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Queer Political Organization in Israel, and Palestine: Shifting away from Homonationalism

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William O. Douglas Honors Thesis

Queer Political Organization in Israel, and Palestine: Shifting away from Homonationalism

Tristan Blaisdell

DHC497

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Glossary

Home/Homeland- Home and Homeland are intertwined, within this essay in their representations of not only concepts of the chosen home, but as well as homes of origin. All three communities within my exhibit, display examples of being forced out of and/or finding their concepts of “home”. Whether it be the family you create or the physical land you stand on.

Homonationalism- the indoctrination of queer populations into nationalist discords, through propaganda and persuasion. Often used by national powers to pit queer communities onto an enemy “other”. In my exhibit the state of Israel pits its queer citizens as well as international citizens against Palestinians. (Jasbir, Puar. 2007).

Intersectionality- “are not additive but rather interlocking, interactive, and relational categories, “multiplicative” (King 1988:42), “simultaneous” (Andersen and Collins 1995:ii), “mutually constituted” (Brodkin 2000:240), and characterized by “the articulation of multiple oppressions” (Brewer 1993:13).” (2005, Mullings). This definition of Intersectionality, suits my exhibit, for how flexible it is when it comes to the intersections of identity. Identities not only overlap, but influence each other in all manor of different outcomes.

Pinkwashing– first used by breast cancer activists protesting the ways companies market products as pink with little to no support for actual breast cancer research. Today the term is used by both Israeli and international queer activists in response to the marketing of queer rights both internationally and domestically by the Israeli government.

Queer-During this thesis I refer to queer as any individual who falls underneath one of the LGBTQIA identities not just for the sake of simplicity, but to be as inclusive as possible of its members.

Diaspora- “the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland” (“Diaspora” Merriam-Webster) The origins of diaspora, actually have their roots in reference to the Jewish population living outside of Palestine and Israel, and for my paper is used for both the Israeli’s and Palestinians.

Introduction

What are the different ways that queer people in Israel and Palestine, organize and identify within their national contexts, and how does this affect queer protest within the region? Drawing from different protests, news coverage and personal narratives from the region, I intend to create a museum exhibit which poses these same questions to visitors. From the exhibit I want visitors to the Museum of Culture and Environment and any other museum this exhibit may find itself, to walk away thinking about the different ways in which national, sexual, religious, and gender identities all intersect and to shed a queer spotlight on the Israel/Palestine conflict. Visitors will encounter personal narratives that provide insight into forms of state power and control and resistance against it. Through this intersectionality of sexuality and nationality within Israel, and Palestine I will be able to make a case of the prevalence of a homonationalist discourse within the region. By understanding the ways that these two nations interact with and present their queer communities both domestically and abroad, it becomes clear that while the lived experiences of many queer people may be shared across the globe they are in no way universal or uniform. Through propaganda and state actions both the Israeli and Palestinian nations gate-keep identity, whether that be about who is considered Israeli, Palestinian, or queer. With this exhibit I also hope to shed light on the ways both the Israeli and Palestinian national struggles are reflective of a shared experience of othering.

By focusing specifically on Pinkwashing, visitors will see how the use of homonationalism in Israeli propaganda, is a prime example of state manipulation. The first term that needs to be defined is Pinkwashing, an advertising strategy, that was originally used to refer to companies who would “come out” in support of breast cancer awareness, by creating pink products, simply to capitalize on the movement, but has since come to refer to the ways in which the state of Israel brands itself as the only progressive nation in the middle east (Fem Magazine, 2019). By appearing pro-LGBTQ, Israel appeals to its western allies, seeking money and support, while at the same time demonizing its Arab neighbors by painting them as regressive and unmodern in comparison. Pinkwashing is just one way that it becomes clear that the intersections between nationality, race and religion impact the queer identity itself. This discussion of Pinkwashing is very important within both current academic and non-academic dialogue as it reflects and illustrates the ways that queer citizens differ cross-nationally and that generalities while useful, need to be seen as illustrative of a percentage of the population rather than the entire population.

