The Reluctant Queer

Sabiha Allouche

Abstract:

In "The Locations of Homophobia," Rahul Rao (2014, 174-175) invites us to complicate our examination of homophobia by turning our analysis inwardly. Whilst I maintain the bearing of the sexed (read: homophobic) colonial legacies on the contemporary discourse surrounding sexuality, including homophobia, across much of the MENA region, I agree with Rao on the importance of turning our analytic gaze inwardly in order to account for the agency of "local actors" in sustaining homophobic narratives and practices. Three concrete location(s) of homophobia are identified in this paper: the role of the Lebanese ruling-class elite in the neo-liberalisation (read: depoliticization through economization) of same-sex desire, the alien rhetoric of local LGBT activism, and the "fractal orientalism" (Moussawi 2013) that reproduces Beirut as an LGBT haven. I conceptualize the "reluctant queer" in relation to each in order to challenge mainstream global media's depictions of Lebanon as exceptionally LGBT-friendly, particularly where LGBT activism is concerned.

A number of western media outlets have recently celebrated the appointment of four women in Lebanon's newly-formed government. For *Reuters* news agency, their appointment "[prises] open a wider foothold for women," (McDowall 2019) whilst *Bustle* and *Euronews* (Lyons 2019) termed it a "huge step forward." None of these outlets relate the connectivity of these women to strong sectarian leaders, or the fact that their appointment takes place within an unprecedented climate of homophobic rhetoric, largely promulgated by religious authorities. The current developments in the Lebanese ministerial cabinet are best described as homophobic state feminism. This paradox is telling of thinking through gender and sexuality dynamics in the MENA within a framework that recognizes their production "within the context of regional and global political economy," as Mayssoun Sukarieh (2015, 2) rightly points out. In addition, and although this paper is primarily concerned with conceptualizing the "reluctant queer" in Lebanon, an all-encompassing expression that captures the apathetic stance of those directly concerned with LGBT issues, I find it important to encapsulate in my analysis "the ways in which multiple and often contradictory gender roles" are deployed across "different social classes, geographical sites and institutional locations" and "in specific institutional and ideological contexts" by each of the state and the elite (Ibid., 3). Conversely, and in order to best capture queer reluctance in the context of Lebanon, as opposed to its widely publicized image as an LGBT haven in the MENA region, it is important to instil a multi-layered analysis that joins the local with the global, and vice versa, and takes into account the multiplicity of the actors, both political and non-political ones, involved.

In "The Locations of Homophobia," Rahul Rao (2014, 174-175) invites us to complicate our analysis of homophobia by turning it inwardly. Whilst I maintain the bearing of the sexed colonial legacies on contemporary sexuality discourses, including homophobia, across much of the MENA region (see: Najmabadi 2005; Amer 2009; Traub 2008; Hayes 2018), I agree with Rao on the importance of turning our analytic gaze inwardly in order to account for the "agency" of local actors in sustaining homophobic narratives and practices.

The concrete location(s) of homophobia in Lebanon allow me to conceive the "reluctant queer." The "reluctant queer" does not mobilize in the name of LGBT rights, despite self-identifying as queer. At the same time, the "reluctant queer" is not to be mistaken with Men who have Sex with Men (MSM), as Joseph Massad (2002) would argue, nor should they[1] be reduced to the question of "coming out" (see: Ritchie 2010). Instead, the political ambivalence of the "reluctant queer" echoes Sara Ahmed's (2000) "stranger fetishism," where the stranger is "produced, not as that which we fail to recognise, but as that which we have already recognised as 'a stranger'" (Ahmed 2000, 3-4). Having said that, I hope to challenge mainstream global media's depictions of Lebanon as exceptionally LGBT-friendly, particularly where LGBT activism is concerned.

In order to achieve this, I postulate the limits of the either/or deployment of Jasbir Puar's concept of homonationalism in global politics, whereby certain states are reproduced as rogue and under-developed, whilst others are treated as enlightened and fully developed. At a second stage, I situate the "reluctant queer" in relation to Lebanese state and society. Three concrete location(s) of homophobia are identified here: the role of the Lebanese ruling-class elite in the neo-liberalisation (read: depoliticization through

---

[1] I use the pronoun they in singular when writing on the reluctant queer.

economization) of same-sex desire, the alien rhetoric of local LGBT activism, and the "fractal orientalism" (Moussawi 2013) that reproduces Beirut as an LGBT haven.

