



# Queer International Relations: Sovereignty, Sexuality and the Will to Knowledge (Oxford Studies in Gender and International Relations)

By Cynthia Weber

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If asked about queer work in international relations, most IR scholars would almost certainly answer that queer studies is a non-issue for the subdiscipline -- a topic beyond the scope and understanding of international politics. Yet queer work tackles problems that IR scholars themselves believe are central to their discipline: questions about political economies, the geopolitics of war and terror, and the national manifestations of sexual, racial, and gendered hierarchies, not to mention their implications for empire, globalization, neoliberalism, sovereignty, and terrorism. And since the introduction of queer work in the 1980s, IR scholars have used queer concepts like "performativity" or "crossing" in relation to important issues like sovereignty and security without acknowledging either their queer sources or their queer function.

This agenda-setting book asks how "sexuality" and "queer" are constituted as domains of international political practice and mobilized so that they bear on questions of state and nation formation, war and peace, and international political economy. How are sovereignty and sexuality entangled in contemporary international politics? What understandings of sovereignty and sexuality inform contemporary theories and foreign policies on development, immigration, terrorism, human rights, and regional integration? How specifically is "the homosexual" figured in these theories and policies to support or contest traditional understandings of sovereignty? *Queer International Relations* puts international relations scholarship and transnational/global queer studies scholarship in conversation to address these questions and their implications for contemporary international politics.

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"This book will challenge readers to think sovereignty, sexuality and IR differently, equipping them to interrogate the sexual bases for political categories, institutions, practices and - most importantly - ideas. In an era where LGBT rights are increasingly held up as markers for normal (as opposed to perverse) states, this intervention is welcome indeed. Weber lays to rest the presumptively white, masculine/cisgendered, able, heterosexual vision of sovereign man that underpins so much of what we do as IR scholars. While the book will almost certainly find pride of place in queer IR, and so it should, it is in the insular world of IR theory that it should be most carefully read."

-- *Critical Studies on Terrorism*

"Cynthia Weber continues to brilliantly and productively disrupt Disciplinary IR by destabilizing what the field holds most dear - 'the delusion of sovereignty.' This boldly conceived and cogently argued text enriches International Relations and Queer Studies and decisively signals the 'arrival' of Queer IR. It's about time; no other scholar could do it so well."

--V. Spike Peterson, University of Arizona

"Such a fascinating book! Cynthia Weber shows us the crooked, messy, anti-normative - and indeed, queer - underpinnings of the field of International Relations in ways never previously imagined. Queer International Relations places ideas about sovereignty, international norms, development, and sexuality onto the agenda unlike every before. I highly recommend this book for students, scholars and practitioners alike. The Field of International Relations will never be the same!"

-- Amy Lind, Mary Ellen Heintz Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, University of Cincinnati

"Yoking theories of sexuality and sovereignty together, Cynthia Weber's new book boldly demonstrates why disciplinary transgression is well worth the risk. Scholars in International Relations, Queer Studies, American Studies, and Global Cultural Studies will find Queer International Relations a valuable resource for understanding contemporary formations of power."

--Robyn Wiegman, Duke University

"This long-overdue investigation of queer studies and international relations uncovers key links between sexuality and sovereignty, power and possibility. From the underdeveloped to the stateless, and from the gay

patriot to the deviant terrorist, Queer IR reconsiders an impressive terrain of human rights debates and controversies."

--David L. Eng, University of Pennsylvania

"Cynthia Weber offers a theoretically and empirically engaging approach to queer theory that broadens and deepens our understanding of International Relations. Her rich accounts of the figurations of 'the homosexual' require a reconsideration of some of the standard tropes in the discipline. Her thought-provoking analyses will be of use to all scholars in the discipline, regardless of their theoretical and methodological commitments."

--Cameron G. Thies, Arizona State University

"In this rich account of why queer theory and IR need each other, Cynthia Weber has given us a powerful statement of what Queer IR might become. This is a great banyan tree of a book that has forced a clearing in the jungle that is IR. Thanks to it, queer IR scholars will no longer have to perform the 'anxious labour' of justifying their place in the academy and can get on with the important work of speaking to and of the world."

--Rahul Rao, SOAS, University of London

"Cynthia Weber has nudged, pushed, and lured us all to think more creatively and more candidly about sexuality as a potentially key dynamic shaping political relationships within and between (alleged) nation-states and their officials."

--Cynthia Enloe

## About the Author

**Cynthia Weber** is Professor of International Relations at the University of Sussex.

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### **Michael Banks:**

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