Leith Mullings definition of intersectionality, furthers this understanding of identities and generalities by which seeking to emphasize the ways different identities “are not additive but rather interlocking, interactive, and relational categories, ‘multiplicative’ (King 1988:42), ‘simultaneous’ (Andersen and Collins 1995:ii), ‘mutually constituted’ (Brodkin 2000:240), and characterized by ‘the articulation of multiple oppressions’ (Brewer 1993:13).” (2005, Mullings). This definition acknowledge that aspects of identity not only intersect, but are relational to each other. This acknowledgement is essential to my exhibit for the ways it will illustrate how race, class, gender and other minority identities are not only situated within different national theatres but how they influence each other. An example of pinkwashing I would include in my exhibit are

pieces of Israeli propaganda, claiming that “only in Israel can you be gay and serve your country”, what equivocations like this uphold is the state of Israel as a self-identified sanctuary to queer individuals while demonizing its surrounding neighbors (“Poster Gallery”, Bluestar). Pinkwashing propaganda needs to be addressed, especially because of the ways that it ignores the intersections between nationality, and sexuality specifically within queer Palestinian and Israeli life, and instead reduces them into strict definitions of who can or cannot be queer in the middle east. It exasperates nationalist tendencies within queer communities, rather than allowing for bridges to be built between nationalities. For example, in the U.S. many queer people see Islam and the Middle East as antithetical to their existence, especially after 9/11 when the Arab “other” became an enemy to the nation as a whole (Puar, J. 2007). Pinkwashing makes out every queer person to be the same and reduces what it means to be queer, without recognizing the complexity that intersectional approaches seek to address. It boldly makes the claim that all heteronormative oppression is the same and is experienced in the same way, with little-to-no regard for differences and intersections based on race, gender, wealth and religion.

Belonging for all three communities has taken on different meanings throughout their histories, but all can be seen to share a common thread of othering. The history of the state of Israel begins with the Zionist movement in the late 19th century, as a way of European Jews to immigrate to Israel, on the basis of an ancestral homeland as well as fleeing anti-Semitism in Europe. For European Jews the idea of Israel represented a safe place, in which they could escape persecution and othering in Europe. This need for safety is similar for queer people, with whom the concept of “home” is fraught with tensions between the family one is born into as well as the chosen family. Within the U.S., gay bars have a history as safe havens where they could express and be themselves away from the heteronormative society they live in. My definition of

home also builds off the definition provided by the Rev. Dr. Patrick S. Cheng, who at a speech given to the Fourth Annual John E. Boswell Lecture at the Pacific School of Religion, conceptualized the rainbow and its intersectional meaning not only as a gay man but as an Asian one as well (Cheng, Patrick S, 2011). He sees the concept of home, not only in the queer sense but also as an Asian man living in diaspora and what it means to be away from a homeland (Cheng, Patrick S, 2011). This is an intersectional notion of home, that acknowledges both the history of queer and racial diaspora. Palestinians are currently going through the process of being othered as Jews and queers have been, and as half of their population live in diaspora as refugees, their concepts of “home” are just as fraught with tension. In my exhibit I would hope to focus on the concept of home/homeland and belonging and what these ideas mean for queers, Palestinians and Israelis. I would also like to specifically show the ways their queer populations protest political Pinkwashing and heteronormativity, and how it becomes clear that queer identities cannot be reduced as nicely and neatly as people want and that they are in fact as ever-changing, and subject to life’s different intersections as the rest of the world.

For the sake of this project I also want to clarify my use of the word queer. Using queer theory, I will demonstrate the ways that different people use sexuality and protest in order to fight against heteronormative dialogues and messages. I will also use the term queer as an inclusive term allows for easier use and flexibility when referring to all members of the LGBTQIA community. Homonationalism is another term that should be addressed as the ways that current nationalist movements pull/draw on queer populations for support both explicitly and implicitly. For a more in-depth definition it is the role that queer people play not only in their own support of nationalist movements but the way that their communities are strategically deployed by the state.