Methodological and Theoretical Underpinnings

Queer theorists have provided important clues in their examination of sexuality, and the work of Michel Foucault have proved indispensable to their endeavours. Foucault (1978) sought to work out the discursive formation of sexuality; that is, the becoming of sexuality as a politically-charged and thus implicating category to be known, documented, recorded, and diagnosed. Inherent to his work is the dual mechanism of power: whereas certain sexualities are endorsed and sanctified, others are excluded. However, and as Buchanan (2018, 394) reminds us, "it is not the fact that straight is included and queer is excluded by a given society that concerns Foucault, but rather the fact that the elastic continuum of sexuality can be segmented so neatly despite the obvious permeability of the key categories." Either way, critical feminist scholars have previously condemned Foucault for his "gender blindness" (King 2004), and for conceiving "docile bodies" – instead of subjects – as the most likely outcome of his power/knowledge analytic. Nancy Hartsock (1990, 164), for instance, asks:

> Why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic?

Today, four decades separate us from the work of Foucault. An additional layer of analysis at the global level is indispensable at a time when sexuality, notably homonationalism, is increasingly mobilized in foreign policy. For postcolonial[2] societies, local mobilizations for or against specific political claims, including sexuality, cannot be fathomed within the dichotomous analytical framework set forth by mainstream political analysts. The latter reinforces a *rest of the world* vs. a seemingly monolithic west binary by drawing clear cuts between cosmopolitan and communitarian views. Rahul Rao (2010) shows the limited reach of such analysis and invites us to privilege state-society relations, despite their messiness, in our examination of political mobilization in Third World[3] contexts. I turn to Rao's work because it helps me to conceptualize the queer vis-à-vis Lebanese state and society.

Mainstream political analysis distinguishes between cosmopolitan and communitarian views in its examination of protest in Third Worldist states. Whereas the first locates threat at the heart of the Third Wordlist state and turns to the international community "for rescue," the second views the International as "a predatory neo-imperialist realm against which the domestic must defend itself" (Rao 2010, 7). The crux of Rao's analysis, however, is that neither the cosmopolitan nor the communitarian views are

---

[2] By postcolonial, I do not mean the end of colonial rule as such. Rather, I deploy postcoloniality as a condition that depicts physically decolonized, yet "ideologically still colonized" societies, in line with Robert J. C. Young (2009).
[3] I use the expression Third World as conceived by Rahul Rao (2010). Far from implying conventional socio-economic criteria, the Third World state, according to Rao, invokes specific "state-society relations." Rao (2010, 28) draws on the work of Mohammed Ayoob who highlight Third World's states' "relatively late entry as full members into a society of juridically sovereign states" and "the incompleteness of their state- and nation-building process."

ideologically-deployed as such. Rather, they manifest in conjunction with and depending on the threat in question, more precisely its location: inside or outside the boundaries of the Third Wordlist state. In Rao's words (2010, 192):

> The quest for self-determination has entailed a struggle against both homophobia within their [Third World queer activists] communities as well as salvation by international or white LGBT allies. In part what these activists have been trying to say to their purported rescuers is that they are not just gay, but other things as well – Palestinian, Arab, Muslim [for example] and that gay liberation that does not respect those other identities is not liberation at all.

In the Middle East, the messiness of the "quest for self-determination" can be summed up in the "Joseph Massad debate." Briefly put, Massad (2002) argues that privileged western LGBT activist groups, which he terms "Gay International," function as an "imperialist" (Massad 2002, 383) group that forces a hegemonic conception of sexuality on the Middle East and further non-western context. Instead, Massad (2015, 219) posits sexuality as "a Euro-American 'cultural' category that is not universal or necessarily universalizable." Massad was widely criticized for essentializing the Arab LGBT experience and reducing it to an either/or western/imperialist/global or local, and for dismissing the multitude of experiences and sexual identities that shape LGBT activism in the region.

