

**War and Pride:
“Out Against the Occupation” and Queer Responses to
the 2006 Lebanon War**

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August 2008

A thesis submitted to McGill University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Arts in Communication Studies

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I examine the role of queerness, solidarity and movement in anti-war activism relating to the 2006 Lebanon War. I investigate two events called “Out Against the Occupation” that were organized during the summer of 2006 in response to the war. These events emerged as a queer response to the context of various gay pride events held throughout the war that failed to develop an anti-war response to the war in Lebanon. These gay pride events include the Divers/Cité festival held annually in Montreal, the first World OutGames held in Montreal, the World Pride events held in Jerusalem and the Queerupton gathering held in Tel Aviv. I argue that we must rethink the role of movement, queerness and solidarity in order to understand how movements of resistance emerge. I do so by examining the role of subjectivity in how we come to move and orient ourselves towards others.

RESUME

Dans ce mémoire, j'examine le rôle de la sexualité *queer*, la solidarité et le mouvement dans les mobilisations contre le conflit israélo-libanais de 2006. J'examine deux événements appelés “Out Against the Occupation,” organisés durant l'été de 2006 en réaction à la guerre. Ces événements émergent d'une réaction allosexuelle au contexte de plusieurs événements se rapportant à la fierté gaie qui ont été organisés durant la guerre au Liban. Ces événements se rapportant à la fierté incluaient le festival Divers/Cité à Montréal, le premier “World OutGames” à Montréal, les événements World Pride à Jerusalem et la réunion “Queerupton” à Tel Aviv. Je propose qu'on devrait repenser le rôle du mouvement, de la sexualité *queer* et de la solidarité pour comprendre comment les mouvements de résistance émergent. Je l'accomplis en examinant le rôle de la subjectivité dans la façon dont on se déplace et s'oriente vers les autres.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to begin by thanking my supervisor, Carrie Rentschler, for her encouragement, support, criticism, editing, listening, talking, inspiration and so much more. Each time I left Carrie's office, I felt excited about my work and confident in myself. Having a supervisor who motivated me when I was insecure and redirected my focus when I was off track is lucky enough already, but Carrie went beyond and showed me a level of kindness, generosity and interest that few graduate students ever find in a supervisor. I feel privileged and honoured to have been able to work with her, and her influence has shaped my work and writing in more ways than I can imagine. Carrie helped me to become a better writer, a better student, and a better researcher, and for that I thank her deeply.

I also want to thank Michelle Hartman who helped advise me and pointed me in the direction that my work is in today; Jenny Burman for three years of courses, conversations and intellectual inspiration; Jonathan Sterne for making me feel like I belonged during my first semester in grad school; Darin Barney for showing me that it's worth reading work that isn't related to my research; Tom Lamarre for teaching a course that made my brain hurt from thinking so hard; Derek Nystrom for getting me to read (and enjoy) literature again; and all the other professors who inspired me, shaped my work, helped me develop intellectually and academically, and taught me cool things. I would also like to thank Shree Mulay, former director of the McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women, who encouraged me to apply to graduate school and helped me develop my feminist analysis.

I owe many thanks to Carrie's thesis workgroup, with whom I felt a sense of

feminist community in our department and received much valued feedback and support. They include Andrea Braithwaite, Anna Feigenbaum, Anna Leventhal, Liz Springate, Samantha Thrift, Jessica Wurster, Laurel Wypkema, and Morgan Charles.

I am grateful to Jennifer Cuffe, Megha Sehdev, and Anna Carastathis from the Graduate Group for Feminist Scholarship writing group. Our weekly meetings over the summer saved me from complete isolation, and their feedback and editing was invaluable. Extra special thanks to Anna Carastathis and Anna Feigenbaum, for being wonderful friends, fantastic co-conspirators and helping me work through the intellectual mazes in my work. I also want to send special thanks to Sonja Brooks, my mother Brenda Kouri and sister Marla Kouri-Towe for all their love and support, and my father Michael Towe for encouraging me as a child to ask questions.