Positionality Statement

Whenever I explain my interdisciplinary major, I preface that I consider myself to have academic commitment issues (which always gets a few laughs), but joking aside, this is a big reason why I chose this topic. When we first were asked what topic we wanted to do our thesis on, I became worried because there is just so much that I want to cover. Whenever I take a class I want to immediately do that niche thing for the rest of my career, so picking a single topic for this thesis not only felt impossible, but as if I was deciding upon the one area of interest that would shape the rest of my life. At first, I wanted to cover queer Globalization, and how LGBTQ people are represented and identify globally, but for obvious reasons, this topic was just too broad for a senior thesis. After narrowing down some of my ideas, I remembered an article I read in a DHC class about pinkwashing in Israel in Palestine. Looking back, it really was the first time I was able to think about my own identity as a queer white man and how it is very much defined by my national, religious, racial and cultural identity. This moment was impactful for me because it was one of the, if not the first, times I had thought about my own identity in an academic setting. It was also the first time I became truly aware of how my own experiences as a queer, white, American man are very particular to me and are not shared by queer people around the globe. Once I had narrowed my topic to focus on pinkwashing and homonationalism in the context of Israel and Palestine I felt like I could still incorporate a theory of a queer diaspora along with it. As I continued through college I would develop a deeper understanding of what it meant to be queer and its history, as well as how it applies to me, which furthered my interest in what it means to be queer globally, and how it impacts various aspects of identity. In the end however I decided after discussing the notion of queer diaspora with various professors, that it may need to be a topic for a future project due to its depth and complexity.

I focused on designing a museum exhibit proposal using the information I already have specifically on Israel and Palestine. By making a museum exhibit I felt I could tailor my project towards my interests more, as well as practice a way to reach out communities on an important topic. As a museum studies minor, I know that I want to work in some sort of museum capacity in my future, and so with the information I had available decided an exhibit would be my best course of action. When it came to my positionality, I struggled a lot with my own feelings of if what I was saying throughout my work and paper was anti-Semitic. Being a white Christian American, I feel uncomfortable talking about and generalizing about the lived experiences and lives of people living half-way across the world, who have to deal with racism daily especially as one who has never dealt with the realities of anti-Semitism or anti-Arabism. I wanted to make sure that I was aware of the possible complexities of this issue as well as the anti-Semitism that has come from anti-Israel campaigns. In this way the distinction between what it means to be Jewish or an Israeli becomes all the more important. This is why throughout my paper and the exhibit I plan on stressing the importance of intersectionality, and that even though there may be experiences that I can share with queer Israelis and Palestinians, it does not mean I have any authority to speak about their particular experiences. I also am seeking funding to travel to Israel/Palestine for a year to collect narratives, objects of protest, and possible art pieces that allow the individuals to speak for themselves. My aim in bringing this exhibit to the U.S. is to serve as their megaphone, and to help queer Americans like myself realize that in this huge planet, queer identities are not going to fit as nicely in the boxes we have assigned them.

Literature review

Before I go into a more detailed explanation for where my definition of Homonationalism comes from, I would be remiss if I did not mention the book the *Globalization of sexuality* by Jon

Binnie who addresses specifically the way queer identities and nationalist projects do and/or do not mix. Of interest to me are the ways that he illustrates the history of queer people with nationalism (Binnie, Jon. 2004): “Nationalisms do not simply exclude sexual dissidents, the relationship between queers and the nation-state is more ambivalent.” This statement is interesting because of the fluidity that it offers nationalist movements in relation to their queer populations (Binnie, Jon. 2004). Nations can both support and oppose their queer citizens as well as compartmentalize, essentialize, and/or oppress all at the same time. Not only do nations interact with their populations differently but this creates different communities who vary wildly from each other despite all being under the very western umbrella of “queer.” He also admits that while nationalist causes were supported by gay-rights movements in post-socialist countries such as Slovenia, homophobia, sexism, and racism increased under the new nationalist regimes which sought to increase their populations. What this tells us is that nationalism, in the end, can have many harmful consequences regarding queer citizens which might not have been as self-evident at first glance. With the case of Israel, it falls more upon the side of support, compartmentalization and essentialization of queer, and Israeli identities, with the drawback of oppressing Palestinian identities.

