

MASTER THESIS

Erasmus University Rotterdam

Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

The use of perceived queer nonacceptance in Palestine in anti-Palestinian
discourse: a critical discourse analysis.

Name: Kevin Barkmeijer

Student number: 74145

Thesis group: Global (Im)mobilities

Supervisor: Dr. Jessica Steinman

Deadline: 22-06-2025

Wordcount: 9619

Abstract

This thesis analyzes the way in which queer nonacceptance in Palestine is used in anti-Palestinian discourse through Digital Discourse Analysis on the platform X. It analyzes the underlying Orientalist and homonationalist argumentation that drives this discourse. The thesis reveals that the debate around LGBTQ+ nonacceptance in Palestine is used as a proxy to debate Palestinian mortality, discussing the deservingness of the Palestinian people to exist based on their adherence to Western modernity. Furthermore, it examines the way homonationalist and Orientalism are used in the data as a tool to maintain Western hegemony through its representation of Palestine as violent, dangerous, homophobic and, ultimately, undeserving. These tools are used to perpetuate settler-colonial violence and genocide in Palestine.

Keywords: Black feminist theory, homonationalism, necropolitics
Orientalism, Palestine.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Theoretical framework.....	8
Black feminist theory	8
Homonationalism.....	11
Orientalism.....	12
Necropolitics.....	16
Methodology.....	19
Results	23
Theme 1	24
‘Queer people should not support Palestine’	26
LGBTQ+ nonacceptance in Palestine as a proxy.....	28
‘Queer and pro-Palestinian do not go together’	30
Theme 2	38
Discussion and conclusion	43
References.....	47
Appendix.....	54

Introduction

In the book *Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique*, Atshan (2020) describes a wall made by Israel in the West Bank. Once the United States Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage, Palestinian artist Khaled Jarrar painted a rainbow on this wall. According to Jarrar, this served as a reminder of the lasting occupation and the Palestinian cause in contrast to the media focus on gay rights. In response, younger Palestinian men took to erasing the rainbow with white paint, claiming that they cannot promote gay rights and that it would be shameful to have a symbol of homosexuality in the refugee camp (Atshan, 2020). The rainbow in this story serves as a symbol for queer liberation in times of occupation and oppression, where the artist Jarrar implies a reciprocal solidarity between the two struggles. The response to the painting shows how the two struggles are facing each other, juxtaposed, implying the idea that liberation is somehow a finite resource and cannot be spent on both struggles. This suggests that the oppressions are isolated and tiered, presenting a moot dilemma between queer oppression and Palestinian oppression.

Contesting this idea, Jarrar explains how he sees the current deficiency of care for personal freedoms in Palestinian society, such as that of gender and sexuality, as being directly linked with the occupation and oppression of the Palestinian lands and people (Atshan, 2020). Atshan describes a peculiar sense of ownership of the wall by the Palestinian people that sought to erase Jarrar's

painting, importantly noting that the concern should not be what is on the wall, but why the wall is there in the first place (Atshan, 2020).

This interaction represents a theme where there is apparent tension between the identities of queerness and Palestianness and where the discussion around LGBTQ+ acceptance seems to drown out or overrule the discussion about Palestinian liberation. In broader terms this fits the description of homonationalism, coined by Puar (2007) in the context of the United States. Initially, this described the experience of homosexual identity being merged with the nationalist identity of the United States where aspects of the White, homosexual identity became the normalized definition of 'gay', wherein other identities and manifestations got rejected and marginalized (Puar, 2007). This self-proliferation through nationalist and normative homosexual identity provided an exclusive space in the homosexual movement wherein norms of traditional sexuality and gender got reproduced (Puar, 2007). Later, the term homonationalism grew to an international context wherein Western homosexuals prioritized their identity in debates over self-determination of non-Western nation states (Bolzendahl & Winer, 2021). This thesis will research how queerness and Palestianness are often seen as contradictory or juxtaposed and how this construct is created and perpetuated by homonationalism in service of anti-Palestinian discourse. This thesis will connect this juxtaposition to the depiction of Palestine as homophobic and therefore undeserving of self-determination in the international homonationalist debate.

Furthermore, this thesis aims to add to existing literature by analyzing how the debate of anti-queerness fits into the Orientalist narrative by examining the line of rhetoric used by the anti-Palestinian movement to dismiss Palestine, particularly in its non-adherence to a Western idea of development. Homophobia is where homonationalism and Orientalism converge to establish Palestine as the uncivilized 'Other', supporting the portrayal of Palestine as violent, backward and, ultimately, undeserving of self-determination. The research question of this thesis is therefore: *"How does the discussion around LGBTQ+ nonacceptance in Palestine configure into anti-Palestinian discourse?"*

The goal of this thesis is to deconstruct the way Orientalism and homonationalism are used as tools to devalue Palestinian identities to perpetuate violence against Palestinians and, conversely, to show how the intersecting oppressions of queer Palestinians are at the essence of resistance against settler-colonialism and therefore integral to the liberation of all of Palestine.

Regarding the former, this thesis will use Black feminist theory to illustrate the development of intersectional resistance. This finds its origin in the gender struggles of Black women, which was considered secondary to the struggle of liberation of racial oppression. This was visible in the civil rights movement where the more privileged and normative identities were first in line in the fight for equality. The ones experiencing interesting oppressions were pushed to the margin. However, Black feminist theory claims that the struggle for liberation of intersecting oppressions of Black women is at the center of the struggle for

freedom without a hierarchy or tier system (C.R. Collective, 1977). This thesis aims to illustrate that the intersection of oppression of queer Palestinians represents the most powerful argument for liberation showing the centrality of resistance in queer Palestinian discourse, deconstructing the homonationalist and Orientalist argumentation that dismisses Palestinians, and in doing so, unifying and amplifying queer Palestinian voices.

Firstly, this thesis argues based on Black feminist theory that the queer and Palestinian people are furthering a tradition of resistance against normative hierarchical oppressions, exposing the fallacies in argumentation of anti-Palestinian discourse. This intersectional resistance finds its foundations in the works of Black feminists such as Audre Lorde, Sojourner Truth and the CR Collective.

Secondly, using the theory of homonationalism, this thesis will argue that the juxtaposition of queer and Palestinianness was created by the international homonationalist elite who prioritize their normative homosexual identity to influence Palestine's right to self-determination and perpetuate Western hegemony.

Thirdly, using Orientalism, this thesis will argue that Orientalist tools were used to reconstruct Palestine as a dangerous, barbaric and violent Other that requires and even deserves Western domination. Fourthly, this thesis will show using the theory of Necropolitics how, using the aforementioned constructs, the discussion around LGBTQ+ acceptance came to determine the parameters in

which Palestinian people deserve to live or die, effectively equating this discussion to the mortality of Palestinians.

Theoretical framework

The centrality of the constructedness in social identities aids in understanding how queer Palestinians are perceived and treated in the discourse and how the socially ascribed meanings are representative of a broader discursive context. Understanding the construction of these identities and how value is ascribed to them, therefore, helps to understand the contemporary positioning of queer Palestinians in the relevant discourse.

Black feminist theory

Importantly, intersectional oppression is not simply the sum of the oppressions of identities together (Fortier, 2025). It is the overlap of the two identities that creates an entirely unique set of injustice and oppression that affect each other (Fortier, 2025). It is not simply the addition of one form of oppression with another, but the interplay of the social categories and how their respective power relations influence and shape each other (Fortier, 2025). It is therefore insufficient to single out one aspect of someone's identity or to treat identity categories as separate, it would provide an incomplete and inaccurate representation of a people's role in society and the role of society in the people.

There is an extensive backlog of Black feminist literature that utilizes this intersectional lens to describe the experiences of Black women. Sojourner Truth famously spoke about the exclusion of Black women in the Black suffragette and abolition movement in “*Ain’t I A Woman?*” provided reference for intersectional Black feminist theorists later on (Truth, 1851). She describes how her experiences as a woman and the value of this social category seems to be contradicted by her Blackness. Even though having mothered thirteen children and performing the role of a woman in society in a more general sense, she is discounted based on her Black identity (Truth, 1851). Seemingly, her Blackness affected society’s perception of Truth as a woman. Truth’s speech, describing how she is in many ways as capable as a man, provides social commentary on the exclusion of Black women in the suffragette movement and the asymmetrical fight for freedom between Black men from White men and Black women from White and Black men.