I'd like to thank Leila, Trish and M. for sharing their experiences and ideas on "Out Against the Occupation" with me. It was their words that brought my project to life, and I owe them much credit for their analyses and reflections that shaped my thesis.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the Beaverbrook fund and Media@McGill for their financial support of my research and writing. I would not have been able to finish this project without their generosity.

PREFACE

I first learned of the “Out Against the Occupation” events through my involvement with QPIRG-McGill¹ (the Quebec Public Interest Research Group at McGill), as a member of their Board of Directors. I was approached by one of the staff members, Leila P., about getting involved in the organizing of a queer response to the war in Lebanon. QPIRG was already connected to Lebanese solidarity efforts through its working group Tadamon!, a Montreal based Lebanese social justice solidarity group, and while the first “Out Against the Occupation” event was organized with the support of QPIRG’s working group the Queer Bookfair, the second installment of “Out Against the Occupation” was organized in conjunction with Tadamon!

While I was unable to be involved in the organizing of “Out Against the Occupation” at the time,² I am interested in how and why “Out Against the Occupation” emerged when it did, and the situatedness of its emergence within diasporic, activist and queer communities – since similar events were not being organized in other places in Canada or internationally. I must admit that my interest in “Out Against the Occupation” was also sparked by my experience attending the second of the two events. Towards the end of the presentations, film screenings, and poetry readings, there was a radical drag performance by Osama bin Thuggin³. Dressed in hip hop gear and gold chains, Osama bin Thuggin did a strip-tease lip-synching performance to political hip hop lyrics that critiqued American foreign policy and political figures such as Condoleezza Rice and Dick Cheney. What struck me most about this performance, however, was not the

¹ QPIRG-McGill is a student funded and campus-based social and environmental justice organization.

² I later helped organize a panel called “Queer Resistance and the War on Terror: Rethinking a Middle Eastern Perspective,” in November 2007

³ Performed by M.

content of the performance itself, but rather what it represented in the emergence of new relations of solidarity and activism. I was interested in what made it possible for a queer Arab woman to perform drag under the pseudonym of a terrorist/gangster thug. M.'s performance of Osama bin Thuggin played with gender and sexuality, and drew on solidarity with black hip hop culture (through clothes and music), to articulate a critique of racism, imperialism, and American foreign policy. Framed within the "Out Against the Occupation" events, her performance points to the relationships of solidarity and identification that are constructed through shared struggles, and suggests a link between different kinds of politicized movements that emerge from diasporas and their discourses of resistance.

INTRODUCTION

I. Setting the stage: war and pride during the summer of 2006

On July 12th 2006⁴, in what the Israeli state claims was a response to the capture of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah, the Israeli Defense Force began its war on Lebanon, which lasted the duration of the summer. A UN adopted ceasefire was implemented on August 14th. But arguably the war only ended in early September with the removal of Israeli blockades of Lebanon, almost one month after the ceasefire was called. Holding the Lebanese government accountable for the actions of Hezbollah,⁵ the state of Israel targeted both civilian infrastructure, destroying highways and the Beirut International Airport, and invaded southern Lebanon, resulting in the displacement of almost one million Lebanese people, the death of 1191 Lebanese (civilians and armed fighters) and the injury of several thousand more. In Israel, tens of thousands of people were displaced, and 43 civilians were killed.

Meanwhile, as the war waged in Lebanon and in northern Israel, the annual World Pride events were held in Jerusalem from August 6th-12th. The theme for World Pride 2006 was “Love Without Borders.”⁶ World Pride Jerusalem was framed as a unifying event that would bring together the three historic religions of the region (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and respond to “intolerance” by urging pluralism and inclusion. During the week-long event, a solidarity rally was organized at the separation wall for the LGBT⁷ Palestinians who were blocked from attending.⁸ Due to the potential security

⁴ All dates and numbers included relating to the 2006 Lebanon War were taken from the International Crisis Group, Middle East Report #59, available online at www.crisisgroup.org

⁵ Hezbollah is a Lebanese political-military organization founded in 1984.