The basis for my definition of Homonationalism comes from Jasbir Puar who really brought the term into use in her book *Terrorist Assemblages*. In her book, Puar addresses the many different ways that the terrorist body has become queer or othered in society, and how specifically within American society, homonationalism has become a tool with which the heteronormative has used in its various nationalist projects (Puar, J. 2007). By making appeals to the queer community, governments, such as the United States, have convinced their populations that only “here” is it possible to be openly queer and live a happy life, and that the freedom that

America/Israel, etc. brings can accomplish this. In many regards, the fact that the United States has allowed its queer population any rights such as marriage equality and adoption, in comparison to the new “enemy” that was being fought against in the middle east, became a tool that nationalists were able to use to justify their hatred of the Arab other (Puar, J. 2007). And as Puar points out unfortunately, many queer people fell into following the rhetoric themselves, claiming that it has become their duty to fight against the homophobic terrorist who seeks to kill all gays (Puar, J. 2007). In ways very similar to the fight many feminist movements have fought, the focus of gay rights was forcefully shifted from a fight fought at home to one that needs to be fought abroad, in an attempt not only to further nationalist agendas but to divert from heteronormative ones domestically.

By building off Puar and Binnie, in the context of Israel and Palestine, the case can be made that Homonationalism and the ways that queers are often coopted/buy into nationalist agendas is similar to the ways that society has bought into heteronormative ones. Within my exhibit I plan on giving a brief history of Zionism in the region, explaining both the needs and fears of Jews who fled persecution in Europe. I will also tell the stories of Palestinians forced out of their homes, by the new Zionists. These would then both be tied into a greater narrative of historical and demographic statistics in the region, to serve as general context for the conflict. I would then shift into personal narratives collected from my trip there, so as to emphasize the fluid and intersecting nature of queer people in the region. What I hope to show visitors within the exhibit is a comparison between queer individuals who feel rejected from their homes and greater societies, and both Israelis and Palestinians who have been forced from their homes *and* their homelands, whether it be Europe or Palestine. In this regard one can start seeing

nationalism and homophobia as closely related tools that countries and/or communities use to manipulate populations, particularly queer people.

In *Zionist Lesbianism and Transsexual Transgressions*, Yael Ben-zvi illustrates the ways that queer Israeli identities are closely linked to the political and social identities of the people already living in Israel. He illustrates the different political spheres of two well known queer public figures, Dana International a famous Trans-singer who gained popularity for winning the cross national European singing competition, Eurovision, and Michal Eden the first openly queer person to hold official office in Israel. He presents the two as representing two distinct parts of the Israeli queer population. With Eden, the politician who is willing to side with political proponents of Palestinian occupation and oppression, for the sake of their “pro-gay” stances and Dana international who is more willing to call out homophobia within her own country. While this view polarizes queer viewpoints a little much for my taste, Ben-zvi does highlight some of the historical differences that emerge when looking at these two women, and how closely tied they are to the notion of race within the country.

What Ben-zvi does as well is illustrate differences inside groups. In his case, among Israeli queers. When it comes to pinkwashing this difference in opinion becomes all the clearer when looking at how queer Israeli activists tend to appropriate the term versus the ways Queer International and Palestinian Activists use it. Hen Mazzig in his article for the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* explains this difference in definition. Many queer Israelis use the term when talking about the ways the state will profit off of seeming to be pro-gay or progressive only to turn around and remove support all of a sudden. An example he gives is off an Israeli bill legalizing same-sex adoption that Israeli President Netanyahu had promised to support, yet failed to when the time came. However international authors like Puar and Sarah Shulman, have taken

