

Globalizing Homonormativity: Visualizing a Worldwide LGBT Identity

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Following the June 2015 Supreme Court ruling allowing same-sex marriage nationwide, President Obama called the occasion a "victory for America" as many in politics in the press rejoiced in LGBT people's newfound "freedom to love" (Korte 2015). In recent decades the world has come a long way in making progress towards accepting non-heteronormative sexualities, as not only the United States but many other countries before it throughout the world began to recognize gay rights as tolerance grows. Yet what ideological framework has made this possible? How can progress be defined globally in such a diverse world of human sexuality? In this paper, I will presume that the current predominant view of queer sexuality is dominated by homonormative values and explore the ways those values have spread under globalization. Under this framework, I argue that globalized homonormativity conflicts with local forms of sexuality around the world and privileges some ideals over others. This can be seen through the means of gay tourism and activism that has spread throughout the globe.

Homonormativity and Neoliberalism

Homonormativity stems as a concept from heteronormativity, or the societal assumption that everyone is both heterosexual and cisgender. Homonormativity is similarly applied in the LGBT community not as the assumption that everyone is gay or lesbian, but that LGBT people desire to live in accordance with heteronormative values. Thus, homonormativity sets an ideal of what it means to be gay that conforms to society without challenging historical structures of oppression. Yet, as queer studies scholars have argued in recent years, this ideal vision privileges certain members of the gay community over others, particularly wealthy white gay men who come to be seen as the ideal, domestic consumers. Lisa Duggan first coined the term "homonormativity" in her 2003 book *The Twilight of Equality?*, noting that it "[promises]... a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (2003:50). Unlike the early gay liberation movements that often-rejected heteronormative social institutions like marriage, gay life under homonormative culture assumes that the very definition of achieving equality is based in guaranteeing such rights to gay people (Brown 2012:1066). In other words, homonormativity brings gay culture closer to the heteronormative mainstream.

In order to fully understand homonormativity, one must also recognize the neoliberal context in which it has arisen. Before neoliberalism, the mid-20th century was dominated by liberal policies first enacted under F.D.R. During the 1930s and 1940s, policies like the New Deal formed the structure of an American welfare state. This welfare state liberalism moved away from the conservative vision of a classical liberal economy that dominated the 1920s. It

expanded government economic initiatives and created a safety net to help those in poverty and create a greater sense of equality within a capitalist system (Duggan 2003:XI). Despite their limitations, these social welfare policies such as social security and food stamps built into an ideal of governance in which the state would be at least partially responsible for the wellbeing of its people in economic terms, rather than the laissez-faire approach as imagined in classical liberalism.

Duggan notes that progressive social movements were also shaped accordingly through the mid-20th century as civil rights groups focused on liberation through what she calls "cultures of downward redistribution" (2003:XVII). Although these movements were sometimes at odds with each other through the turbulent 60s and 70s, they were more or less united in their progressive ideals of equality that emphasized fighting injustice by leveling existing power and economic structures that combined financial, political and cultural elements in their goals and motives (2003:XVII). By the mid-1970s, however, a pro-business counterculture emerged that would change this by focusing on upward distribution (2003: XVIII). Rather than aid the causes of grassroots civil rights movements, business interests began promoting policies that would only enforce existing hierarchies in their own interest. By the 1980s, such social movements became increasingly constrained by a variety of political and economic forces that forced many to disband or narrow their focus as income inequality grew and they could not withstand the legal pressures they faced (2003: XVIII).

This pro-business culture rests on the values of neoliberalism. Unlike the welfare state liberalism that preceded it, this cultural and economic paradigm insists that government should have minimal involvement in social welfare and instead the economy should be marked by deregulation and privatization. Neoliberalism borrows many of its economic ideas from classical liberalism, such that a society is best run under a free market and it assumes an equal playing field in a situation where business and trade is unregulated because people and states would naturally specialize in what they do best and trade for what they need. Rather than a political philosophy that also emphasizes individual liberty and the government's role in protecting it, neoliberalism emerged as a more specific economic paradigm that dictates how countries should enact economic policies that encourage the free market system as imagined in classical liberalism (Fourcade-Gourincas and Babb 2002:533). By cutting taxes, cutting social programs, deregulating trade and privatizing government industries, countries can get closer to this vision and as a result, according to neoliberals, will see economic growth and greater prosperity than they would have in an economy with more government control (2002:534). Duggan argues that this has created a dichotomy between the economic and the cultural, one to which many social movements in the 1980s and 1990s were blind (2003: XVIII).