To best exemplify the asymmetrical struggle for freedom of oppression: “[Specifically,] Black jobs were available to Blacks who were men and women’s jobs were available to women who were White” (Southbank Centre, 2016, 2:31). This quote from Kimberlé Crenshaw explains how Black women occupy an adversary position in the power structure to White men and therefore experience oppression based on race and gender that is not simply the sum of gender and racial oppression. In the struggle for gender equality, Black women were behind White women, as in the struggle for racial equality, Black women were behind Black men. Out of necessity, Black feminists took on an intersectional lens to

conceptualize their experiences in the face of White patriarchal domination (C.R. Collective, 1977).

Moreover, to protest the idea that one part of identity needs to give way to support another part, Audre Lorde wrote in *There Is No Hierarchy of Oppressions* (1983):

I simply do not believe that one aspect of myself can possibly profit from the oppression of any other part of my identity. I know that my people cannot possibly profit from the oppression of any other group which seeks the right to peaceful existence (Lorde, 1983, p. 1).

In this quote she describes the experience of being a Black, lesbian, woman and how the oppressions she experiences for each of these social categories are not secondary, or tiered, but exist in conjunction and an attack on one is an attack on all (Lorde, 1983). She writes “There is no hierarchy of oppression” in relation to her queerness, her Blackness and her femininity and the impossibility to fight one oppression in an isolated manner without engaging with the Other forms of oppression (Lorde, 1983). In this sense, Lorde’s argumentation is a continuation of Truth who, in her speech “*Ain’t I a woman?*”, argues that gender struggles of Black women within the struggle for racial freedom are integral to resist the dominant oppressions (Truth, 1851). Lorde widens the scope to include, *inter alia*, the queer experience of Black women:

“Within the lesbian community I am Black, and within the Black community I am a lesbian. Any attack against Black people is a lesbian

and gay issue, because I and thousands of other Black women are part of the lesbian community. Any attack against lesbians and gays is a Black issue, because thousands of lesbians and gay men are Black. There is no hierarchy of oppression.” (Lorde, 1983, p. 1).

Lorde describes how her Blackness and queerness converge, how her Blackness exists in her queerness and vice versa. Moreover, it is important to understand the reason she stresses her Blackness despite queerness and queerness despite Blackness as it reveals an underlying socially constructed, idealized image of homosexuality that could priorly not exist in relation to Blackness: a White, American, gay man. The process of creating this normalized image of homosexuality is understood as homonationalism.

Homonationalism

Homonationalism originated as a term through the work of Puar (2007) in the context of the USA. She connects this term to the sentiment of exceptionalism of the American empire in the way that it presents a normative strand of homosexuality and queerness that is inextricably reinforced by racial and national identities (Puar, 2007). The acceptance of homosexuality did not happen symmetrically, according to Puar, as certain identities experience acceptance differently based on how they fit a narrow definition put forward. In this theory, the sexual-racial subjects that are furthest removed from the normalized idea of Whiteness are excluded from this definition of acceptance (Puar, 2007). In this

way Puar combines the ascendancy of Whiteness with a curated form of acceptance for queer people that fit the normative White sexual-racial categories (Puar, 2007). This resulted in US sexual exceptionalism that parallels national heteronormativity to a national homonormativity (Puar, 2007).

Widening the scope, homonationalism later came to describe how Western countries utilize their support of LGBTQ+ rights to: “legitimize nationalist, imperialist, racist, and Islamophobic positions” (Bolzendahl & Winer, 2021, 2). This is done for example through the proliferation of the West as egalitarian and the Other as homophobic (Bolzendahl & Winer, 2021). In this sense the queer identity becomes inextricably linked to the idealized nationalist image of the US and the underlying sentiment of such as a universal protector of human and queer rights. Later, this concept has been applied to countries outside of the US and even as a global project to undermine or support certain state’s right to self-determination, thereby often defending spheres of influence or power of Western countries (Bolzendahl & Winer, 2021). In this way, LGBTQ+ issues have been reshaped as the Master’s tool to maintain Western spheres of influence in the Global South (Lorde, 1984).

Orientalism

Orientalism by Said (1979) describes a process of configuring the Orient in relation to the West, or the Occident. In doing so, it sketches a negative print of the West to create a definition of difference and a digestible, thrilling version of the non-West. Said describes the historical tradition of Orientalism as starting the twelfth

century with Western universities offering courses in Arabic, Greek and Hebrew. Said writes that the classes had a preconceived notion of the East as being dangerous to the West, as well as the necessity for the West to occupy the East (Said, 1979).

Later, this juxtaposition of East and West became integral to the construction of the White man, that is good-willing, dominant and keen to modernize peoples and cultures he deems savage (Said, 1979). Here, Orientalism coincides with modernity to sketch an image of the West as developed and the non-West as undeveloped and brute. Moreover, Orientalism describes the East as unusual and alien in its comparison to the West, and in that sense, it mystifies the East as the exciting unknown. The East merely occupied a space in Western discourse for its mystical and exotic quality, even sensual, making it digestible and delectable for the civilized Western 'Us' to learn about and consume the savage and backward 'Other' (Said, 1979). Said explains this image is more of a propulsion of Western interpretations and ideas than it is a depiction of the East, serving as a tool in service of reproducing Western colonialism and imperialism (Said, 1979).

More contemporarily, the term neo-Orientalism is used to describe the reconfiguration of the Orient and its dynamic to the West post 9/11 (Altwaiji, 2014). After the event of 9/11, the Arab identity became entrenched as the violent, terrorist 'Other' in relation to the benevolent, victimized West (Altwaiji, 2014). Similarly to traditional Orientalist ideology where the East was seen as dangerous to the West, the cause of danger got reconfigured to the Arab nations, focusing

on civilizing the violent, 'backward' Arab Muslims, often discussed in terms of religion, democracy or security (Altwaiji, 2014). This depiction of the Middle East as violent and terrorist enables the West to justify and maintain influence and domination in the Middle East. Central to this idea is the supremacy of American, or Western, values and ideologies, seen as universal. In this way, Islamic nations are constructed by the West as its antithesis, anti-modern, anti-Western and anti-peace (Altwaiji, 2014, 316).

Orientalism therefore enables to create a reductionist divide between the West/Us and the Orient/Other, a threatening place of terrorism, racism, and oppression (Nayak, 2006, 46). This construction of the Orient as such and of the West as just and civilized is an act of self-servitude that foregoes the systemic racism, oppression and homophobia that is central to the conception, and the contemporary functioning of the United States, Europe and what is considered 'the West'. This magnification on violence and oppression in the Orient is arguably a manner to dismiss the same themes in the West, to save the 'Self', and demonize and dehumanize the Orient (Nayak, 2006).

Demonization and dehumanization are mechanisms that reconstruct the identity of the subject into either collateral damage, conditionally worthy or dangerous (Nayak, 2006). 9/11 as an event changed the way in which the Self was regarded in the United States in a significant way that, to save the Self, they categorized Arabs and Muslims and other marginalized identities as a source of fear and hatred, who are entirely deserving of suffering (Nayak, 2006).

Dehumanization and demonization are critical tools for the US hegemonic project (Nayak, 2006), uncoupling Arab and Muslim people of their humanity facilitated intervention in the Middle East, perpetuating violence without empathy.

AlQaws, a Palestinian activist organization concerning LGBTQ+ communities argues that queerness in Palestine is an essential element of the Palestinian struggle against Zionist settler-colonialism (Alqaisiya, 2018). Queer Palestinians reject coloniality in its physical form through the resistance against Israeli occupation and reject coloniality through the manifestation of their sexual and gender identities that do not adhere to Western definitions. They explain that queer is a Western concept with a Western definition that is unable to capture the essence of queerness in Palestine because queer Palestinians are not Euro-American subjects (Alqaisiya, 2018). As a counter to Israeli Pinkwashing, AlQaws introduces 'Palestinian Pinkwatching', aiming to deconstruct pinkwashing narratives, reject the myth of the colonial savior and show how discourse around the progress of LGBTQ+ acceptance in Palestine reproduces Zionist colonialism (Alqaisiya, 2018). The organization defines pinkwashing as "Israel's practice of branding itself as a modern, progressive society and gay haven while simultaneously depicting Palestinian society as reactionary and homophobic" (Alwaisiya, 2018, p. 31). Through establishing Palestine as the backward and violent 'Other', Israel aims to establish itself as the civilized, recognizably Western 'Us'. Through Palestinian Pinkwathcing, AlQaws shows, among other, how Orientalist

mechanisms feed into the 'Us vs Them' debate propagated by Israel to legitimize the settler-colonial violence against Palestine.