the term to refer to the ways the Israeli government uses its PR to make itself out to be a seemingly gay sanctuary in the middle east. In his article Hen Mazzig goes on to claim that “These activists are using our pain (Israelis) as a means to advance their biased agenda. What is the reason for their fixation on all of these issues? Is it actually meant to promote underprivileged communities, or attack us for our nationality?” (Mazzig, Hen. 2019) The issue however with this statement is that within the article he in no way backs up the idea that they aren’t “actually” promoting underprivileged communities. In fact, it becomes a perfect example of homonationalism in action. Hen Mazzig becomes defensive of his nationality, believing that pointing out the flaws of the state of Israel is an attack on queer people. In the end devotion to a nationalist agenda which “seemingly” promises equality under the law for queer people, takes precedence over inequality and injustice elsewhere in the country. Pinkwashing forces queer Israeli and Palestinian citizens to pick a side. It creates a dichotomy between either transcending national boundaries, or rooting oneself in them.

In terms of the literature, it was also easy for me to find articles like Mazzig’s which explained the Israeli argument, yet I struggled to find articles by queer Palestinians on the topic. Of the accounts I did find one came from a book called *Unspeakable Love* by Brian Whitaker which address the lives of gay and lesbian people living in the middle east. In it he describes the life of a Gaza Palestinian who was rejected by his family, and then tortured by the police, a narrative he claims is far too common in the country (Whitaker, Brian. 2015) . He also remarks about how Palestinians who flee this persecution to Israel are then seen as traitors or are caught in an administrative block created by the Israeli government who sees them as security threats (Whitaker, Brian. 2015). This catch-22 is just the kind of experience that I hope to shed light on with my exhibit. A more recent development has also occurred in Palestine, which silences their

queer voices even more. In August of 2019, the Palestinian Authority banned the group Al-Qaws a Palestinian LGBTQ group from protesting in the region (Toameh, Khaled Abu, 2019). This creates a double-sided sword for queer Palestinians who are forced to choose between a government who discriminates against them on the basis of being Palestinian and a government who discriminates against them on the basis of being queer. By traveling to the region, I would hope to collect and then present these complex narratives in my exhibit that aren't often heard, so as illustrate the intersectional nature of the issue.

While not an example from Palestine or Israel Nadine Naber and Zeina Zaatari provide concrete examples of both feminist and queer activism during the U.S.-backed Israeli war on Lebanon. They outline the different ways that the war forced both feminist and queer activists to put aside their own issues for the sake of protesting the war (Naber, N., & Zaatari, Z., 2014). In this way similar to Mazzig's defensive stance on Pinkwashing, nationalism takes precedence within the personal narratives and identities of queer Lebanese activists. During this period Naber and Zaatari illustrated the ways that the war also opened up both opportunities and new issues for the feminist and queer populations to protest. The role of the family life in Lebanese society took center stage for many protestors as it was a social structure that became an important factor for many to rely on during war time (Naber, N., & Zaatari, Z. 2014). Sectarianism within Lebanese cities at this time also became evident to many activists, specifically the ways that it attempted to divide the citizens and create more room for nationalism and distrust than for unity and strength (Naber, N., & Zaatari, Z. 2014). By looking at this article it becomes clear that the ways protest is used differently to navigate different social and political situations. It brings to light that even though both share the root connection of

fighting the heteronormative, queer protesting in Lebanon is going to look and materialize itself differently than queer protest in America or Israel.