⁶ <http://www.worldpride.net/> [Last viewed: August 3, 2007]

⁷ LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans/Transgendered/Transexual) is the standard acronym covering most queer subjects.

risks of holding a parade during the war, the organizers of World Pride postponed the Pride Parade, replacing it with a protest against homophobic violence.

Queeruption, a free “DIY”⁹ radical queer gathering that has been organized annually since 1998, hosted its 2006 event from August 3rd-13th in Tel-Aviv, Israel. The organizers, who were part of an “anarcho-gender-queer” community in Israel, chose to organize Queeruption 2006 in Israel parallel to World Pride Jerusalem in order to provide “an opportunity to develop alternative ways of thinking and anti-oppressive principles, in contrast to Israeli authoritarian culture, and also as a platform for engaging in a deep, queer, deconstructive debate.”¹⁰ Queeruption received strong criticism from organizers of the Boycott of World Pride Jerusalem, yet the Queeruption 2006 organizers decided to continue holding their events, offering the counter-argument that a radical response still needed to be represented at World Pride, and in Israel.

In Montreal, more gay pride events were also held, with the first World OutGames¹¹ from July 29th to August 5th, and the annual Divers/Cité¹² festival from July 31st to August 6th. As people gathered at the OutGames, the sporting events were precluded by an International Conference for the Advancement of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Rights titled “The Right to be Different” from July 26th-29th.¹³ A Beirut-based LGBT organization, Helem,¹⁴ was scheduled to attend the conference. However,

⁸ The Israeli state exercises control over borders and the movement of Palestinians into Israeli territory, through the use of checkpoints, identification cards, detention, and the newly constructed separation wall.

⁹ DIY (Do It Yourself) refers to a subcultural practice that focuses on creating and repairing objects themselves instead of purchasing these objects through capitalist consumer culture.

¹⁰ http://www.queeruption.org/q2006/faq_en.htm [Last viewed: March 15, 2008]

¹¹ The World OutGames are a sporting and cultural event open to people of all sexual orientations and without qualifying requirements.

¹² Divers/Cité is an annual LGBT arts and music festival in Montreal

¹³ <http://www.outsports.com/montreal2006/culture.htm> [Last viewed: April 25, 2008]

¹⁴ <http://helem.net> [Last viewed: April 25, 2008]

due to the outbreak of the war and the blockade of all borders by the Israeli military, Helem was unable to attend.

Amidst all the discussions on human rights and the celebrations of Pride both locally and internationally that occurred over the summer of 2006, there appeared to be a disconnect between the international context of war and the call for LGBT rights globally. As queers in Montreal celebrated diversity and asserted sexual human rights, there was a distinct lack of recognition and attention given to the absence of Helem at the OutGames and the systemic barriers of occupation and segregation that prevented many Palestinians from attending the World Pride events in Jerusalem. Finding the lack of any discussion of the war in Lebanon within the queer events that summer to be unacceptable, a group of Montreal activists organized a series of fundraising and solidarity events titled “Out Against the Occupation” in solidarity with Helem Beirut and the Sanayeh Relief Centre (which was established in the Helem office in Beirut). “Out Against the Occupation” called on queer members of the Montreal community and their allies to critically examine the war and the queer responses to it.

II. Statement of the project and chapter outline

The name “Out Against the Occupation” literally brings together queerness and a politics of solidarity. To be “out” is a common euphemism for being openly or publicly gay (to come “out” of the closet). It also suggests a public position on occupation, as one is “out” against “the occupation” of Palestine and of part of Lebanon. It thus indicates that the politics of opposing occupation are not simply personal, but public. Further, the act of coming “out” against occupation is an act of solidarity, one that connects those

who are “out” to those who live under occupation. The act of coming “out” and of aligning oneself in solidarity with another relies on the practice as well as the metaphor of movement. One moves from inside the closet to the outside, from apathy to solidarity, a movement of realignment towards and with another. In this thesis, I argue that movement – physical, metaphoric, symbolic and affective – plays a central role in the construction of possibilities for resistance and activism in the “Out Against the Occupation” events. Using movement as a theoretical and material framework for analyzing the contexts that set the stage for the events of the summer of 2006, I investigate the ways that solidarity, subjectivity and queer activism figured into a queer anti-war response to the 2006 Lebanon War.