Necropolitics

Necropolitics is a term that found its way into academia through the articles and essays of Mbembe (2019). It explores the concept of sovereignty, going further than its normative connotation regarding the self-determination of nation states, now describing the sovereignty to exercise control over mortality (Mbembe, 2019). In more direct words, Mbembe describes it as the politics of death or "the death that lives in human life" (Isiaka et al., 2024, 42). Thereby stressing the power one holds in the decision-making position of life and death, and by extension, which life is deemed valuable and which disposable (Mbembe, 2019). Mbembe describes the horrors in the concentration camps in the Second World War and claims that this was able to happen due to the deprivation of political status and the reduction of the victims to bare life (Mbembe, 2019). This to illustrate that, a reason for a state to engage in war is as much a tool for obtaining sovereignty as it is to gain the permission to kill (Mbembe, 2019). Regarding the former, Mbembé calls this a 'state of exception' which describes a state outside of jurisdiction and judgment that exercises control over the mortality of its subjects or opponents in an otherwise exceptional manner (Isiaka et al., 2024, 42).

Through the establishment of Israel as a state of exception and its exertion of sovereignty over the lives of Palestinians, Palestine now exists in a state coined

by Mbembé as ‘death-world’ (Isiaka et al., 2024; Layth Hanbali et al., 2024). This refers to the way in which large parts of the population are exposed to a hazardous and unstable form of life that exists in proximity to death (Layth Hanbali et al., 2024, 3).

Mbembe (2019, p. 80) states: “The most accomplished form of necropower is the contemporary colonial occupation of Palestine”. He explains this by saying that Israel supports its sovereignty through its narration of its history and its divine right to populate the territory, a narration that makes cohabitation with another people based on territories impossible. Therefore, Israeli national identity is constructed through its religious claim on a territory and through a struggle against other religions (Mbembe, 2019). According to Israel’s own constructed narration, its claim is backed by cartography and archeology, providing supposed religious and secular support for Israel’s project to deprive Palestinians of their right to exist and self-determination, underlining the use of colonial violence and occupation (Mbembe, 2019).

To synthesize, to arrive at the climax of continuous use of colonial violence and deprivation of self-determination, Orientalism and homonationalism work in conjunction to construct Palestine as barbaric, backward, violent, savage and therefore undeserving and disposable. The Orientalist project post 9/11 saw the inclusion of Islamic and Arabic countries in the depiction of the Other through the weaponization of Islamophobia. This depiction constructed Islamic and Arabic nations as a threat to national security to save ‘the Self’ by demonizing, among

others, the Palestinian people. Through tools as dehumanization, through which the Palestinian people are regarded lesser in value than Western people, and demonization, the violence against the Palestinian people and the deprivation of their right to self-determination is perpetuated. Homonationalism works to arrive at the same conclusion in a different way. Through the perception of Palestine as nonaccepting of LGBTQ+ people, the homonationalist elite prioritizes its own sexual identity in the debate of self-determination of another state, however, not out of concern for the actual betterment of LGBTQ+ conditions but as a tool to maintain colonial hegemony.

Through the perceived nonadherence to the international Western model of development concerning LGBTQ+ issues, homonationalism depicts Palestine as backward and homophobic, deeming Palestine uncivilized and unwestern and thus, underserving of self-determination. These theories aid in understanding how the acceptance of LGBTQ+ people in Palestine has influenced the parameters in which people discuss the deservingness of the Palestinian people to an own nation and their deservingness of violence. This debate is ultimately a form of Necropolitics, wherein the value and disposability of the Palestinian people is constructed by an actor with the absolute sovereignty over the Palestinian mortality. The continuous settler-colonial violence effectively makes Israel a 'state of exception', untethered by jurisdiction and lawfulness, that has transformed Palestine into a 'death world'. Homonationalism and Orientalism are hereby

supporting constructs that enable Israel to legitimize and justify their sovereignty over Palestinian mortality.

Methodology

To understand the interaction of anti-queerness in anti-Palestine debate and the socially constructed nature of discourse, this thesis has chosen a qualitative research approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

To answer the research question, this thesis will use digital discourse analysis. The digital aspect of this method serves the research goal of this thesis as it provides an accessible way in which to analyze the discourse. This thesis regards social media as an important platform for the consumption and production of social artefacts. X, formerly Twitter, was chosen as the field site to collect this data. A platform such as X is valuable in its provision of access into international discourse that is voluntarily and publicly published by the author and can thereby provide insight into the rhetoric and argumentative structures used in the discourse. Furthermore, X is a popular platform that is widely used by political actors or as a platform of political debate and it is easily accessible, adding to the feasibility of this thesis.

It is important to note that social media in a itself is not a one-on-one representation of reality. Due to algorithms, search terms and hashtags, results on social media can provide a refracted image of the total discourse (Bonilla &

Rosa, 2015). However, in this research, social media acts as an unprompted, archived way of accessing the international debate surrounding Palestine, enabling to probe remotely what supporting argumentation drives the use of anti-queer discourse in the debate against Palestine. It therefore does not aspire to present the most accurate representation of how this debate is held, but to research underlying structures that enable the anti-Palestinian rhetoric to emerge.

Social media provides a platform that feels unstructured and anonymous which allows for the research of the production of discourse. The production of discourse is relevant to analyze as it provides insight into the formation of the line of argumentation and underlying sentiments that drive argumentation.

Discourse covers a broad spectrum of sources that could range from policy papers, personal narratives to photo images or social media content (Wodak, 2012). This fits the intersectional and transdisciplinary scope of this research well as it provides multi-faceted and real-world sources of information, which is especially important given that the author is not of Palestinian origin.

For this research, Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach has been chosen as it centers on the interplay of the relationships between power, discourse and social practices (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017). This research uses discourse as its data; however, discourse is never isolated. It is constructed from the structures of power between people. Discourse allows for the underlying social practices and

power dynamics to surface and be examined. The assumption that discourse affects, and is representative of, power and social practices is central to this thesis.

Moreover, the Discourse-Historical Approach allows for an intertextual and interdiscursive approach which allows the research to draw on a wide variety of genres (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017).

The author is aware of the apparent antithesis of researching Palestine through the framework of homonationalism and Orientalism despite his own positionality as a Western queer person.

To work around bias, this thesis analyzes argumentation found in an openly accessible forum by deconstructing argumentation and connecting this to the relevant theory. Recognizing potential biases, lenses and perspectives in oneself contributed to an emerging consciousness of recognizing this in other lines of argumentation. The author does not feign to say that any bias can definitively disappear and is aware and conscious of this and aims to conduct this research carefully, considerately but critically.

Admittedly, research through a social media platform, though an efficient way of accessing an index of the relevant discourse, can present a skewed representativeness since the platform uses algorithms that prioritize often sensationalist content that achieves the most interaction in the form of likes, comments, retweets etc. Besides, social media platforms such as X have been found to suspend the accounts of Palestinian and pro-Palestinian people critiquing Israeli policies due to their supposed 'affiliation with Hamas', erasing

their voice and narrative from the discourse (Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, 2023).

Be that as it may, Digital Discourse Analysis was chosen because the topic is especially sensitive and can be emotionally exhausting when directly interacting with the target group, especially when it comes to the vulnerable group of queer Palestinians. The concern is therefore that direct communication with Palestinians could lead to an exploitative dynamic where research and probing could be distressing and exhausting for the participants.

Another concern would be the potential of a neocolonial dynamic between researcher and researched that is prevalent in the history of Western academic research where a Western researcher would enter a site of research as such, disregarding the cultural sensitivities for the purpose of conducting research exploitatively. This is magnified by the fact that Palestine is a site of an active genocide, making physical fieldwork difficult and unethical.

Therefore, despite concerns of representativity and to avoid an exploitative, neocolonial dynamic between researcher and participants, especially given the author's Western background, a social medium was selected as the best option for preexisting, openly accessible sources.