One author who disagrees completely with the concept of homonationalism is Jason Ritchie whose book *Pinkwashing, Homonationalism, and Israel-Palestine: the conceits of Queer theory and the politics of the ordinary* illustrates the ways that he would argue with other authors like Puar. Essentially Ritchie claims that the notion of homonationalism is too focused on the specific political and social histories of the west and then is applied almost entirely to Israel and Palestine (Ritchie, J. 2014). While I would agree with Ritchie that homonationalism needs to be applied to more contexts, rather than just within the Middle East, I would disagree with just how much the concept is applicable to the west only. Nothing within Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages* implies that her theory could not apply to countries outside of the west or middle east. I would make the argument that intersectional ways of thinking about queer communities and culture, reveals how homonationalism, in one form or another, occurs everywhere whether that be within Israel or the United States, as Puar points out. Homonationalism also takes shape in the rejection of queer people as demonstrated by the Palestinian government. By distancing itself as far as possible from the queer community the Palestinian government forces its own citizens into siding with a power who discriminates against them on the basis of being Palestinian. Admittedly it will take different forms depending on the national contexts, but nonetheless is still utilized. Whether it be the subjection and rejection of a queer population by a nationalist power or the support of it, the different ways queer people and their various nation-states interact need to be addressed more fully.

The literature review on this subject would go amiss without mention of Sarah Schulman whose book *Israel/Palestine and the queer international* specifically addresses this complex

issue. The majority of the book is spent with Schulman explaining her travels to Israel and Palestine and her own experiences as both a Jewish American woman and lesbian, and how it really took a trip to Palestine to witness what the actual nuances of queer experience in the region (Schulman, S. 2012). She outlines some of the key differences amongst the Jewish diaspora which in turn opens up a discussion of the notion of diaspora and that people can still have a shared background and not agree or differ from one another in some regard (Schulman, S. 2012). The biggest example in her life being not only language differences but how people from Israel dressed and acted when compared to the family she grew up with in New York (Schulman, S. 2012). What Shulman also does well is illustrate the BDS movement (boycott, divest, and sanctions) that has sprung up in recent years to try and discourage Israeli apartheid (Schulman, S. 2012). Specifically, she talks about her own influences and ways that she has taken part in the movement by turning down speaking positions and instead visiting Palestine (Schulman, S. 2012). I also appreciate Shulmans work because of the ways that she incorporates how much impact the west, particularly in relation to the Queer Film festival held in Tel Aviv, directly supports the Israeli governments Pinkwashing agenda and then going forward different steps that can be taken to protest the injustices facing Palestinians (Schulman, S. 2012).

Finally, an important aspect of my exhibit that I am drawing from are first-hand new accounts of queer activism within the region, and in other countries like Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt all of which hold Palestinian refugees and/or are impacted by the crisis in one way or another. Specifically, I'm interested in the public figures who've already been mentioned such as Dana International and Michal Eden but also the Lebanese band Mashrou' Leila whose lead singer is openly gay, and whose latest music video, *Calvary*, directly criticizes Israeli occupation, and I would be interested in including the video amongst the exhibit in some

capacity. Other groups who I hope to meet with and discuss the future of my exhibit are AIQaws, a Palestinian-based queer group that has recently been declared illegal by the PA and Aswat a Lesbian-Palestinian group based in Lebanon. I would specifically like to reach out to representatives of both groups so as to create a basis of support that I can build from on my trip to the region. These groups are important within a global context due to the impact they have on their own country's foreign policies and ideologies towards these issues.

By presenting Israeli and Palestine through a queer lens I hope to illustrate the different ways in which nationality is used to manipulate queer people. Specifically, through the vehicle of Pinkwashing and the ways that protest against it can take different forms, locally, nationally and globally.

Exhibition Brief

Big Idea: To shed a queer spotlight on the Israel/Palestine conflict, in a way that focuses on personal narratives and forms of state power and control.

the following should be seen as sections of my exhibit that are subject to change upon visiting Israel/Palestine and further research into the lived experiences of their queer populations

Audience Statement: The MCE attracts approximately 4,000 visitors per year, a third of which are from the local Ellensburg community, the rest being faculty and students. I unfortunately do not have any statistics regarding CWU students who identify as Palestinian or Israeli which are both populations I would like to reach out too, but I do know that as of the U.S. Census statistics taken between 2014-2018, 7.7% of Ellensburg's entire population are foreign born, a percentage probably deflated due to number of citizens who responded (U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts).

