the perspective of local LGBT activists desperate for international support to offset their precarious domestic position,[67] there is something deeply disingenuous about donors moralizing on the subject of homophobia while failing to recognize their partial culpability in its production and consumption. At best, we might ascribe this to a cognitive failure to appreciate their implication in complex chains of cause and effect. At worst, we might read this as an ideological effort to position themselves as external to the problems they claim to want to alleviate, allowing them to masquerade as agents of benevolence and to shore up the hegemony of 'development' and neoliberal capitalism as civilizing influences.

Capitalizing QUEER

The term 'homocapitalism' has been in circulation for some time, largely on social media, and largely as a critique of gay assimilationist politics in the USA and Western Europe.[68] In its everyday usage, it builds on concepts like homonormativity and homonationalism to signify the selective incorporation of some race-, class- and gender-sanitized queers into capitalism and the disavowal of others through a liberal politics of recognition that obviates the need for redistribution. In this article, taking as my archive a set of early efforts by IFIs to lend their institutional authority to struggles against homophobia, I have attempted to describe the contours of an emerging global homocapitalism.

As with its domestic counterparts, global homocapitalism seeks to reconcile the twin imperatives of efficiency and empowerment, making capitalism friendly to queers but also rendering queers safe for capitalism. Such discursive moves threaten to split queers off from anti-capitalist movements, while also splitting queers themselves into those deemed

'productive' and worthy of celebration and others cast out as 'unproductive'. But we also need to take the globality of this homocapitalism seriously. No doubt propelled by the collaborative efforts of a transnational capitalist class, global homocapitalism acquires hegemony by repackaging queer normativity in recognizably local idioms with which those outside this class can identify or aspire to inhabit. In its bewildering cultural diversity, homocapitalism perpetuates neoliberal illusions of autonomy and choice. I have also argued that homocapitalism relies on a view of homophobia as 'merely cultural', allowing it to celebrate a liberal politics of recognition while ignoring or marginalizing redistributive concerns. Taking prior debates about recognition and redistribution as a point of departure, I have suggested that these debates focus too narrowly on what agents want or say they want, neglecting the wider structural conditions within which they acquire power and saliency. As long as IFIs fail to recognize their partial culpability for the very injustice that they claim to oppose, their efforts to inveigh against homophobia will only ever come across as disingenuous and ideological exercises in pinkwashing.

Where will resistance to global homocapitalism come from? Early utopian Western queer Marxist texts tended to see queers as both creatures of, and potential antagonists to, capitalism, in much the same way that Marx considered the proletariat to exemplify the internal contradictions of capital. Freed up to express sexual and gender non-normativity by capitalism's disruption of traditional family and kinship arrangements, queers were nonetheless cast out by capitalism's reliance on heteronormativity to produce the next generation of workers, making it imperative for them to be part of anti-capitalist movements.[69] That this was not, in fact, imperative became clear as Western LGBT movements entered into a rapprochement with capitalism in a politics of homonormativity. More recently formed LGBT movements in the global South are in many respects *more* beholden to capitalism because the vectors of their foundational Euro-American originated identities ('LGBT') – HIV/AIDS funding, human rights discourses, global media, elite diasporic travellers – are borne along by the circuits of global capital. Although these identities take their place within complex gender landscapes populated by older indigenous queer lifeworlds, the disproportionate power and leadership wielded by LGBT constituencies within those landscapes might render them less antithetical, as a whole, to the interests of capitalism than queer Marxists had once hoped. While a full consideration of this question is beyond the scope of this article, it seems reasonable to suppose that the most determined resistance to global homocapitalism will not come from the LGBT movements with which the IFIs seek alliance, given their reliance on the flows and infrastructures of neoliberal globalization. Nor is it likely to come from movements that have long struggled against the IFIs but within a largely heteronormative framework. If the critique offered by this article has a constituency, it probably lies in the very figurations of unproductive, 'anti-development' queerness that haunt the imaginaries of homocapitalist discourse.

Notes

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