Homonationalism and the "War on Terror"

Jasbir Puar conceptualizes homonationalism as a framework for "understanding the complexities of how 'acceptance' and 'tolerance' for gay and lesbian subjects have become a barometer by which the right to and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated" (Puar 2013, 336). Homonationalism relocates homophobia from US heteronormative administration and citizens onto foreign others, notably brown and Muslim bodies (see: El-Tayeb 2012). The entanglement of sexuality with the US nation produces assemblages of unequal citizens, some more respectable than others. This newly incorporated homosexuality, post 9/11 following Puar, is dependent upon the ethnic and racialized demarcation of newly-designated, allegedly homophobic Muslim others.

In addition, Puar draws parallels between modernity and homonationalism by viewing them as historical processes with enduring impact(s): "Like modernity, homonationalism can be resisted and re-signified, but not opted out of: we are all conditioned by it and through it" (Puar 2013, 337). Indeed, postcolonial modernities, including Middle Eastern modernities, emerged alongside discursive practices that produced superior powers, and inferior Others simultaneously. Puar's attention to the question of time in her framing of homonationalism posits it as a paradigm shift, and like all paradigm shifts, it requires us to rethink and fine tune our research methodologies. Where international politics are concerned, we are compelled to take into consideration the "constitutive and fundamental reorientation of the relationship between the state, capitalism, and sexuality," which is largely marked by "the entrance of (some) homosexual bodies as worthy of protection by nation-states" (Puar 2013, 337).

Puar's understanding of homonationalism as a "facet of modernity" is re-asserted by Rahul Rao (2015), who captures similar paradigms in the context of the global economy. Rao presents his argument as a

puzzle to the reader by asking: "why [have] leading institutions of global capitalism begun to take activist stances against homophobia, and why they have done so now?" (Rao 2015, 38). As is the case with Puar, Rao's interrogation reflects a preoccupation with the question of time. Ultimately, Rao successfully shows how the portrayal of homophobia as "merely cultural" allows global and international financial bodies to "obscure… their own culpability in co-producing those [homophobic instances] in the first place" (Ibid.). Both Puar and Rao's observations reflect the "centrality" and "mobilization" of queer sexualities in foreign policy (Richter-Montpetit and Weber 2017, 19).

Homonationalism describes how the civilizational status of a state is defined through its treatment of its gay and lesbian population. It is a dual exercise of coercion and self-absolving that can be observed in the context of states and international politics. States that show hostility or use violence against gay and lesbian individuals are systematically vilified, along with their population. Such a reading of sexuality organizes states along a binary of good states/rogue states. Crucially, it paves the way for interventionist initiatives, be them in military form, as was the case of Afghanistan.[4]

Homonationalism is a hasty fix that is riddled with epistemic censorships and inconsistencies. For one, it annihilates the well-documented homophobic attitude of the US government towards its non-"normal homosexual" politicized population. In addition, it implies that LGBT individuals currently residing in the US face no structural or social discrimination, which is not the case for those underprivileged LGBT individuals, notably LGBT people of color (Chávez 2013). Last but not least, and perhaps most importantly, homonationalism constructs homophobia as a fixed pattern that can easily be reversed through legislative measures. Homonationalism tackles gay rights in a rather instrumental fashion. Its Eurocentric core is reflected in its formulation of the legal sphere as independent from all other spheres in society. This approach is not necessarily applicable to contexts where penal codes often intertwine with further regulatory systems, including religion, customs, traditions, and kin-based patterns of governance (see: Hajjar 2004; Moghadam 2003; Brown 2009). This is not to say that the legal sphere lacks integrity in these contexts; rather, by overlooking their "strangeness" and hybridity, we risk annihilating local knowledges through the imposition of an alien legal rhetoric. Lebanon's penal code, for instance, can be said to mirror its societal threefold "flexible morality," which operates under distinct social, political-sectarian, and religious rubrics (Deeb and Harb 2015). Where Article 534 is concerned, its legal ambiguity, as I show hereafter, allows the state to deploy its sovereignty under one or more of these rubrics. Conversely, Art. 534 is less about sexual morality than it is about upholding well-instilled gendered discourses.