In the chapters that follow, I will explore how a *queering* of movement disrupts imperialist tendencies in relations of movement, such as those of war and gay internationalism. I begin by examining the events that occurred during the summer of 2006, including World Pride Jerusalem, the OutGames in Montreal, and Queerupton Tel Aviv. In Chapter 1, I examine in further detail the content and context of the “Out Against the Occupation” events to analyze the role of queer movement as a way of thinking through the movement of queer politics, subjectivity, and solidarity. I draw on the work of José Muñoz and Sara Ahmed to discuss what role “queerness” has in the “Out Against the Occupation” events, and focus on the role of queer movement in shaping the contexts for the emergence of a queer anti-war response. In Chapter 2, I investigate how the politics of solidarity played a central role in framing the events and argue that solidarity functions as an important condition for the possibility of resistance. In Chapter 3, I explore the role of movement in shaping theoretical approaches to

queerness and solidarity. I argue for a model for rethinking activism through movement by exploring the role of queerness and the politics of solidarity through the mechanism of transversalism – which refers to the process of unfixing and shifting our orientation in movement to enable new forms of movement beyond unidirectionality.

III. Methods

Between May and July 2007, I conducted interviews with two organizers (Leila P. and Trish S.) and a performer (Osama, aka M.) of “Out Against the Occupation.” The purpose of the interviews was twofold. First, it was to obtain information otherwise unavailable on the “Out Against the Occupation” events, and second, it served to begin the process of analysis and interpretation of why and how the events emerged.

Throughout my project, I built on the language my three interview subjects used to interpret, frame, and analyze the events. In the interviews, I asked questions about their involvement in “Out Against the Occupation,” their opinions on the events, their roles within them, and how they understood the relationship between their own identities and activist work (see the Appendix for interview questions). I was interested in how their involvement in the events shaped the way they talk about their relationships to the event itself. I was also interested in using the interviews as a way to investigate how queer subjectivities emerge through modes of embodiment (such as gender, sexual orientation, and racialization) and politics of solidarity. Listening to the organizers’ description of their involvement with “Out Against the Occupation” helped me articulate an analysis of movement that I call “political path-making”: the process of building connections across locations through political and social movements. Political path-making traces the paths

made through political, migratory, activist and other types of physical movements across places. However, rather than focusing on the locations of origin or destination, political path-making instead focuses on the paths themselves as the location for new possibilities of social movements and relations. Here, the connection between places in the process of movement is emphasized. Visually, the network of paths can be viewed as a map (see figure 2 in the Appendix). We can think of the paths connecting across this map as constructing a terrain on which new approaches and modes of action and resistance can emerge. As a site for reading the map of political path-making, “Out Against the Occupation” provides a framework for investigating the complex connections made through migrancy, diasporic communities, queer communities, activism, and solidarity – all of which function to create paths of movements that form a map of possibility for the emergence of new modes of social engagement.

In addition to the interviews, I relied on the “Out Against the Occupation” ephemera (such as posters and announcements), and the websites of World Pride, Queerupton, the Coalition to Boycott World Pride Jerusalem 2006, the International Conference for the Advancement of GLBT Rights, Helem-Beirut, and Helem-Montreal to develop my analysis. Treating these sites as objects of analysis, I looked comparatively at concepts of queer identity and community, transnationalism, the politics of solidarity and responses to war as they were represented within the websites and ads, and examined through the critiques coming from my interview subjects. I drew on the following substantive bodies of theory to analyse both the content of these objects, and the underlying interpretive frameworks at play: queer theory, postcolonial theory, critical race studies, diaspora studies, and feminist theory. This detour through theory was

especially significant for my investigation into the role of movement in the emergence of “Out Against the Occupation.” My goal was to articulate how the relationship between queer subjectivity and activism relates to movement.