Although neoliberalism is an economic model, it has had widespread cultural impacts that have also affect the way civil rights groups approach their goals in politics. As a cultural ideology, neoliberalism is envisioned as a sense of freedoms that are inherent in a free market system, one which encourages individual enterprise and meritocracy (Harvey 2005:36). A neoliberal emphasis on economic growth places values of private businesses and personal responsibility on a pedestal and thus encourages upward redistribution (Duggan 2003:14). Unlike the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, later movements worked within this system with increasingly narrow goals that tie strongly to the existing economic hierarchies

and reinforce them- thus shedding their radical views and focusing on the economic aspects of civil rights. Cultural neoliberalism therefore redefined equality from a breakdown of social hierarchies to the achievement of rights and freedoms on the same playing field one would assume under a free market system.

For the emerging acceptance of LGBT people in the West and around the world, the existence of social movements under this paradigm has a wide array of consequences for both gay culture and overall social morality. Drawing from Duggan's own definition of homonormativity, cultural neoliberalism is inherent in its construction because it "upholds and sustains" existing hierarchies (2003: 53). Rather than a desire for gay liberation and a focus on social tolerance, homonormative culture has led gay rights groups to pursue narrow goals for equality that fit within existing heteronormative frameworks and whose values are often underpinned with economic growth in mind. The two biggest goals: same-sex marriage and military service are then often seen in terms that make institutions more efficient, boost local economies and save gay couples tax dollars. This is even though in previous gay movements; marriage was something for straight people and potentially oppressive for the LGBT community (Brown 2012:1066). Neoliberalism has then entered the push for gay rights by viewing gay people for their market potential, and this has formed the homonormative image of the wealthy gay consumer.

To illustrate homonormativity's ties to neoliberalism, Leopold Lippert's 2010 article "How Do You Think We Get to Pottery Barn?" reveals gay culture as it is intertwined with consumerism. Lippert explores the lives of gay men and theater culture in New York City during a time in which the fight for same-sex marriage in the United States was in full force and social tolerance of gay people was rapidly on the rise. He begins with an anecdote of a white male couple looking out onto the New York Pride Parade down the street and asking "how do you think we get to pottery barn?"- A store across the way that had been blocked by the parade and festivities (Lippert 2010:41). Rather than feel pride or a sense of shared struggle in the community gay pride parade, the couple finds the event to be an annoyance, and note it as one reason they plan on moving upstate where the neighbors "keep to themselves" (2010:41).

Their story is a strong example of a homonormative gay culture in which gays and lesbians are expected to live as domestic consumers while leading private lives. Under homonormative equality, there is no need for more talk of social liberation if gay people are allowed the same domestic rights as heterosexuals because as such they can lead "normal" lives uninhibited by discrimination. While rights such as same-sex marriage and equal treatment under the law are certainly important, the homonormative reasoning behind the recent push for equality has only marginalized others in the LGBT community.

Lippert notes that homonormativity has embraced neoliberal values of privatization and consumerism while abandoning any critique of social justice or global capitalism, thus depoliticizing gay rights movements and molding them to fit the neoliberal paradigm (2010:45).

Yet this also means that intersecting social hierarchies are also left untouched and the image of the gay consumer is also marked by the stereotype of wealthy and consumer savvy white men. Other forms of LGBT experience and identity, such as that of transsexual people, that do not conform to this are left on the sidelines and are met with indifference by the dominant group, as is illustrated by the couple in Lippert's example.

Globalizing Homonormativity

Having established homonormativity, one must also consider its relationship to globalization. Considering that Western countries are paving the way for LGBT rights and the protection thereof around the world, they are also driving the forces of homonormativity. Globalization refers to the processes in which global integration occurs through the spread and consolidation of ideas, values and products among other things. As neoliberalism became the primary economic paradigm on the world stage after the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, there was a rapid push for developing countries around the world to adopt neoliberal policies as outlined in the 1989 Washington Consensus. As such, neoliberal economic vision was globalized and viewed as the best way forward towards a global free market economy (Brown 2012:1068). Because gay rights movements have also been framed under a neoliberal vision of upward distribution, their activism abroad also reflects the Western homonormative vision of gay sexuality as being prototypically cisgender, fixed and the desire of gay people to be monogamous domestic consumers. Like neoliberalism, a homonormative ideal of a normalized and private gay individual also became the way forward in terms of advocating for LGBT rights and social tolerance around the world.