Purpose: The goal of my exhibit is to introduce the concepts of Pinkwashing and Homonationalism to the Ellensburg community, as well as to build bridges, between queer

people internationally. The mission statement of the Museum of Culture and Environment is as follows “The CWU Museum of Culture and Environment works with diverse communities to create opportunities for lifelong learning that foster self-discovery, global citizenship, and environmental stewardship.” My exhibit would focus on working with diverse communities, in this case queer Israeli and Palestinian people, to help foster global citizenship. The impact I want to make for my audience is to broaden understandings within the Ellensburg community as to what the different lived experiences of queer Palestinians and Israelis are. A large part of the exhibit would be comprised of personal statements and stories of activists and queer people on the ground and their experiences living in the volatile region. In consideration of the Ellensburg community I would hope to reach out not only to CWU students and faculty but the larger community as a whole. Based on a poll done by the Pew Research Center 64% of Americans favorably view the Israeli people, while only 41% favorably view the Israeli government (U.S. Public, 2019). This is a population I want to represent and reach out to. I also hope to make queer people think carefully of where their own money is being spent, in connection to the state of Israel, which has been branded as a sort of queer sanctuary in the Middle East, and instead think of their own positionalities in relation to the conflict.

Core Ideas:

- Conceptualizing Jews, Palestinians, and queer people as communities forced out of their homes and homelands, by either other nations/peoples, or society at large.
- Expanding the focus of queer issues and protests outside of strictly heteronormative American understandings of “queer issues”
- The use of power and control imbedded in nationalist discourse over the ability to change narratives.

- What can visitors to the exhibit do?
- A comparison of queer Israeli/Palestinian narratives.

Outline:

- Introduction and Title: Pinkwashing and the Conceptualizing of Home
 - Section 1-Traditional introduction
 - Everyone will have a different definition of home. Whether it be a physical location or the family you are born into or choose, and the concept of home becomes all the more important to those groups who have been routinely othered by society. By looking at the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict and specifically the queer Individuals who live and protest there, the need to stray further from a homonationalist discourse and focus on the ways the all three populations Israelis, Palestinians and queers can come together to create a home, need to be addressed.
 - In terms of objects or graphics for this section, I want to include three in order to provide context for the conflict. A timeline, a map, and a graph illustrating the populations of Israelis and Palestinians over time. With these I hope to give visitors a sense of a timeline, involve multiple narratives of the conflict, depending on which side one sees it from.
 - The History of the Conflict and important moments within
 - The injustices faced by the Israelis, Palestinians, and queer peoples living in the region

- A sense of what the political and social climates are like today, as well as where the majority of the Israeli and Palestinian populations live within diaspora.
- Section 2-Background on terms used and current protests
 - I will provide a small handout, possibly laminated, that visitors could carry around, providing definitions for terms I use throughout the exhibit, such as queer, or the PA or the different acronyms and/or names of protest groups mentioned.
- Section 3-international queer movement
 - Discuss what Pinkwashing is and how it is defined differently between queer Israelis and the Larger International community.
 - Pinkwashing Can be defined in two ways. The first is used by local queer Israelis who claim the Israeli government is hypocritical and makes promises to the queer community for the sake of political revenue, while the other is used by international scholars and activists like Jasbir Puar and Sarah Shulman, who claim it is the marketing strategy of the Israeli government, to present itself as forward thinking and gay friendly in the Middle East, so as to paint their opposition in a less flattering light as well as draw attention away from their human rights abuses against the Palestinian population.
 - Objects: Images of Pinkwashing protests, and small pink stamp set up for visitors to use, so they can protest pinkwashing like the activists.

- Here are some example of protesters Marching and staging a die-in covered in either pink paint or pink sheets. Which I would like to either capture myself while there, or receive permission from the original owners



to include.



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Gay Officers
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- Section 4-Pressures on queer Israelis
 - Here I want to cover the pressures or seeming lack of oppression that queer Israelis face from their own government and/or society.