CHAPTER 1

“Queering” a Response to War

The term queer was largely used throughout the 20th century as a derogatory term to refer to gay men and homosexuals more generally (Jagose, 74). In the 1990s, a re-appropriation of the term “queer” emerged in response to debates around gay and lesbian identity invested in liberation models (76). Since the 1990s, queer theory has developed into a major area of critical theory, engaging with feminist theory, post-modernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism and critical race theory. According to Annamarie Jagose, the link between queer theory and poststructuralism is not incidental, as the former developed out of the latter through “a specifically lesbian and gay reworking of the poststructuralist figuring of identity as a constellation of multiple and unstable positions” (3).

Throughout this project, I juxtapose *queer* subjects and activism with those of LGBT groups in a move that attempts to distinguish between the naming of sexual desire as an identity (as is often the case in liberal inclusions of LGBT-identified people) and the complicated way that queer subjects resist the reification of categories of sexual identification. Jagose argues that “broadly speaking, queer describes those gestures or analytic models which dramatise incoherencies in the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire. Resisting that model of stability – which claims heterosexuality as its origin, when it is more properly its effect – queer focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire” (3). If we think of queer as the possibility for different, shifting and varying relations of gender, sex and desire, rather than as a descriptive model for sexual identity, then queerness stands as a location for resistance.

This distinction is important because it shifts the political focus away from concerns over representation and integration to questions of subversion, deconstruction, and destabilization.

In this chapter, I introduce the local and global contexts and events that played a part in the emergence of “Out Against the Occupation,” looking particularly at the way they relate to queerness and the war on Lebanon. I begin by distinguishing between two forms of queer movement. The first I call “gay internationalism,” which is a term I take from Joseph Massad. I locate World Pride, the OutGames, and Queeruption within the framework of gay internationalism. Next, I introduce another model of queer movement, one that I argue has the potential for mobilizing politics of resistance. I build this model through “Out Against the Occupation” and explore how “queer” as opposed to a LGBT response to war and occupation is significant. Finally I introduce a model of rethinking the role of movement through “queerness” and examine the performance of Osama bin Thuggin to argue for a model of resistance based in movement.

I. Queer movement

“Out Against the Occupation” and its surrounding events provide a rich site for investigation into numerous areas of social, political, cultural, and economic relations and frameworks. Before I started my research, I imagined that my analysis of these events would figure into a broader social and cultural framework. However, as I began to conceptualize the map of relations at play, my interest shifted to understanding how location and movement shape and are shaped by activism.

The question of queer movement provides a useful way for rethinking the

construction of communities (both local and transnational, i.e. across international locations) and the possibility for resistance and activism. Popular impressions of gay movements have been preoccupied with the movement of LGBT people located in repressive, homophobic, and “backwards” places (such as in the “Third World” or “Muslim World”) to the liberal, gay-friendly, and progressive locations in Western states (such as Canada, USA, and many parts of Western Europe).¹⁵ Strategic use of Western “gay liberation” politics have become useful as a bridge for LGBT refugee claimants to gain status in locations such as Canada. However, these strategies function, at best, to intervene in the failure of regular immigration policies; at worst, they function to obscure homophobia within Western states.

Instead, I would like to outline two main issues that fall under what I call “queer movement.” In the first instance, we have what we can call the movement of “gay internationalism,” which is a term I take from Joseph Massad (2007). This takes the form of international gay organizing (as seen with the OutGames and World Pride events, and to a different degree, Queeruption); gay tourism; and the application of gay human rights discourses throughout the world. In the second instance, we can look at queer movement as the physical and social movements of queer subjects through activism and transnational communities. Here, queer movement includes the spread of the Lebanese queer advocacy organization Helem to places such as Montreal, Paris, Sydney and San Francisco, and the travel of diasporic queer people to underground communities, both in their homelands and in other locations of social and political solidarity.