Results

The discussion that comes forward from the data collection is one that questions the validity of Queer Palestinians supporting the Palestinian liberation movement due to the supposed 'backwardness' in Palestinian society towards queer rights. In the 92 analyzed tweets, there are several similarities in the ways in which this rhetoric and content is set up regarding this discussion. In tweets regarding queerness and Palestine, or by queer Palestinian authors, sexual identity is contrasted with pro-Palestinian affiliation either implicitly or explicitly. A second pattern that presented itself from the data collection is that Hamas' actions are equated with Palestine. In this theme, there is a line of argumentation that starts with the former, then presents Hamas, and therefore Palestine, as backward and homophobic. This to reach the conclusion that queer people could not support Palestine due to Hamas' backwardness and homophobia. The third and final pattern entails the collection of stories by queer Palestinian that share their personal experiences of being queer in Palestine and resists the rhetoric of the first two patterns. Through this, two themes emerge:

Theme 1: Hamas is seen as representative of Palestine

Theme 1-a: Hamas/Palestine as backwards (homophobic/uncivilized/non-Western/the Other)

Theme 1-ab: therefore, as a queer person you cannot support Palestine

Theme 2: Queer exists in Palestine (Palestinian liberation=Queer liberation)

Themes 1, 1a and 1ab are not to be regarded as separate from each other as they are used in conjunction to construct a line of argumentation that concludes with theme 1-ab. Theme 1 to theme 1-a are presumptions found in the data that enable the argumentation of theme 1-ab. It is therefore in their sequential interplay that these themes are relevant and apparent in the data. Theme 1 to theme 1-a are therefore supporting constructs that are either explicitly mentioned in the data or implied as an ellipsis that create the conditions for theme 1-ab to emerge.

Theme 1

The first and second theme are often used in conjunction or consecutively as set up for the argumentation that create dissonance between queer people and supporting Palestine. This became apparent when analyzing the tweets about the discussion around Palestine, opponents of the Palestinian cause often refer to actions by Hamas when referring to Palestine, functionally blurring the line between the two, representing theme 1.

An example in the data of pro-Palestinian affiliation being juxtaposed with sexuality is the tweet of Eyal Yakoby that includes a broadcast of a speech in Arabic with English subtitles:

“Palestinian Authority on “Queers for Palestine.” “Once Palestine is free, not a single homosexual will be allowed to live in our pure land. Such perverted abominations will not be accepted among us.” ” (Yakoby, E., 2024).

This tweet assumably paraphrases a speech by the Palestinian Authority calling practicing homosexuality an abomination and perversion that will be trampled.

Eyal Yakoby is a Jewish American who, across multiple platforms, including X, has expressed his support for Israel and his dissent for Palestine. His profile includes numerous tweets calling out media for supposedly covering lies in favor of Hamas, who he often refers to as terrorists. It is important to note that this is a verified account with a substantial number of followers, 127,300 followers as of June 1st, 2025. Eyal Yakoby has been invited to speak on news channels such as Fox, CNN and WashingtonPost.

This tweet is directed at ‘Queers for Palestine’, a movement consisting of queer people that contests settler-colonialism, Zionism and capitalism (Queers for Palestine, n.a.). This organization is an international collective of queer people spreading awareness and organizing events to support the Palestinian struggle for liberation. The broadcast talks about how homosexuality is viewed and should be treated according to the Palestinian Authority. By addressing Queers for Palestine in this tweet, Yakoby attempts to highlight a juxtaposition between the queer identity of the members of Queers for Palestine and the views regarding homosexuality in the broadcast. This is done to ridicule and reduce the movement of Queers for Palestine.

‘Queer people should not support Palestine’

This represents a line of argumentation that centers the idea that queer people should not support a group based on if their sexual identity is supported or accepted. The tweet by Yakoby implies this idea and is therefore a manifestation of how homonationalism is found in the data. In this case, it is used to destabilize the pro-Palestinian movement by distancing queer people from the Palestinian cause. Moreover, Queers for Palestine is merely a collective of queer people that recognize oppression, either through their queerness or otherwise, and apply this lens on Palestine. By ridiculing Queers for Palestine with a broadcast containing homophobic beliefs from a supposed Palestinian origin, Yakoby implies that queer people should not support a cause that does not meet the Western standards of progressivity regarding LGBTQ+ issues.

This is not for the purpose of concern from Yakoby with the lives of queer people in general, as nowhere on his profile tweets are found about regarding the state of queer rights and freedoms in the USA, or in general. Queerness is only used by Yakoby as an argument against Palestine, to diminish the value of the Palestinian cause by underlining the shortcomings when comparing, assumably Palestinian values to Western values. In doing so, Yakoby implies the supremacy of Western modernity, particularly considering LGBTQ+ acceptance. His concern over LGBTQ+ acceptance is however not out of concern for the LGBTQ+

community, but to construct Palestine as underserving of an own state: to build a case against the Palestinian struggle for liberation.

In accordance with Bolzendahl & Winer (2021), the homonationalist project is not so much profoundly concerned over the conditions of the LGBTQ+ community in the country of interest but uses it to maintain domination and influence of the West and legitimize imperialist and Islamophobic stances.

The content of this tweet is an example of homonationalism as a contemporary tool for undermining a nation state's right to self-determination based on its adherence to a Western development model (Bolzendahl & Winer, 2021). The tweet implies that, because their sexual identity would not be accepted in Palestine, they should not support Palestine or be opposed to genocide. This is a homonationalist idea, where the homonationalist elite would prioritize their Western sexual identity to destabilize a nation state's right to self-determination and sovereignty, a tool for perpetuating Western hegemony (Bolzendahl & Winer, 2021).

In the case of Palestine, homonationalism is used as a supporting construct or motive to discuss necropolitics, seeing as LGBTQ+ nonacceptance became reason for many posters to discuss the parameters in which the Palestinian people deserve to live or die. In this line of argumentation, Palestinian adherence or nonadherence to Western values, such as LGBTQ+ inclusion, decide if the Palestinian people are worthy of life or deserving of the violence put on them, making their lives disposable in the face of genocide. By showing Palestine in this

homophobic way, this tweet brings forth the sentiment that Palestine cannot exist in conjunction with progressive Western values and should therefore not exist. This leads to the dehumanization of Palestinians through their depiction as barbaric and violent to queer people. In this way, the discussion about LGBTQ+ nonacceptance in Palestine has become a proxy for the discussion if Palestine even deserves solidarity and, ultimately, if Palestine should be allowed to exist at all.

LGBTQ+ nonacceptance in Palestine as a proxy

To illustrate how LGBTQ+ nonacceptance in Palestine provokes a debate about the right to self-determination and subsistence using the data, under the former tweet of Yakoby, a user called Espouse Freedom tweeted:

“Not to worry, because there never has been, nor will there ever be... a nation called “Palestine.”” (Espouse Freedom, 2024).

This tweet shows how the homophobic and barbaric depiction of Palestine, according to the Orientalist project of Othering, prompts the discussion of Palestine’s right to self-determination and autonomy. This portrayal enables the opponents of Palestine to create a simplified version of the debate surrounding Palestinian self-determination that simply focusses on the adherence to Western values, in this case LGBTQ+ acceptance, to dismiss Palestine as whole.

Going further than to dismiss Palestine, in congruence with Bolzendahl & Winer (2021), the homonationalist project is a platform for the reproduction and spread of Islamophobic sentiment:

“100%!! No such things as Palestinians. Nomadic, gypsy, mo\$lem subhumans!” (BWaynePatriot, 2024).

This tweet is a reply to the tweet by Espouse Freedom, revealing in this instance that the opposition to self-determination for Palestinians is supported by Islamophobia and dehumanization, tools of Orientalism. In a derogatory sense, the poster writes ‘nomadic, gypsy, moslem’ which highlights manners in which the Palestinians, according to this posters, do not adhere to Western modernity.

Moslem here is written as ‘mo\$lem’ with the Dollar sign, presumably because ‘moslem’ is a term that could be picked up by the algorithm as offensive, the Dollar sign therefore acting as a way to bypass this and continue the use of this slur. Moslem is an archaic form of the contemporary word Muslim that is no longer in use due to derogatory connotation. Its pronunciation in Arabic would change its meaning from “one who gives himself to God” to “one who is evil and unjust” (Chen, 2002).

The use of ‘subhumans’ illustrates that Palestinians are dehumanized in anti-Palestinian discourse. Dehumanization is a tool used to perpetuate violence against a people by deconstructing their value as human beings and allowing for the perpetuation of violence against them through reconstructing them deserving targets of violence, devoid of empathy and undeserving of solidarity. This has been

used in Orientalism to deface the Other by reconstructing them as savage or, in a general sense, less valuable than a white, Western man (Said, 1979).