The "Reluctant Queer"

The reluctant queer, I argued earlier, is best understood as a "stranger." Precisely, the reluctant queer is made stranger to the hetero-patriarchal foundations of Lebanese nation-state. Their non-normative desire

---

[4] For a reminder, the narrative of "saving Afghan women" figured prominently in the speeches of US politicians and influential personalities, including Laura Bush, in the weeks before the invasion of Afghanistan. This narrative brings forth the colonial pretext of "white men saving brown women from brown men," as succinctly put by Gayatri Spivak. It has been criticized by an array of feminist scholars working on the Middle East, including Lila Abu-Lughod (2013).

constructs them as a stranger who is simultaneously alien to *and* betraying of the promises and premises of the Lebanese nation-state. That is, the Lebanese state constructs the nation by designating a commonly denominated Other who doubly defies its heterosexual conventions *and* the limits of the strict permissible parameters originally assigned to them. This is a considerable departure from Benedict Anderson's conceptualization of the nation as an "imagined" space of commonality *in spite* of difference.

At the same time, the Lebanese queer is immediately recognized, or must I say, made recognizable by the "Gay Internationalist" (see: Massad 2002). This recognition is a continuity of the colonial enterprise and the result of a mechanism of intense fetishizing that is premised on "eating the other" (hooks 1992). This "stranger fetishism," as Sara Ahmed would conceive it, is abundant with the "orientalist" trope of "protecting the otherness of the other" (Ahmed 2000, 140) – not for the sake of recognizing their specificity, but to coerce them into a rhetoric of "needing saving" (see: Mikdashi 2011). This state of affairs is best captured by Meyda Yegenoglu (1998, 48), who states:

> In Western eyes, the Orient is always more and other than what it appears to be, for it always and everywhere appears in a veiled, disguised, and deceptive manner. It is by way of its veiled appearance, by the very act of its concealment, that the Orient reveals itself, reveals that there is Orient, a place, a culture, an essence that needs to be grasped, known, and apprehended.

To fully comprehend the "stranger" and "stranger fetishism" dichotomy in the context of the reluctant queer, I situate the latter in relation to Art. 534. What emerges is a gap between mainstream media depictions of LGBT activism in Lebanon on the one hand, and the lived reality of its non-normative bodies on the other. To begin with, it is important to note that Lebanon's heterosexual, non-heterosexual, homosexual, transsexual, and transgender population can be imprisoned under Article 534 of Lebanese Penal Code, which dictates that "any sexual intercourse contrary to nature leads to a sentence of prison up to one year" (see: Al-Farchichi and Saghiyeh 2012).

The openness of the expression "act against nature" is evident in its application to cases of "moral crimes" devoid of sexual intercourse and in the non-conviction of same-sex practitioners in three cases since 2009. Theoretically speaking, the ambiguity of Art. 534 brings forth the work of Kopano Ratele (2014), who distinguishes between "vertical" and "horizontal" homophobia. Whereas the first refers to elitist and legal narratives that "trickles down to people," the second exists outside of confines of the judiciary sphere and is located at the level of society (Ratele 2014, 122). Ratele's analysis compels us to acknowledge the mutli-layeredness of homophobia, and to take into consideration the ways in which state and society co-constitute discourses of homophobia. Still, the boundaries between vertical and horizontal homophobia are not straightforward, particularly when we insert an intersectional layer to our analysis.

The last ruling related to Art. 534 took place in July 2018, when an upper court upheld the ruling of a lower court's acquittal of nine men put on trial for engaging in unnatural sex. Unsurprisingly, celebratory headlines in western-based news outlets soon followed, with many hastily stating that Lebanon was "closer to decriminalizing" Art. 534. Such stances echo the view of Anjali Arondekar (2016, 333) who, in her examination of the links between "geopolitics and sex," sarcastically states: "After all, we [i.e. sexuality scholars] cannot not want the incommensurability of the 'Rest' [referring to the global south]!"