As LGBT rights and culture becomes increasingly defined by homonormativity, its spread around the world also means there are bound to be conflicting ideas of sexuality. Although non-heteronormative sexualities exist around the world in many forms, what is perceived to be normal varies from place to place. So too do the very definitions of sexuality in general and the attitudes surrounding it. If Western homonormativity has become the dominant mode of viewing sexuality around the world, especially a political sense, it may then be reasonable to suggest that these homonormative values begin to replace existing forms of sexuality. This would therefore create a globalized sexual identity and a unified sense, in that case, of what it means to be LGBT under a homonormative frame. Yet this may also be too simplistic of an assumption and can be further explored in ethnographic literature from around the world.

Globalization via Tourism

As a force of globalization, the tourist industry plays a critical role in shaping homonormativity both politically and socially. As the niche purchasing power of gay people became increasingly recognized through the 1990s under neoliberalism, the tourist industry also saw the creation of gay tourism. One year before Lisa Duggan's book, Jasbir Kaur Puar wrote about this growing phenomenon and the benefits and problems it presented in his landmark article "Circuits of Queer Mobility: Tourism, Travel and Globalization" (2002:101). In this article, he describes how gay tourism is conceptualized in discourse on the subject and the important role it plays within senses of a global gay identity.

Gay tourism saw its beginning in the 1950s by Hanns Ebensten, who ran organized tours for gay males in South America, notably the Galapagos (Puar 2002:104). Decades later in the early 1990s, there was a sudden boom in gay tourism and new travel agencies that began to cater explicitly to gay customers. This was due to both the AIDS crisis of the 80s and the growing Western acceptance of gays and lesbians that led to companies seeing the potential in their purchasing power (2002:105). Instead of being viewed as a nuisance or disturbance to other potential customers like they often were in past decades, gays and lesbian travel began to be a unique niche to be expanded upon. As a market, gay tourism is also fundamentally tied to the values of an out gay identity in which gay customers are free to be themselves without fear of harassment from locals or agencies.

As such, the nature of tourism also allows gays and lesbians to explore their identities in new spaces together, meaning they are free to express themselves in settings far from the intolerance they may face at home. Puar uses Howard Hughes' work on gay tourism to exemplify this and notes that "the search for gay identity is itself conceptually a form of tourism" (2002:103). When gay men and lesbians come together in organized tourism, they are in principle surrounded by a friendly environment that allows them to mingle with other gay people while ideally being assured of a gay friendly experience from the agencies and hosts. Gay tourism is thus largely about space, as a tolerant environment is constructed away from the heteronormative society that often excludes LGBT people.

Yet the gay tourism industry often runs into trouble in fulfilling this promise of a tolerant environment and friendly service to gay customers. This is because tourism is also inherently an interaction between guests and locals, and in places where gay people travel to that often have homophobic attitudes towards their guests. Puar gives the example of a cruise ship being denied entry to the Cayman Islands in 1998. As a gay cruise, locals were worried about the tourists not upholding local standards of behavior, echoing a previous scandalous incident in which gay tourists were frequently seen publicly kissing and holding hands (2002:101). Other Caribbean nations prepared to propose similar policies, to the dismay of human rights groups as well as Western governments like the U.S. and the U.K., who noted that turning away the tourists on such grounds was a breach of human rights protocol (2002:101). Similar homophobic laws in the Caribbean that make homosexuality illegal are also widely regarded by international organizations and Western nations to be outdated relics from the colonial era which ought to be removed from the books (2002:102).

Although such actions may on the surface be beneficial to both gay tourists and gay locals living in these oppressed environments, it is important to note to power structures inherent in gay tourism that brings Westerners to new environments expecting to be treated equally by societies that may view them with disgust or indifference. One primary factor to consider is an inherently neoliberal argument for allowing gay tourism: that to turn away gay tourists would also waste economic potential and potentially drive off other visitors. Because neoliberal culture assumes an equal playing field under an open market, gay tourists have a right just as any other to spend money and travel in any way they wish in a globalized world because it is good for the international economy. A homonormative image of gay people existing in the upper class as trendy and savvy consumers also makes them the perfect target for niche market campaigns (Brown 2012:1065). It could therefore be argued that gay people

are likewise bringers of wealth in tourism, and places such as the Caribbean could benefit from servicing affluent gay tourists (Puar 2002: 102).