This illustrates that the supporting constructs around a debate, initially about LGBTQ+ conditions in Palestine are, in truth, Orientalist notions including Western and White supremacy and Islamophobia. In this case Orientalism is used as a tool to deny Palestine of support and reproduce Western domination.

‘Queer and pro-Palestinian do not go together’

The following thread of tweets aids in placing the homonationalist discourse in context of the queer Palestine debate as observed in the data. Avi Yemini (@OzraeliAvi, 2024) tweets a picture of a person wearing a Palestinian *kuffiyeh*, a traditional Palestinian headdress, and a tote bag in the colors of the rainbow, with the caption saying, “Who wants to tell him?” This tweet juxtaposes the rainbow tote bag, as symbolism for the LGBTQ+ community, and the *kuffiyeh*, representative of the support of Palestine. The caption implies the two cannot go together and the individual needs to be told of the supposed unknowing contradictory statements in their apparel. As a response to this tweet, Chelsea Hart, queer, pro-Palestinian activist, tweets:

“They say we’re idiots for being queer and supporting Palestine but they don’t understand the pain of queer people in Gaza is our pain. Their fears are our fears. Their dreams are our dreams. Their freedom is our freedom. They don’t know our hearts are with queer Palestinians. [...]” (Hart, C., 2024).

This tweets centers the solidarity of queer people with the queer people in Palestine, attempting to circumvent the homonationalist lens of the initial tweet. The thread continues with @SagasofBharat tweeting a picture of an online article with the title “Persecution of homosexuals in the Palestinian autonomous areas” with the caption

“In 2000, 4 Palestinians were killed for being homosexual and 100s were forced to flee Israel -yes the same Israel this queer is protesting against 🤔 [...].” (SagasofBharat, 2024).

The tweet had the following image as a response:



(PranabMCMXCVIII, 2024).

This picture shows a White, Western-looking woman holding up a sign saying “Free Palestine” with the Palestinian flag next to the rainbow flag. A brown person in military uniform and a headband with “ Hamas ” on it, looks at her and takes her hand. As they disappear out of frame, her decapitated head is seen thrown backwards into frame. This threatening imagery, depicting violence against a personification of queer Palestine supporters, tweeted in response to queer Palestinian discourse exemplifies how the queer pro-Palestinian discourse is thwarted through homonationalist rhetoric. This picture, in the context of this thread, is posted in response to a queer pro-Palestine activist tweeting about solidarity, to intimidate queer people supporting Palestine by depicting a gruesome situation of violence. This seems to mock and intimidate queer supporters of Palestine by imagining them in a situation of harm. The homonationalist ideal lives in this image that Western queer people should not support Palestine due to the reason that their personal identity is not supported by local values and beliefs, creating a false dilemma between supporting Palestine and one’s sexual identity. This rhetoric in homonationalism makes use of an attack on the identity markers of queer supporters of Palestine to devalue their stance, while depicting Palestine as backward and violent. In this reductionist and misconstrued view of reality, personal identity and political affiliation are at odds with each other. This is done to destabilize the argumentation and disposition of queer people supporting Palestine by creating an inaccurate paradox wherein one cannot be queer and support Palestine.

“Few things make me more livid than “Queers for Palestine.” These individuals often lecture and criticize LGBTQ+ people who vote for moderate, non-bigoted Republican candidates, yet they openly support groups or causes that include individuals who would have no issue harming or even killing them.” (@MrJesse91, 2024).

In this tweet, an ideological assumption is made that queer supporters of Palestine support operations and organizations that bring harm to queer people. The poster mentions “groups or causes” which could both be addressing Hamas or Palestine. Firstly, “groups” could be referencing Hamas, which would mean the poster equates Palestine with the dealings of Hamas, using an inaccurate *pars pro toto*, reducing the Palestinian cause to Hamas to juxtapose the queer identity of the supporters of Palestine with the homophobic connotation of Hamas. Secondly, “causes” could be referencing the Palestinian cause, using the Orientalist notion of portraying Palestine as the backward and anti-modern ‘Other’ presuming homophobia in Palestinian society. Both serve the purpose of questioning the validity of the queer supporters of Palestinian cause by misrepresenting Palestine as anti-queer and violent.

This is often followed by a tweet or reply about Hamas’ treatment of Queer people in Palestine, which serves the function of representing Palestine and Hamas as homophobic and backwards, representing theme 1a. In the discourse collected, articles referring to Hamas’ abuse to queer people was often found under tweets by queer Palestinians or tweets regarding queer Palestine,

seemingly to dissuade or undermine queer Palestinians' posts by conflicting their support of Palestine with the sketching of Palestine as homophobic and dangerous for queer people. This is a tool used in Orientalism to depict "the Other" as barbaric and uncivilized, the inverted image of the sophisticated and civilized "West" (Said, 1979).

In this case, by making Hamas representative of Palestine, the opposition enables use of the violent depiction and imagery of Hamas to dominate the depiction of Palestine. This misrepresentation is therefore an Orientalist tool to sketch Palestine, here Othered, as barbaric, violent and unmodern (Said, 1979). This is particularly targeted as the contemporary meaning of Orientalism became specifically centered on Islamic nations' depiction as the main threat to Western modernity and civilization (Altwaiji, 2014).

Homophobia is only a spoke in the wheel of this portrayal, a ready-to-use weapon against Palestinian right to self-determination. Here is where homonationalism and Orientalism intersect in their notion of supremacy of Western values and their depiction of non-Westernness. Both notions are weaponized in a way to dismantle queer support of Palestine, to maintain hegemony and domination in areas of interest (Bolzendahl & Winer, 2021; Altwaiji, 2014).

"How do you balance your sexuality given that Hamas has grown in popularity for its recent attack on Israel in support of Sheikh Jarrah? To what

extent has this popularity squeezed civil resistance spaces? 😬 The latest horrible question I got from @AlJazeera journalist #pride” (Maikey, H, 2021).

In this tweet, Haneen Maikey addresses a question posed in by a journalist working for Al Jazeera that juxtaposes her sexual identity to the growing popularity of Hamas, exemplifying the first theme. The implication that the growing popularity of Hamas should collide with her sexual identity becomes evident from the word “balance”. This implies that the recent attack on Sheikh Jarrah and the thereby belonging growing popularity of Hamas would have disturbed an equilibrium. The two concepts in the proverbial balance are not explicitly named but are suggested to be her sexual identity and her support for Palestine. The journalist already guides the question by placing the two things at the opposite end of each other and implies a push and pull between the two caused by the growing popularity by Hamas. Here, Hamas is made to be representative of Palestine as a *pars pro toto*, such as described in theme 1.

The author of the tweet is Haneen Maikey, the former director of AlQaws, a well-known queer Palestinian organization, who is public about her support of Palestine in the organization as well as on her personal X account. The question mentions that the attack on Sheikh Jarrah, claimed by Hamas, would have contributed to tipping a balance in her support of Palestine and her sexual identity. ‘Squeezing civil resistance spaces’ assumably talks about pro-Palestinian organizations such as AlQaws, placing the attack by Hamas well into the debate of the pro-Palestinian movement. Moreover, the interviewer asks about her sexuality

in light of the Hamas attack on Sheikh Jarrah, not only implicating Hamas in the Palestinian cause, but implying a certain disposition of Hamas towards queerness that could potentially constrict, in the eyes of the interviewer, Haneen Maikey's idea of supporting Palestine.

The tweet by Haneen Maikey shows her dissatisfaction with the framing of the question, visible through her expressions of “latest horrible question” and the use of the emoji “🙄”. The hashtag, #pride, appears to be used in an ironic way to underline the way her queerness is used to contradict or contest her support of Hamas, or ultimately, Palestine.

The replies to her tweet, most likely accessed by her followers or mutuals, concur in her dissatisfaction with the line of questioning by the interviewer, saying:

"@AlJazeera are you serious?" (Mirae, 2021).

Or mocking the question:

“Is your sexuality out of balance?” (Fayez, 2021).

One reply stands out, an X user with an English and Hebrew name tweets:

“So you're not* concerned about your safety – given that lethal homophobia, linked with Hamas ideology, will also grow. Good...I guess...” (Feldman, 2025).