A large proportion of Lebanon's self-identified LGBT population shows little interest in mobilizing against Art. 534 of the Lebanese legal penal code because they consider it a lesser concern compared to their kin and friends' reactions, or to their reconciliation between societal and theological interpretations of same-sex desire as anti-religious – be it a Muslim or a Christian setting – and their faith. In addition, sociability and relationality to others is tightly linked to sect in the Lebanese context, and sects themselves are dispersed along more or less geographically precise locations. As a result, self-identified LGBT individuals have to invest considerable emotional labor, time, and money in order to maintain long-lasting relationships with each other. Such narratives resonate with those encountered in the collective *Bareed Mista3jil* (Meem 2009), and more recently in the work of Sofian Merabet, *Queer Beirut* (2015). As a result, Lebanon's LGBT population's overall view can be summarized in their prioritization of social consent over legal protection. Their ambiguous relationship with the law (vertical homophobia) and society (horizontal homophobia) largely reflects the current state of affairs that dictate the Lebanese state's attitude towards homosexuality.

Although Lebanese officials do not issue pro-LGBT statements per se, they do not categorically condone same-sex desire either. This "task" is relegated to the religious authorities. In order to understand this conundrum, it is important that I elaborate on Lebanon's religion/state nexus. Makdissi (1996, 25) likens the 1943 National Act from which independence ensued to the legitimization of a "system of patronage and a division of spoils among the elites," who sought to appease their majoritarian sectarian communities at the expense of further minorities, and in the name of "national unity" – a fictitious narrative at best and a mandatory one at worst, deemed imperative for nation-building in the immediate aftermath of independence. As a result, the state/religion nexus relegates a large chunk of the civic duties of the state to the realm of kinship, the primary location for "protection against the state" (Joseph 2000, 109), and is largely informed by religion-based personal status codes. When Mikdashi (2014) examined the situation of Lebanese citizens who opted to register their (heterosexual) marriage directly with the state by revoking their respective personal status codes, she informed us that they soon "found themselves unable to inherit, run for public office, or register their marriage certificate or their newborn children in the government registries" (Mikdashi 2014, 289).

Conversely, it is the (decriminalization) of the state/religious nexus, rather than Art. 534, that is more likely to bring actual change. Whereas homonationalism as a barometer for a state's civilization status pretends to safeguard LGBT rights, it remains oblivious to non-homosexual intimacies that are equally subjugated to statal and legal procedures. That is, the singling out of the "gay rhetoric" in homonationalist governance leads to the prioritization of a singular sexuality, i.e. "normal" homosexuality, at the expense of further sexualities that equally find themselves negotiating their legal relationship with the State in an increasingly transnationally-informed and neo-liberally globalized world. This is evident in Lebanon's intensely commodified LGBT scene, to the extent it is wrongly homogenized as an "exception" among its Arab neighbors.

Indeed, Ghassan Moussawi (2013) conceives "fractal Orientalism," or "Orientalisms within the Orient," in order to elucidate us on the not-really exceptional status of Beirut compared to the "rest" of Lebanon. Beirut's LGBT-friendly image is characteristic of Lisa Duggan's (2002) definition of homonormativity:

A politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption (Duggan 2002, 179).

Homonormativity is intrinsically linked to contemporary consumerist behaviours that reinforce neoliberal models of consumerism and movement. In other words, queer subjects are more likely to gain momentum in their capacity as consumers rather than advocates for social or political change. In Lebanon, this momentum is further slowed down by a complex piecing together of fragmented politics that can be traced back to its civil war days. This fragmentation is succinctly captured by Sofian Merabet (2014), whose immersed ethnography in Beirut's multitude of "queer spaces" leads him to conceptualize a homosexual sphere – not a homosexual community – to describe Beirut's gay population. Indeed, the intersections of class, geographical location, sect, and distinct homoerotic embodiments produce "hierarchies of urban mobility" (Merabet 2014, 74) that ultimately dictate one's place and potential to access certain spaces, including activist ones. This point is further developed by Merabet (2014), who cautiously and humbly relates the recurring short livelihood of each of the initiatives undertaken by Lebanon's LGBT activists throughout its recent history.