In such a case, neoliberal economic visions and homonormative views of gay sexuality are in some sense forced upon local sensibilities. They must then find ways to react to powerful world governments and organizations that disapprove of their handling of their most important industry. Puar describes this phenomenon as also drawing on long standing post-colonial conflicts that use sexuality issues in gay tourism in a wider struggle between the developing world and former colonial powers (2002:124). Tourist agencies act closely with gay activist groups when promoting gay tourism to third world destinations, and some tours are also organized by gay rights groups "for the purposes of educating and engendering queer solidarity and support" (2002:124). This solidifies gay tourism as a force of spreading homonormativity while existing under neoliberal power structures. Developing countries must therefore come to terms with modernizing their economies as dictated by the neoliberal values of the West. With the economic narrative that is also stapled to homonormativity, modernizing also means adopting Westernized freedom of sexual identity and the social construction thereof because doing so allows people to perform better under the free market as private consumers.

Yet the reality of gay tourism in developing countries is not necessarily simply about a one-sided embrace of homonormativity, as reconfiguring non-homonormative imaginings of sexuality requires agency on the part of locals in these countries themselves. One ethnographic work which extensively documents both local and tourist accounts of the gay travel industry is Gregory Mitchell's 2016 book *Tourist Attractions*. Mitchell explores the gay sex tourism industry in Brazil and the reasons both Brazilian male prostitutes, or garotos, and the tourists participate in it. He frequently discusses conflicting images of gay identity that emerge in the sex industry and must be navigated for tourist experiences to be of worth for both parties.

Unlike the Western homonormative sexuality that imposes fixed sexual identities firmly based in sexual and romantic attraction, Brazilian sexuality is noted to instead be based on sexual behavior and a dichotomy between the passive and the active (Mitchell 2016:78). Since homonormative sexuality ties attraction and behavior together, it is difficult for many westerners to imagine someone having sex with the same sex without also identifying as gay or at least bisexual. However, many of the garotos Mitchell interviewed identify as straight and some even have wives and children. If they are in the active role in sex, their masculinity and heterosexual identity are not compromised according to Brazilians (2016:79).

This causes an interesting relationship between tourists and garotos that is defined by performance and expectations. Mitchell describes sex workers as being performative "because their success or failure depends on constructing certain styles of gender that are often rooted in neocolonial variations of archetypes such as the lusty *mulata* [or] the Latin *macho* ..." (2016:34). Tourists come to Brazil with a sexualized imagining of the local people that plays into stereotypes of Brazil as a sexual paradise and of its men being hyper-masculine. Although these stereotypes may or may not reflect the lives of garotos in Brazil, they must perform their roles accordingly when dealing with gay clients because otherwise tourists would not be as satisfied with their experience and garotos would not be able to make as much money. Mitchell notes that this image of Brazilian macho masculinity is only as real as it is when performed,

because the garotos construct their masculine identity when working to fit larger social molds of Brazilian sexuality (2016:34).

This relationship between garotos and their clients thus creates what Mitchell refers to as bounded authenticity, drawing from Elizabeth Bemsetin's sociological work on sex workers (2016:50). Tourists come to Brazil with certain expectations they desire to come true when going to a sauna and meeting with a garoto. These expectations arise from a search for the authentic: their mental image of Brazilian sexuality is the "real" Brazil that tourists want to experience upon arriving. They want to do more than simply visit famous local sites but also go beyond what tourists normally do in order to have a unique experience (2016:50). For many gay clients this means not only having sex with garotos but forming a unique relationship to them based in shared desire, even if that relationship is only temporary. Mitchell's garoto informants also reflect on this fact, as one said: "Clients want you to enjoy it. I never enjoy it at all, but if the client wants you to enjoy it you have to pretend... they want more affection [and] act as if getting to know a person" (2016:79).

Affluent tourists often show this desire for shared attraction by taking the garotos on dates, by giving gifts or even going so far as taking them abroad as escorts on vacations. They also imagine their garoto as bisexual or closeted, so that they feel there is a potential for attraction on the part of the garoto. This occurs when the tourist fetish of the Brazilian straight man becomes complicated by the fact that their heterosexual identity lacks the inherent ability or reciprocate desire, so gay clients image and "[relish] the idea that they were awakening hidden desires and repressed attractions", assuming that their garoto would eventually create a desire for them in return (Mitchell 2016:96). Because tourists are also often aware of Brazilian concepts of sexuality, it becomes easier to imagine a bisexual nature of the men they develop an attraction to, as their performance also leads clients to believe that the garoto would otherwise not develop the special relationship they want from them (2016:97). Garotos, aware of the expectations of their clients, play into the desire for something special by going on continuous dates and showing outward affection, only later shocking the clients by often demanding additional payment for time spent with them outside of the saunas (2016:100).