This reply comments on the original post, claiming that the homophobia present in the Hamas ideology should be a concern for the safety of our original poster, Haneen Maikey. This reply implicates the sexuality of our original poster and

contrasts this with her support of Palestine and her contempt for the question posed by the interviewer. This reply claims that for the concern of her own safety, she should not support Palestine. This conclusion came forth from the suggestive framing of the question by the interviewer where an attack by Hamas became central to the frame of questioning Haneen Maikey's support of Palestine in light of her sexuality, contrasting personal sexual identity and political affiliation to Palestine.

These themes are tools that are used in the anti-Palestine discourse that enables the argumentation that queer people should not support Palestine. To arrive at the conclusion that queer people should not support Palestine requires the assumption that either Palestine is homophobic, according to the homonationalist argument, or that Palestine is equal to Hamas. The former equates the violent depiction of Hamas to the whole of Palestine, which creates an image of Palestine as terrorist and uncivilized. This argumentation fits the Orientalist notion of creating an image of the Other as dangerous to the West, laced with Islamophobia, to support the idea of Western domination.

The data shows that the debate around LGBTQ+ nonacceptance in Palestine was used as a proxy to the debate if Palestine should exist at all. In face of the colonial violence in Palestine, the debate around LGBTQ+ nonacceptance is used as a way of framing Palestine as deserving of the violence. The distraught to the LGBTQ+ nonacceptance seems to be used to justify or legitimize the violence

against the Palestinians. This rids them of empathy and frames them as deserving of violence.

That queerness happens in Palestine is often erased in the observed tweets, as they present a narrative that queerness in Palestine can only result in murder, providing an argument against Palestinian sovereignty. In this sense, Western domination and Israeli violence are seen as a salvation, justifying the killing of Palestinian people, framed as murderers of queer people. In these tweets, homonationalism is used as a platform for necropolitics: to decide which lives are objectionable, those of queer Palestinians killed in Palestine, and which are erased, queer people that exist in Palestine in actuality, deeming them ungrievable. Homonationalism hereby decides who has the right to life and who has the right to death by deciding which lives are valued and to serve what purpose.

Theme 2

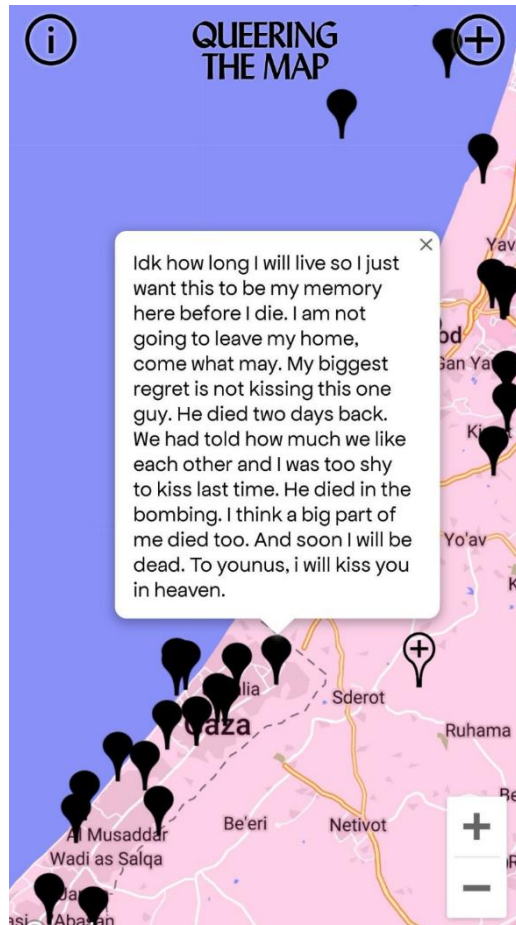
Although not a way in which anti-queer discourse configures into the Palestine debate, found in the data were also voices resisting the construction of the anti-queer argumentation disfavoring Palestine. It would therefore be inaccurate to omit mentioning (queer) pro-Palestinian voices who have been addressing the oppression of queer (pro-)Palestinian voices in the face of homonationalist and Orientalist rhetoric in the anti-Palestinian discourse. This too has been a recurring theme in the data, either posters tweeting about the spread of oppressive rhetoric in this discourse or replying to hateful anti-Palestinian

rhetoric, calling out fallacies in their line of argumentation and showing that queerness happens in Palestine and how.

“Arguments such as “Palestine is homophobic” or “Palestine doesn’t support me so why should I support them” will never be valid. It shows some of yall only care about yourselves” (Pjskmoots, 2024).

This tweet was a response to a suspended account, the original tweet rendered inaccessible. This response appears to address the theme in homonationalism that prioritizes the Westernized homosexual, normative identity in debates regarding self-determination and subsistence. By saying “some of yall only care about yourselves” (Pjskmoots, 2024), the poster refers to the devaluing of Palestinian lives due to the perceived unacceptance of their personal identity or values. ““Palestine doesn’t support me so why should I support them”” (Pjskmoots, 2024) calls out the conditionality of Western empathy in this debate. The dehumanization and demonization act as justification and legitimization for the violence against Palestinians in the anti-Palestine debate and the dismissal of empathy in this conditional way appears to act as a moral reassurance. Through the perceived nonadherence to Western values, Palestine is refused the role of ‘perfect victim’ though homonationalist and Orientalist mechanisms. As previously discussed, this allows for the construction of Palestine as unworthy of self-determination and subsistence, validifying the perpetuation of mass violence against the Palestinian people. This is another way in which the Palestinian people are dehumanized, lessened in value and denied empathy.

“THERE ARE QUEER PALESTINIANS! To completely ignore and disregard them, to defend their genocide by saying “Palestine is homophobic” is homophobic in itself and contributing to zionists’ dehumanization of Palestinians!! (Pic from Queering the Map) #Free Palestine”



(Lightbrushfan, 2024).

The previous tweet shows that there is resistance to this reconstruction of the Palestinian people as deserving targets of violence. “Queering the Map” is a medium in which people can anonymously share their personal experiences, shown with markers on the map referring to the location of the story (Queering the Map, 2025). Queering the Map began as an initiative on Tiohtia:ke, the indigenous land that is now known as Montreal. This initiative acknowledges the normalization of certain bodies in the production of contemporary society,

addressing complicity in settler-colonialism, race, gender, sexuality, ability and citizenship (Queering the Map, 2025). A quote is featured in the description that was made on this platform in Hawaii: “queer liberation must mean decolonization, and decolonization must mean queer liberation” (Queering the Map, 2025).