Returning to Massad's argument, and far from his global/local binary, LGBT activism in Lebanon simultaneously draws on "both local and global discourses of sexuality" (Moussawi 2015, 594). It is thus important to stress the heterogeneity of LGBT activism in Lebanon. Critical queer theorists increasingly caution us against the universalization of queer experience (Engebretsen 2013). Such an approach leaves unattended the complex differences between sexual identities within a particular collective (Gamson 1995). Indeed, and unlike Massad's "assimilationist" analysis, a small fraction of LGBT activists does conduct their politics through an intersectional and coalitional politics lens, by recognizing the entanglement of class, gender, sect, and sexuality in the context of local and transnational political mobilization, notably where the question of Palestine is concerned (Naber and Zaatari 2014).

The collective *Meem* (2009), for instance, was clear in its rejection of the "coming out" narrative that we often encounter in liberal interpretations of LGBT activism; instead, it situates its politics within an Arab (as opposed to global) movement (Moussawi 2015, 605-606). Similarly, and writing on behalf of *Helem* and in response to Joseph Massad's "Gay International" accusations, Ghassan Makarem (2011) insists that being funded by western donors does not negate the fact that *Helem* is very much a product of its own conditions. In the same vein, Makarem asserts the importance of recognizing the interlocking systems of oppression in the context of LGBT activism, and to adopt transnational solidarity as a strategy that allows it to partake in the "wider struggle for democracy" (Ibid.). Still, Makarem's recommendation did not resonate with all LGBT activists, many of whom privileged an approach focused on identity politics, at the expense of an intersectional one (see: Moussawi 2015). On this note, the question of visibility oftentimes clashes with the masculinist and sexist patriarchy permeating LGBT activism in Lebanon, with queer women and feminine masculinities feeling considerably targeted and policed by their LGBT fellows (see: Shabby 2012; Rizk and Makarem 2015 respectively).

Another constraint that LGBT politics face in Lebanon is the rampant NGO-ization. Following Islah Jad (2003, 44), NGO-ization reflects the rather elitist approach and character of international and local NGOs

currently working on/in the Middle East. Although her work looks at the impact of NGO-ization on women's activism in Palestine, it can be extended to further contexts. For many men and women in the Middle East, the "professional" language and structure adopted by NGOs is akin to an alien lexicon that is far removed from their lived reality. Moreover, Jad (2003, 44) highlights that NGOs' reliance on international donors de-legitimizes the work of local activists who are often perceived as agents of the west by the larger society.

Concluding Remarks on the "Reluctant Queer"

It is important that we refrain from accusing the "reluctant queer" of being indifferent. Reluctance is not tantamount to indifference. Just as the "reluctant queer" has to navigate an array of homophobic locations, LGBT activists often find themselves caught between local and global hegemonies. The local activist's eternally "doomed" situation is best captured by Lama Abu-Odeh (2015) who identifies a "subdued mode" of attack that charges the "activist of being the unwitting handmaiden of western imperialist projects," including Massad's "Gay International," or "as a naïve participant in western discourses," evident in their lack of "qualification and nuance," and further "skirmishes."

If anything, the "reluctant queer" befits Sara Ahmed's "willful subject" par excellence, where "to be identified as willful is to become a problem" (Ahmed 2014, 3) that needs solving, i.e. to be rehabilitated to perform accordingly. Imperialists and liberals' universalist take on identities construct both the politics of the "reluctant queer" and their sexuality as "reluctant," and thus in need of being enabled with the necessarily tools to become more assertive. At the same time, the "reluctant queer" brings forth the native dilemmas that Kaguro Macharia (2016) eloquently conveys. Taking on the task of the "complaining native," (187) Macharia (2016) relates the "sense of deracination" that "overwhelms" (185) him: Is he the "sly native, the trickster native, the desiring native, the sage native, the agential native, the undeveloped native, the homosexual native, the queer native, the deracinated native?" (188). Ultimately, he draws his own resolution in the format of the "indifferent native" (Ibid.). However, his indifference is not a depoliticized stance per se, particularly when we situate it in a context as complex as Lebanon's "consociational" political system. Following John Nagle (2018), Lebanon's distinct power-sharing system among 18 sects, does "open up" a dialogical space between LGBT activists and the state (and by extension the religious authorities). This space, however, can only contain the main ethnic groups and is unlikely to cut-across them (Ibid.). Ultimately, it seems that the reluctant queer ought to undo their strangeness in their very milieu first and foremost. At the same time, their milieu must be examined following an inside-out approach where a queer analysis is re-oriented in line with the context of question, and not vice versa. This echoes Mikdashi and Puar's (2016, 217) recent call "for a politics in queer theory that works to displace the United States as the prehensive force for everyone else's future."

Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2013. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

Abu-Odeh, Lama. 2015. "Holier than Thou?: The Anti-Imperialist Versus the Local Activist," *openDemocracy*. Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/lama-abu-odeh/holier-than-thou-antiimperialist-versus-local-activist

Ahmed, Sara. 2000. *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality (*Routledge: London and New York).

Ahmed, Sara. 2014. W*illful Subjects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press).

Al-Farchichi Wahid, and Nizar Saghiyeh. 2012. "Homosexual Relations in the Penal Codes: General Study Regarding the Laws in the Arab Countries with a Report on Lebanon and Tunisia." *Helem* and *Daleel Madani.* Available at: https://www.daleel-madani.org/sites/default/files/Resources/HelemStudy.pdf

Amer, Sahar. 2009. "Medieval Arab Lesbians and Lesbian-Like Women," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 215-235.

Arondekar, Anjali. 2016. "Thinking Sex with Geopolitics," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly,* vol. 44, no. 3/4, pp. 332-335.

Brown, Nathan. J. 2009. "Shari'a and State in the Modern Middle East," *International Journal of Middle Eat Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 359-376.

Buchanan, Ian. 2018. *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Chávez, Karma. 2013. *Queer Migration Politics: Activist Rhetoric and Coalitional Possibilities* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press).

Deeb, Lara and Mona Harb. 2013. *Leisurely Islam: Negotiating Geography and Morality in Shi'ite South Beirut* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Duggan Lisa. 2002. "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism." In: Castronovo R. and Nelson D.D. (eds), *Materializing Democracy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), pp. 173-194.

El-Tayeb, Fatima. 2012. "Gays who cannot properly be gay': Queer Muslims in the Neoliberal European City," *European Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 79-95.

Engebretsen, Elizabeth, L. 2013. *Queer Women in Urban China: An Ethnography* (New York, NY and London: Routledge.

Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books).

Gamson, Joshua. 1995. "Must Identity Movevements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma," *Social Problems*, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. 390-407.

Hajjar, Lisa. 2006. "Religion, State Power, and Domestic Violence in Muslim Societies: A Framework for Comparative Analysis," *Law & Social Inquiry*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 1-38.

Hartsock, Nancy. 1990. "Foucault on Power: A Theory for Women?" In: Nicholson, L. (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism* (London and New York: Routledge), pp. 157-175.

Hayes, Jarrod. 2018. "De Groove Is in de Move: Decolonizing Sex and Sexuality in Middle East and North African Studies," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies,* vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 143–151.

hooks, bell. 1998. "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance." In: *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press), pp. 21-39.

Jad, Islah. 2007. "NGOs: Between Buzzwords and Social Movements,'' *Development in Practice*, vol. 17, no. 4/5, pp. 622-629.

Joseph, Suad. 2000. "Civic Myths, Citizenship, and Gender in Lebanon." In: Joseph, S. (ed.), *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press), pp. 107-136.

King, Angela. 2004. "The Prisoner of Gender: Foucault and the Disciplining of the Female Body." *Journal of International Women's Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 29-39.

Lyons, Joseph. 2019. "Raya El-Hassan is Lebanon'st First Woman Interior Minister & It's a Huge Step Forward." *Bustle/Euronews*. Available at: https://www.bustle.com/p/raya-al-hassan-is-lebanons-first-woman-interior-minister-its-a-huge-step-forward-15959664

Macharia, Keguro. 2016. "On Being Area-Studied: A Litany of Complaint," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp.183-189.

Makarem, Ghassan. 2011. "The Story of Helem," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 98-112.

Makdisi, Usama. 1996. "Reconstructing the Nation-State: The Modernity of Sectarianism in Lebanon," *Middle East Report*, 200, pp. 23-26.