The spread of homonormativity to Brazil therefore certainly seems to be influential on local sexuality from Mitchell's work. However, it has not simply replaced traditional views of Brazilian sexual identity. Although locals come to react and shape their identities based on Western homonormative ideas of gay sexuality, their own views remain because "conflicting models of sexuality can coexist or overlap and subject can move between them" (Mitchell 2016:93). The garotos move between two different worlds of sexual identity when interacting with clients and then going back home to their families and respective neighborhoods. Yet their sexual identity is not necessarily confusing because they have adapted the tourists' homonormative views within their own system. One garoto may identify as bisexual and exaggerate or create a pretend attraction to appeal to clients and then go back to a wife as he has not violated Brazilian concepts of masculinity. Although garotos do sometimes "break the rules" and take on passive roles for the right price, their public image as straight active men can coexist with tourist and local sexual expectations (2016:95). Mitchell notes that it is therefore wrong to assume Westerners are simply inflicting their sexual identities on locals, or that garotos are operating with a sense of resistance because sex workers also develop a

considerable amount of their own agency when navigating these expectations (2016:97).

Drawing back to Puar and Duggan's work, there are many ways to analyze the neoliberal role of bringing homonormativity through tourism in Brazil. Mitchell brings up the idea of gay people as "turboconsumers" - a group that is affluent and uniquely prepared to spend money and travel as worldly consumers (2016:101). Some tourists also utilize their neoliberal roles as consumers when traveling to Brazil arguing that their visits are inherently good for Brazilian society in uplifting it economically while promoting social tolerance for LGBT people (2016:102). Gay tourism in Brazil can therefore be seen in the eyes of Westerners as not merely a vacation destination but as an act of solidarity by using tourist infrastructures to promote an open view of LGBT sexuality (Puar 2002:125). This conjures up an image of "trickle-down equality" (Duggan 2003:53) in which affluent gay tourists use their wealth and status to benefit the poorer developed world despite not actually bringing any moral ground in which to start a conversation on the rights of gay people in their destination.

Another case study that analyzes gay tourism in Bangkok, which has in recent decades especially become popular for sex tourism amid Thailand's rapidly growing economy and international presence. Dredge Kang analyzes the hyper sexualization of Thailand through Western eyes in terms of media representation in his article "Queer Media Loci in Bangkok: Paradise lost and found in Translation" (2011:169). He reflects upon Bangkok as a "gay paradise" in Western media imaginations as a "city that affords cheap and easy access to exotic 'boys'" (2011:169). Not only is Thailand and its capital tropical and visually stunning, but its populace is viewed as tolerant to gay people and open to non-normative gender roles and identities, owing to its construction in the West as an exotic destination for gay people who want to experience non-western gay sexuality. Kang argues that this image of a tolerant Thailand and the lack of Thai media perspectives inherent in its creation "may in fact inhibit the free expression of male-bodied effeminacy" (2011:170). However, he also notes that this phenomenon of sexualized Thai identity in the West is affecting local desires towards favoring regional gay tourists from around East Asia instead (2011:170).

Western media often sexualizes gay men in Thailand while glossing over several cultural differences and the socioeconomic backgrounds of locals tourists interact with. Kang states that the idea of a gay paradise itself is "lost in translation", as the title would have it, because while Western imaginings of paradise conjure up a worldly place of beauty and relaxation, the Thai version comes from Buddhist customs of a paradise only available after death in enlightenment (2011:169). This has important implications regarding tourist expectations and local attitudes towards them because what Western media may portray as a beautiful paradise on Earth conflicts with Thai realities of class difference, labor in sex tourism and different views on sexuality in general. The images of Westerners that Thais have conversely come to reflect a stigma against relationships with Western tourists. To local eyes, tourists then become associated with sex work and Thai people who interact with them are associated with images of lower-class men interested in using them for financial gain (2011:170).