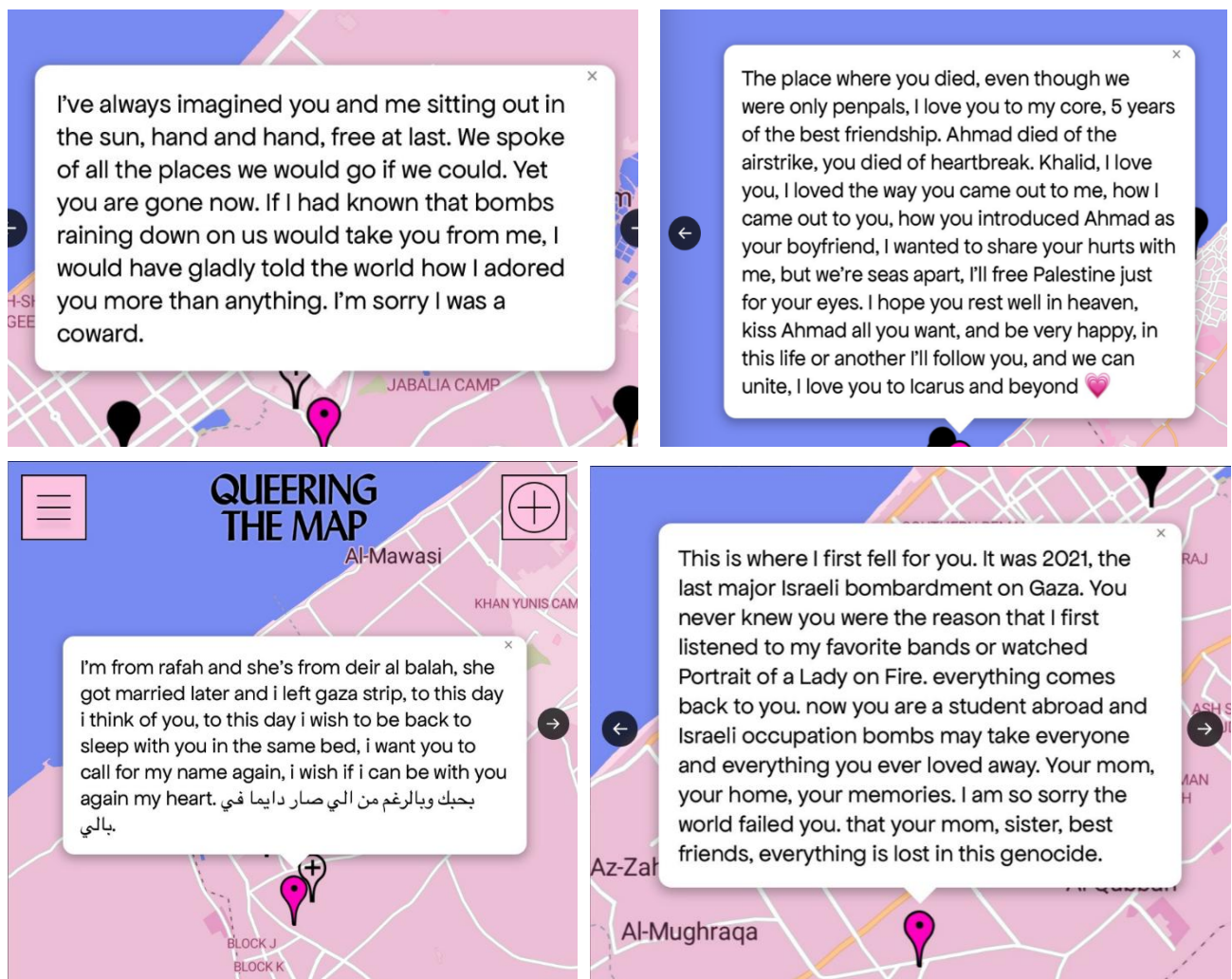
Though not exclusive to Palestine, it is apprehensible to see the adoption of this platform with this lens to include the queer Palestinian struggle, addressing similar themes of settler-colonialism and oppression of non-Western queer identities. These personal narratives through this medium are a recurring method in the data in which people share voices of queer Palestinians as an act of resistance to the anti-queer Palestinian discourse, seeking to erasing and misconstrue queer experiences in Palestine. They offer resistance by demonstrating and archiving the lived experience and struggle of queer Palestinians despite the violence, physically and discursively.

In analyzing the data, the supporting structure for this resistance harkens back to the quote by Lorde: “I know that my people cannot possibly profit from the oppression of any other group which seeks the right to peaceful existence” (Lorde, 1983, p. 1). In this body of work and the circumspective theoretical framework, she deconstructs the core of homonationalism by saying there is no freedom to be gained from the oppression of another people. The normative, idealized image of a Western, White homosexual prioritizes his sexual identity to legitimize violence against people that do not assimilate to his image and the associated Westernized values. The individuals resisting this idea in the data,

consciously or otherwise, are supported by Black feminist theory in saying that one form of oppression does not legitimize another. These individuals continue a long tradition by illustrating how intersectional identities are at the essence of resistance against dominant oppressions (Truth, 1851; Lorde, 1983).

To further this tradition of resistance: stories from queer Palestinian voices found in the data that deserve their own narration.

“Please don’t forget about Palestine, and don’t forget that queer people live there too 💖”



(Bamfypoo, 2025).

Discussion and conclusion

This thesis' aim was to answer the research question: "*How does the discussion around LGBTQ+ nonacceptance in Palestine configure into anti-Palestinian discourse?*". To do this, this thesis examined digital discourse using the platform X to find tweets concerning queer people in Palestine and queer people supporting Palestine. 92 tweets have been analyzed that relevantly discuss the perceived acceptance of LGBTQ+ people in Palestine or the legitimacy of queer people supporting Palestine or the Palestinian deservingness of self-determination based on their treatment of LGBTQ+ people.

These tweets have been analyzed to find out what notion or sentiment drives their argumentation. To understand this argumentation, this thesis used Orientalism to uncover in which way Palestine is framed in the data as violent, dangerous and, in turn, homophobic. This thesis used homonationalism to analyze how the prioritization of the Western homosexual identity was used in the debate around the right of self-determination of Palestine. Furthermore, the theory of necropolitics was used to understand how the discussion around LGBTQ+ acceptance became the parameters in which to discuss the lives of Palestinians.

In analyzing the data, it was found that assumptions were made in anti-Palestinian discourse to arrive at the conclusion that queer people should not support Palestine. Such assumptions were that either Palestine is nonaccepting of LGBTQ+ people or that Hamas is representative of Palestine. The former portrays Hamas as terrorist and dangerous for LGBTQ+ people.

The findings in the data are congruent with the expectations and the literature. To arrive at the conclusion that queer people should not support a cause that is nonaccepting of them, homonationalist rhetoric was used to prioritize the Western sexual identity over the fate of Palestine. The nonacceptance of this identity in Palestine became a deciding factor in their dissent for the Palestinian cause.

The perception that Palestine is homophobic is an assumption that was commonly found in the data. This fits the Orientalist notion of the depiction of Palestine as dangerous, violent and uncivilized. Since Palestine is not seen as Western, these sentiments and connotations are attributed to Palestine. The perception of Palestine as homophobic was also supported by the equation of Palestine to Hamas. This fits the Orientalist idea of the Other post 9/11 as terrorist and a threat to national security. Tools such as dehumanization and demonization were used in the data to devalue the lives of Palestinians.

The debate around LGBTQ+ nonacceptance in Palestine became a proxy to discuss the mortality of Palestinians, congruent with the theory of necropolitics. The disposability of Palestinian lives compares to the perceived acceptance of LGBTQ+ people and, in broader terms, adherence to Western modernity. The discussion is centered not on the violence against Palestinians, but rather, if they deserve the violence, placing the contributors to the anti-Palestinian discourse in the decision-making position over Palestinian mortality.

Resistance against this Orientalist and homonationalist narrative has been found in the data. This resistance focusses on deconstructing the argumentation that LGBTQ+ acceptance should define the parameters of the discussion around Palestinian liberation. It amplifies queer Palestinian voices and shows the manifestation of queer in Palestine. This form of resistance recognizes the plurality of oppression of queer Palestinians. They highlight that queer Palestinians face colonial oppression physically and discursively. Congruent with Black feminist theory, this resistance highlights that there is no hierarchy of oppressions.

To answer the research question, the way in which perceived LGBTQ+ nonacceptance in Palestine configures into the anti-Palestinian discourse is to destabilize and decelerate the Palestinian cause for liberation. As mentioned in the literature, homonationalism and Orientalism are both used to maintain Western domination and hegemony and influence nation states' right to self-determination based on Western influence. The discussion around LGBTQ+ nonacceptance in Palestine is a proxy for Western supremacy and a vehicle for Islamophobia. Furthermore, the discussion around LGBTQ+ acceptance in Palestine acts as a distraction for the discussion that direly needs addressing: the discussion on the settler-colonial violence the Palestinian people face, the threat to the very existence of Palestine and the eradication of Palestinian culture.

By engaging in the discussion whether LGBTQ+ people are accepted in Palestine or if Palestine adheres to Western modernity or if, in plain terms, 'they'

look enough like ‘us’ for us to care, we are blindsided. By focusing on the discussion if the painting of the rainbow flag ought to be on the wall separating Israel from Palestine, we are at risk of forgetting to ask why the wall is there in the first place.

In retrospect, there were challenges in the data collection of this thesis. Although intangible, the (shadow)banning of accounts on X that engage in pro-Palestinian discourse and the algorithms that prioritize sensationalist content might have affected the representativity of the data collected. Furthermore, some content was found in Arabic that was illegible to the author. It is likely that there would be more data found if the search terms used were also Arabic, however this was not within the realm of capabilities of the author. This thesis used X as its sole field for data collection. Future research could investigate if results differ based on platforms, especially in the way their algorithms function.