Massad, Joseph. 2002. "Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World," *Public Culture*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 361-385.

Massad, Joseph. 2015. *Islam in Liberalism* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press).

McDowall, Angus. 2019. "Lebanese Women Hail First Female Arab Interior Minister." *Reuters*. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-government-women/lebanese-women-hail-first-female-arab-interior-minister-idUSKCN1Q60F6

Meem. 2009. *Bareed Mista3jil* (Beirut: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Middle East).

Merabet, Sofian. 2015. *Queer Beirut* (Phoenix, TX: University Texas Press).

Mikdashi, Maya. 2011. "Gay Rights as Human Rights." *Jadaliyya*. Available at: http://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/24855/Gay-Rights-as-Human-Rights-Pinkwashing-Homonationalism

Mikdashi, Maya and Jasbir Puar. 2016. "Queer Theory and Permanent War," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Queer Studies*, vol. 22, no.2, pp. 215-222.

Mikdashi, Maya. 2014. "Sex and Sectarianism: The Legal Architecture of Lebanese Citizenship," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 34, no.2, pp. 279-293.

Moghadam, Valentine. 2003. *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers).

Moussawi, Ghassan. 2013. "Queering Beirut, the 'Paris of the Middle East': Fractal Orientalism and Essentialized Masculinities in Contemporary Gay Travelogues," *Gender, Place & Culture*, vol. 20, no. 7, pp. 858-875.

Moussawi, Ghassan. 2015. "(Un)critically Queer Organizing: Towards a More Complex analysis of LGBTQ Organizing in Lebanon," *Sexualities*, vol. 18, no. 5/6, pp. 593-617.

Nagle, John. 2018. "Crafting Radical Opposition or Reproducing Homonormativity? Consociationalism and LGBT Rights Activism in Lebanon," *Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 75-88.

22

Naber, Nadine and Zeina Zaatari. 2014. "Reframing the War on Terror: Feminist and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Activism in the Context of the 2006 Israeli Invasion of Lebanon," *Cultural Dynamics*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 91-111.

Najmabadi, Afsaneh. 2005. "Mapping Transformations of Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in Modern Iran," *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 49, no. 2, pp. 54-77.

Puar, Jasbir. 2013. "Rethinking Homonationalism," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 45, pp. 336-339.

Rao, Rahul. 2010. *Third World Protest: Between Home and the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Rao, Rahul. 2014. "The Locations of Homophobia*," London Review of International Law*, vol. 2, no. 1/2, pp.169-199.

Rao, Rahul. 2015. "Global Homocapitalism," *Radical Philosophy*, vol. 194, pp. 38-49.

Ratele, Kopano. 2014. "Hegemonic African Masculinities and Men's Heterosexual Lives: Some Uses for Homophobia," *African studies Reviews*, vol. 57, no. 2, pp. 115-130.

Richter-Montpetit, Melanie and Cynthia Weber. 2017. "Queer International Relations." *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*. Available at: http://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-265

Ritchie, Jason. 2010. "How Do You Say 'Come Out of the Closet' in Arabic?: Queer Activism and the Politics of Visibility in Israel-Palestine," *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 557-576.

Rizk, Anthony and Ghassan Makarem. 2015. "'Masculinity-Under-Threat:' Sexual Rights Organizations and the Masculinist State in Lebanon." *Civil Society Review*, vol. 1, pp. 97-108.

Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon).

Shabby, Amal. 2012. "Helem and the Weapons of Patriarchy." *Kaosgl*. Available at: http://www.kaosgl.org/page.php?id=12341

Sukarieh, Mayssoun. 2015. "The First Lady Phenomenon: Elites, States, and the Contradictory Politics of Women's Empowerment in the Neo-liberal Arab World," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 585-587.

Traub, Valerie. 2008. "The Past is a Foreign Country? The Times and Spaces of Islamicate Sexuality Studies." In: Banayan, K. and Najmabadi, A. (eds.), *Islamicate Sexualities: Translations Across Temporal Geographies of Desire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), pp. 1-40.

Yegenoglu, Meyda. 1998. *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Young, Robert C. J. 2009. "What is the Postcolonial?," *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 13-25.