Yet tourists look to both Western and local tourist guides and websites, often believing that the experiences and reviews online will reflect an authentic Thai experience as well as give advice on what to do and what to avoid (2011:171). Reviews relating to sex work can further

perpetuate the notion that sex easily available from Thai men and thus create a consumer culture around sex tourism in Bangkok (2011:172). Such sites and tourist images in media are part of a larger neoliberal framework that privatizes and commercializes sexual experience in the region in contrast to local realities. As Michael Peletz notes on the subject of politics and sexuality in Southeast Asia, "neoliberalism informs gender and sexual dynamics in Southeast and how far-reaching but invariably uneven global processes are experienced in intimate and embodied ways by variably situated social actors on the ground" (2012:898). When tourists in Thailand look for the authentic gay culture in Bangkok via modes of consumer culture, they find the very image of the country they are looking for, as the media involved caters to their needs and desires. This is not to the benefit of gay sex workers in the city however, who interact with tourists who are often unaware of their financial struggles and face social stigma despite the openness of Thai sexuality that tourists perceive (Kang 2011:172).

Not all gay travelers come to destinations and stay only for a short while, and there exists a growing community of Western expats living in Thailand and elsewhere in Asia drawn there for similar reasons that Kang writes about. Laura Collins' work on gay expats in the Philippines reveals how the image of the "global gay" is often troubled and reconceived by gays and lesbians who travel and stay in places with very different concepts of sexuality than they are used to at home. Like Puar's theorization of gay tourism as an escape from the normal and finding of solidarity, Collins argues that expats move to Manila in order to "escape the regulations of home" (2009:466). Additionally, she writes that this "gay mobility" helps form the expat's identity while simultaneously troubling their perception of what it means to be gay (2009:466).

Unlike heterosexual men, who may travel to find unconstrained sexual liberty, gay men instead travel to form gay places in which to perform gay versions of masculinity and identity they may be unable to find at home (Collins 2009:469). The destination as a gay space abroad is thus tied to authenticity of gay identity, and tourists expect to find a uniquely open and tolerant place to find themselves (Collins 2009:469, Puar 2002:103). Collins notes that this homonormative gay mobility "offers structures from which gay men resist homophobia, experience a new sense of themselves, participate in global gay community, and become self-actualizing agents" (2009:470). Likewise, gay tourists travel abroad and participate in a sense of "neoliberal masculinity" that is defined by the consumer choices of private individuals in creating equality while ignoring their relative wealthy status (2009:474). Gay expats in Manila stay for this very reason as they believe that they have found a home that accepts them, but one that is carved out from existing local spaces and often sheltered from the inequality around them.

The existing space in question is Malate- a neighborhood of Manila known for its history as an artist haven and former sex tourism hub that attracts gay people from around the country as well as international tourists. Although both many locals and the affluent gay expats who increasingly call the neighborhood would describe Malate as a place of tolerance that " ... just brings gay men out" (2009:474), it is also a place of conflicting identities and social stratification. The space expats create is at odds with mainstream Philippine society as well. Although many gay icons and drag queens are popular in Filipino pop culture, there is a sort of what Collins calls a "marginal tolerance" for LGBT sexuality, which has its appropriate time

and place (2009:475). Rather than being openly accepted, there are class and family lines that gay people are expected to cross, that includes prejudice against homosexuality in general while in the middle and upper classes especially, men are expected to keep their gay identity hidden as to not "bring shame upon the family" (2009:475). Foreigners are, to a large extent, much more at liberty to disregard or ignore these barriers and create a space that very much seems tolerant and open as they interact with locals who would not necessarily give them the impression of being oppressed (2009:476).

These differences between expats and locals then creates the illusion that the Philippines may be a safe haven sheltered away from the heteronormative oppression that gay men experienced in their home countries (2009:476). Tourist agencies play on this image of a gay haven abroad, even though countries like the Philippines are not in many ways, any more tolerant than Western countries. Although relative social acceptance of LGBT people is high in the Philippines, there is deep seated opposition to legal recognition of gay relationships rooted in its deeply catholic culture (Peletz 2012:904).

Just like the previous examples of Brazil and Bangkok, Collins' ethnographic work shows that the gay expats have brought with them a sense of homonormative gay identity that also in some ways privileges them to largely ignore social strata and attitudes while exoticizing the unique sexual culture of the locals. This also creates a homonormative sense of the exotic other that combines senses of race and nation in their image of the Filipino gay man (Collins 2009:478). Yet the new space and perceived openness of homosexuality also frees the expats to explore more aspects of their sexuality, as one noted Malate to allow him to "accept his more effeminate gay self" (2009:479). This troubling and opening up of Western sexuality still exists as homonormative, because the expats have ultimately formed a community of gay masculinity that is relatively secluded from the reality of either their home or adopted countries and enforces the image of affluent gay men who are able to promote tolerance and openness through wealth.