References

- Alqaisiya, W. (2018). Decolonial queering: The politics of being queer in Palestine. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 47(3), 29–44. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2018.47.3.29>
- Altwaiji, M. (2014). Neo-Orientalism and the neo-imperialism thesis: Post-9/11 US and Arab world relationship. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 36(4), 313–323. <https://doi.org/10.13169/arabstudquar.36.4.0313>
- Atshan, S. (2020). *Queer Palestine and the empire of critique*. Stanford University Press.
- Bamfypoo. (2025, May 8). Please don't forget about Palestine, and don't forget queer people live there too ❤️ [Tweet and images]. X. <https://x.com/bamfypoo/status/1911520623257665652>
- Bolzendahl, C., & Winer, C. (2021). Conceptualizing homonationalism: (Re-)Formulation, application, and debates of expansion. *Sociology Compass*, 15(8), e12853. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12853>
- Bonilla, Y., & Rosa, J. (2015). #Ferguson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States. *American Ethnologist*, 42(1), 4–17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12112>
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>

Business. (2023). *X allegedly suspends hundreds of Palestinian accounts amid Israel-Gaza war* - Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/x-allegedly-suspends-hundreds-of-palestinian-accounts-amid-israel-gaza-war/>

BWaynePatriot. (2024, December 25). 100%!! No such things as Palestinians. Nomadic, gypsy, mo\$lem subhumans! [Tweet]. X. <https://x.com/BWaynePatriot/status/1871925069070668256>

Chen, Y.-A. C. (2002, July 8). Why do people say Muslim now instead of Moslem? History News Network. <https://www.historynewsnetwork.org/article/why-do-people-say-muslim-now-instead-of-moslem>

Combahee River Collective. (1977, April). *A Black feminist statement*. Unpublished manuscript.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Deprez, M. (2023). Visual necropolitics and visual violence: Theorizing death, sight, and sovereign control of Palestine. *International Political Sociology*, 17(3), olad016. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olad016>

Espouse Freedom. [@EspouseFreedom]. (2024, December 25). Not to worry, because there never has been, nor will there ever be... a nation called

“Palestine”. [Tweet]. X.

<https://x.com/EspouseFreedom/status/1871776005553344556>

Fayez. [@fayez]. (2021, June 23). Is your sexuality out of balance? [Tweet]. X.

<https://x.com/fayez/status/1407774197355630596>

Feldman, J. [@eishsadehy]. (2021, June 25). So you’re not* concerned about your safety – given that lethal homophobia, linked with Hamas ideology, will also grow. Good... I guess... [Tweet]. X.

<https://x.com/eishsadehy/status/1408412001655832576>

Fortier, M. (2025). *Theory/theatre: An introduction* (4th ed.). Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003393412>

Hanbali, L., Jit, E., Neilson, A., Smith, J., Hafez, S., & Khoury, R. (2024). Israeli necropolitics and the pursuit of health justice in Palestine. *BMJ Global Health*, 9(2), e014942. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2023-014942>

Heart, C. [@chelseahartisme]. (2024, May 1). They say we’re idiots for being queer and supporting Palestine but they don’t understand the pain of queer people in [...] [Tweet]. X.

<https://x.com/chelseahartisme/status/1785721969112973624>

Isiaka, M., Nasirudeen, I. A., & Yusuf, T. A. (2024). Biopower and necropolitics in the Israel-Palestine conflict: A critical analysis. *Ilorin Journal of Criminology and Security Studies*, 2(1), 36–59.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392083052_Biopower_and_Necropolitics_in_the_Israel-Palestine_Conflict_A_Critical_Analysis

Lightbrushfan. (2024, February 19). THERE ARE QUEER PALESTINIANS! To completely ignore and disregard them, to defend their genocide by saying “Palestine is homophobic” is... [Tweet]. X. <https://x.com/Lightbrushfan/status/1759387500991119513/photo/1>

Lorde, A. (1983). There is no hierarchy of oppressions. In *Homophobia and education*. Council on Interracial Books for Children. https://uuliveoak.org/pdfs/worship_9-04-09_excerpts_no_hierarchy_of_oppressions.pdf

Lorde, A. (1984). The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. In *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches* (pp. 110–114). Crossing Press.

Maikey, H. [@hmaikey]. (2021, June 23). How do you balance your sexuality given that Hamas has grown in popularity for its recent attack on Israel in [...] [Tweet]. X. <https://x.com/hmaikey/status/1407691848966193156>

Maikey, H. [@hmaikey]. (2021, June 23). How do you balance your sexuality given that Hamas has grown in popularity for its recent attack on Israel in [...] [Tweet]. X. <https://x.com/hmaikey/status/1407691848966193156>

Mbembe, A. (2019). *Necropolitics* (S. Corcoran, Trans.). Duke University Press. <https://grattoncourses.wordpress.com/wp->

content/uploads/2019/12/theory-in-forms-achille-mbembe-steve-corcoran-necropolitics-duke-university-press-2019.pdf

Mirae. [@mirae_mei]. (2021, June 23). @AlJazeera are you serious? [Tweet]. X. https://x.com/mirae_mei/status/1407820063869132800

MrJesse91. (2021, March 22). Few things make me more livid than “Queers for Palestine.” These individuals often lecture and criticize LGBT people who [...]. [Tweet]. X. <https://x.com/MrJesse91/status/1871751871817248812>

Nayak, M. (2006). Orientalism and “saving” US state identity after 9/11. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 8(1), 42–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616740500415458>

Pjskmoots. (2024, January 26). Arguments such as “Palestine is homophobic” or “Palestine doesn’t support me so why should I support them” will never be [...] [Tweet]. X. <https://x.com/pjskmoots/status/1751012719715586182>

PranabMCMXCVIII. (2024, May 2). [Image]. X. <https://x.com/PranabMCMXCVIII/status/1786128057079603459>

Puar, J. K. (2007). *Terrorist assemblages: Homonationalism in queer times*. Duke University Press.

Queering The Map. (2025). About. <https://www.queeringthemap.com/>

Queers for Palestine. [@queers.for.palestine]. (n.d.). Queers for Palestine: Queers committed to the struggle for a just world, free of settler-colonialism,

- zionism, and capitalism ps  [Instagram bio]. Retrieved June 1, 2025, from <https://www.instagram.com/queers.for.palestine/followers/mutualOnly>
- Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2017). The discourse-historical approach (DHA). In J. Flowerdew & J. E. Richardson (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies* (pp. 44–59). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315739342-4>
- SagasofBharat. (2024, May 2). In 2000, 4 Palestinians were killed for being homosexual and 100s were forced to flee Israel - yes the same Israel [...] [Tweet and image]. X. <https://x.com/SagasofBharat/status/1785928651256836562>
- Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage Books.
- Southbank Centre. (2014, March 14). Kimberlé Crenshaw: Intersectionality and gender equality [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DW4HLgYPIA>
- Truth, S. (1863). Ain't I a woman? In F. D. Gage (Ed.), *New York Independent*.
- Wodak, R. (2012). Critical discourse analysis. In J. P. Gee & M. Handford (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 185–197). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203809068-28>
- Yakoby, E. [@EYakoby]. (2024, December 25). Palestinian Authority on “Queers for Palestine.” “Once Palestine is free, not a single homosexual will be allowed to live in our pure land. Such perverted abominations will not be accepted

among us.” [Tweet and video]. X.

<https://x.com/EYakoby/status/1871748981790789694>

Yemini, A. [@OzraeliAvi]. (2024, May 1). Who wants to tell him? [Tweet and image].

X. <https://x.com/OzraeliAvi/status/1785460908493594706>

Appendix



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Bonnie French, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Identity and belonging: Queer Palestine and Homonationalism

Name, email of student: Kevin Barkmeijer, 741415kb@eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Jessica Steinman, steinman@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: March 2025-June 2025

Is the research study conducted within DPAS YES - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. YES - NO

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? YES - NO

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations
that will not involve identification of participants. YES - NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary
data that has been anonymized by someone else). YES - NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES - NO

2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES - NO

3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES - NO

4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? YES - NO

Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).

Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES - NO

Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? YES - NO

Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? YES - NO

Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? YES - NO

Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured?

YES - NO

Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study?

YES - NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

-On my personal computer (digital sources).

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

-Kevin Barkmeijer.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

-Whenever I access the sources I will make sure it is safely backed up on my laptop.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

-N.A.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Kevin Barkmeijer

Name (EUR) supervisor: Dr. Jessica Steinman

Date: 23-03-2025

Date: 23-03-2025

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Barkmeijer". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'K' being large and prominent. The signature is written on a plain white background.