- “While Israeli government changes the narratives of both queer Palestinians and Israelis, the earlier also face pressures within the West Bank and their own homes. In August of 2019 the Palestinian Authority banned any members of the Palestinian LGBTQ group Al-Qaws from protesting within the West Bank, encouraging citizens to report members to the police.”
- “While Al-Qaws has responded by continuing their own activities, groups like them and the Lebanese based Aswat face othering for being both Palestinian and queer in nature.”
- Objects: Images and quotes by Israeli politicians and religious leaders condemning queer people. I think this section would be a good place for any queer Israeli art I may find.
- Section 5-Pressures on queer Palestinians
 - Objects: Images and quotes by Palestinian politicians and religious leaders condemning queer people, as well as any queer Palestinian art.
 - I would also like to focus here on the catch-22 mentioned earlier as to queer Palestinians having to choose between their home and people and their own safety. As well as mentioning groups such as Aswat as Al-qaws and the work they are doing.



- The above political cartoon, is slightly misleading as it is referencing gay Israeli Arabs and not gay Palestinians so may not make the final cut for the exhibit but I still feel is a good example of the catch-22 in the region.
- Section 6-Israeli and Palestinian Narratives
 - This I plan on being a series of photo portraits of queer Israelis and Palestinians flanking the visitors while segments of interviews that I will take while traveling. Their words and images would only be used with permission, and within the guidelines of IRB clearance.
- Section 7 -conceptualization of Palestinian and Israeli bodies as queer in terms of being forced from their homes. And a final push to drive home my argument that Homonationalism is another form of homophobia only on a larger, more nation/ethnic base.
 - “Israelis found their home and safety in the state of Israel, queers through pride and chosen families, but what of Palestinians? Where is there home and Justice?”

Schedule: Ideally the 200 linear ft. of room offered by MCE makes a timeline spanning approximately 18 months, or a year to travel and collect research and then another six months to

design/prepare exhibit ideal. I would like to spend that first year in the region, collecting narratives and objects, interviewing queer, Palestinians and Israelis, focusing particularly on the ways these communities create their definition of home and belonging. I would then move to the design portion for around 6 months, until finally spending the final 3 months, implementing the exhibit. By spending a year in Israel/Palestine, I see myself being able to split my time effectively between queer Israelis and Palestinians. If given the opportunity, I would like to interview queer Americans who are visiting. While visiting I would hope to collect any material culture related to protest activities, whether those be buttons, signs or pictures. Any pictures I took would immediately be asked for permission from the community as to whether it was okay for me to use or not. Ideally this would be a traveling exhibit, where the funds could go towards both my own research costs as well as the organizations I interviewed and researched. Below is a list of more concrete steps that I need to take before continuing on with this research.

1. Creation and development of interview questions including but not limited to
 - a. What do you think of when you think of home?
 - b. what is Pinkwashing to you? Have you even heard of this term?
2. HSRC Clearance Completion allowing me to carryout human subject research and interviews
3. Grant applications for money, regarding financial compensation for both the research and exhibit applications of this project. Possible grant sources include:
 - a. IMLS Inspire! Grant for small Museums: \$50,000 funding Cap
 - b. NEH Public Humanities: \$75,000 Funding Cap for Planning, \$400,000 for Implementing
 - c. NEA Grants for Arts Projects: \$100,000 Funding Cap

4. Travel to Israel, Palestine, and Lebanon hopefully meeting with representatives of Al-qaws, and Aswat. When it comes to entrance into all countries precautions will be made to make by travel as seamless and by the book as possible.
5. I would like to have interviewed an equal number of queer Israeli's and Palestinians, but at the very least 5 of each, with their use and participation up to their discretion.
6. I would hopefully have been able to collect a series of objects including, protest signs, buttons any other objects I believe to fall under the scope of my big idea.
7. Upon my return from the region, I would begin finishing my exhibition script, moving into the design phase, fabrication, publicity, and exhibition.
8. Finally, upon the opening and subsequent closing of the exhibit at the MCE I would reach out to as many other institutions as possible, through their websites and information made public, to see if they would also be willing to also host.

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