Globalized Homonormativity in LGBT Activism

Homonormativity is a powerful image of sexual identity that has spread from the West throughout the world and tourism has played a major role in this fact. Although it has not simply replaced local customs or attitudes, the image of the "Global Gay" persists as affluent gay travelers find tolerant spaces that also make it easy to ignore disparities within the LGBT community and the regions they visit. But what about regions that are more untouched by tourism? Is it additionally too simplistic to assume homonormativity operates on a dichotomy between the West and the Third World? One example that may help answer these questions is Gloria Wekker's ethnography, *The Politics of Passion: Women's Sexual Culture in the Afro-Surinamese Diaspora* which shows an interesting perspective on Surinamese sexuality in the country itself and among its sizeable diaspora in the Netherlands.

Suriname is a small, Dutch-Speaking South American country that is still off the beaten track for most tourists beyond those from the Netherlands, its former colonial power with which it remains in strong contact with. It is a very diverse nation, owing to a mix of Indigenous, African, Southeast Asian and European roots with several languages spoken

alongside the official Dutch and Sman Tongo, the local creole (Wekker 2006:60). Homosexuality is legal in the country but carries a high social stigma that would make it unattractive as a gay tourist destination, although Surinamese living in the Netherlands are typically much more open to the subject (Wekker 2006:71). Yet the country's sexual norms traditionally vary greatly from the western homonormative view of a fixed gay identity. The phenomenon Wekker chooses to focus on in her work is Matiwork, a form of female prostitution in Suriname.

Matiwork presents a radically different view of same-sex female sexuality than the homonormative image of Lesbians as domestic and uninterested in sex. As Wekker notes it is "prevalent among white middle-class Lesbian couples [to experience] a sharp drop off in sexual activity after the second year [as a couple]" (2006:73). Matiwork differs primarily in the fact that it is considered to be behavior- an act in which women are free to engage in sexual activity regardless of what their sexual identity may be in homonormative terms. Matiwork participants are thus inherently active in forming their sexuality and challenge notions of feminine passivity but are also less associated with ideas of romantic love as it exists as a prostitution form (2006:73).

It can therefore be said that Matiwork is not explicitly for "lesbians" any more than the garotos in Brazil would necessarily identify as gay. Yet as the LGBT rights movement grows in Suriname and more national attention is given to the visibility of gay people, there is an increasing desire to view Matiwork in homonormative terms. The Surinamese population is inherently transnational, because there are just as many Surinamese living in the Netherlands and other Dutch territories as there are in the country itself (Wekker 2006:79). Because of this, Suriname's local sexualities are shaped by longstanding colonial relationships and a sharing of ideas between it and the Netherlands than it is by gay tourists or expats themselves. As Puar notes that gay tourism in the Caribbean reflects political struggle with colonial powers (2002:124), so too is the status of Matiwork related to Dutch imaginings of Surinamese sexuality.

This is most explicitly seen in Surinamese LGBT activism, which operates using language and goals like such groups in the Netherlands itself rather than local sensibilities. The fact that they use official Dutch rather than the colloquial creole is also symbolic of this transnational imagining of gay identity (Wekker 2006:73). In this imagining of Surinamese sexuality, Matiwork is a lesbian phenomenon that is intertwined with homonormative senses of gay identity rather than a matter of behavior. Although gay relationships are stigmatized in Suriname, Matiwork has developed its place in female sexuality divorced from gender identity and the history of violence black female bodies have experienced in the country's brutal past (Wekker 2006:74). It is not simply a formation of lesbian identity but a matter of freeing sexual experience that homonormative values would undercut. Although activists and many LGBT Surinamese in the Netherlands may seek to point to Matiwork as an example of lesbian identity free from homophobia, doing so would also take it out of context and potentially enter homophobic discourse that is prominent in Suriname today.

Homonormativity masks not only non-Western experiences of sexuality but also LGBT people in the West who live outside of the prototypical image of an affluent white gay

community. As an upward system of equality, it is also a homonormative trend for members of these groups to rise close to this image in congruence with the difficult social ladder neoliberalism has produced. One good example of this fact in the West relates to the integration of Muslim immigrants in Western Europe who bring with them notions of sexuality that often conflict with homonormative gay identities in addition heterosexual ones.

Although Muslims from the Arab world and elsewhere are not the only groups to bring with them different views on sexuality, they are increasingly singled out by many European countries as being homophobic and having dangerously different views on women among other things. The Netherlands, for example, announced a "homo-emancipation" policy to encourage the *bespreekbaarheid* (willingness or ability to talk about) of LGBT issues within the country's growing Muslim population (Jivraj and de Jong 2011:143). Although there is a generally larger attitude of homophobia among the Muslim Dutch population than among the rest of the country, what is notably absent from the national discussion is the voices of gay Muslims themselves. Without these voices to show the diversity of the Muslim community, such policies become interconnected with anti-immigrant discourse that likewise forms an image of a backwards other within their own country (2011:145).

Such a discussion conforms to homonormative notions of an out gay identity that simultaneously argues for a private domestic gay lifestyle like the Dutch gay upper class. It is this image that forms a Dutch gay identity which notably loses connection to Muslim gay people as well as anyone else who does not fit this model. Jivraj and de Jong argue that this is ultimately a silencing effect on Queer Muslims that will ultimately backfire in bringing tolerance of LGBT people in their communities, because such individuals are excluded from what it means to be gay under a homonormative Dutch society (2011:146). Although the Netherlands is widely regarded as one of the most gay-friendly countries on Earth, having been the first country to legally recognize same-sex marriage, its homonormative gay culture is indicative of disparities between LGBT people in the country.

However, gay immigrants to Western countries do not necessarily play silenced passive roles across the board and there exist many Queer Muslim organizations in Europe that reach out to members of these communities. In Berlin, where tolerance of gay people is among the highest in Germany, Ilgin Yorukoglu argues that the economic decline of industry in the city has in part been replaced by a marketable image of a city of culture and diversity (2010:423). Yet not all gay people have been so widely accepted and celebrated in popular imagination. Like the Netherlands, Queer Muslims in Berlin also struggle from a lack of visibility and anti-Muslim rhetoric in the city's politics and social scenes. Gay Muslims who come to the city as refugees are particularly vulnerable to deportation, as even though Germany would provide asylum, family members in their own countries are expected to provide proof of their homosexuality, something many cannot provide (2010: 423). They are therefore unfairly judged by both homonormative gay identities and the oppression they face in Berlin and their home countries.

Muslim LGBT groups in Berlin seek to aid people caught in this divide and provide help that government policy has ignored. They must do this because "homonormativity

anesthetizes queer communities into passively accepting alternative forms of inequality in return for domestic privacy and the freedom to consume" (Yorukolgu 2010:426). The predominate view in mainstream German gay culture is that Muslim backgrounds are incompatible with homosexuality, due to a misconception that Muslims are religious fanatics and incapable of integrating (2010:428). Elevating gay rights under a homonormative frame allows German gay groups to passively ignore questioning this reasoning as social tolerance of homosexuality rises as a whole.

Muslim LGBT groups then challenge the homonormative mainstream of German gay culture by also fighting the social stigma that immigrants face in the country. The German perception of Turkish immigrants, for example, as homogeneous and staunchly conservative undermines their integration into society itself as Turkish identity becomes conflicting in a German national narrative. By creating visibility, they can actively include themselves in the image of German LGBT culture that otherwise excludes them. Although homonormativity reveals itself in this case to be more complicated than the West vs the Rest in terms of globalizing western ideas, it does show that homonormativity also plays into western imaginations of the Other even within their own countries.

Conclusion

As a stratifying force, homonormativity uplifts gay people within a consumer culture that does not readily benefit all LGBT people. It instead allows affluent gay people to live private lives as domestic consumers, in effect silencing calls for liberation and the voices of those who do not conform. As the status of affluent gay men rises to national and global imagery, it can therefore wrongly be determined to be a sign of progress that gay people have amassed a significant purchasing power as model neoliberal citizens. As this homonormative version of the Global Gay spreads through the world via a variety of forces, notably activism and tourism, it conflicts with sexual norms and glosses over socioeconomic inequalities. Although its spread does not replace local sexualities, it does frame how LGBT issues are discussed and dealt with on the world stage. This is ultimately problematic as it does not include all the people that should benefit from LGBT equality, nor does it provide a meaningful moral discourse in which to change attitudes or open minds.

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