¹⁵ Common television and media representations of LGBT people from the Middle East focus on the sexual liberation Arabs and Muslims find in North America. For instance, in 2007 CBC aired a documentary called “Out in Iran” that looked at an Iranian gay man who moved to Canada because his life was threatened.

i. Gay internationalism

In Desiring Arabs, Joseph Massad argues that Western discourses around universal sexual human rights construct a sexual epistemology that is problematic in two ways. First, it erases the actual and varied ways in which same-sex desire functions by creating a singular framework for thinking through sexuality. Second, on a political level, the universal sexual human right is called upon as witness to the primitivism of “Third World” cultures, which in turn is used to justify first world military intervention in various places throughout the world, most notably in the Middle East and Arab or Muslim world. Massad further argues that the polarization of sexual human rights discourses compels an extremist Islamicist response to sexual rights as conservative leaders fight against the imposition of "universal" Western values on “Third World” cultures.

Central to Massad’s argument is that models of desire and sexuality are not universal, and that the Western model of the hetero-homo sexual binary does not exist historically in other locations and cultures (40). Massad’s main evidence for this is a major historical review of Arabic Literature dating back to the 16th century, where he demonstrates that while same-sex desire existed, it was in no way framed through the concept of homosexuality, and did not exclude heterosexual desire (30). Massad points in particular to sexual rights advocates in the West, such as US-based organizations like the International Lesbian and Gay Association (established in 1978) and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (established in 1991), for imposing a universal condition for sexual subjectivity.

The categories gay and lesbian are not universal at all and can only be

universalized by the epistemic, ethical, and political violence unleashed on the rest of the world by the very international human rights advocates whose aim is to defend the very people their intervention is creating. In doing so, the human rights advocates are not bringing about the inclusion of the homosexual in a new and redefined human subjectivity, but in fact are bringing about her and his exclusion from this redefined subjectivity altogether while simultaneously destroying existing subjectivities organized around other sets of binaries, including sexual ones. (41)

Massad calls this kind of sexual human rights project the “Gay International,” and argues that the project of gay internationalism works in a similar way to missionary projects (161). “In espousing this liberation project, however, the Gay International is destroying social and sexual configurations of desire in the interest of reproducing a world in its own image, one wherein its sexual categories and desires are safe from being questioned” (189). The irony of gay international human rights movements for Massad then, is that rather than creating more freedom for homosexuality by applying the Western model of gay identity onto a global scale, gay internationalism ends up reproducing sexual and gender binarism through the application of the Western framework of heterosexuality. Thus, the result of the gay international project, according to Massad, is a universal imposition of straight identity where no such discourse previously existed (190).

Massad’s critique of gay internationalism offers an important analytic framework for approaching international movements of gay pride and celebration. As I noted earlier, the “Out Against the Occupation” events emerged as a response to the inability of gay pride events and queer communities to articulate a link between sexual human rights and

an anti-war discourse. Since mainstream gay advocacy focuses on the rights of the individual, it should come as no surprise that these same advocates would be unable to articulate a concept of collective rights, or even solidarity across difference, given the framework of liberalism under which they function. However, it was not just liberal gay advocacy groups that failed to make the links between sexual rights and the effects of war; many queer communities also failed to make these links, even though they articulated a radical anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist perspective.

In her interview, M. (who performed the drag king Osama bin Thuggin' at the second "Out Against the Occupation" event) echoed a similar critique to that of Massad by pointing to the way the state of Israel, through World Pride, had effectively framed itself as the only "safe place" for LGBT people in the Middle East.

Often what happens in queer communities is a kind of gay imperialism. I think that people use liberalism around homosexuality to serve as a cover for colonial and imperial activities ... in particular around World Pride, people were saying how amazing it was that you could go to a place in the Middle East where homosexuality is accepted. This was not entirely true, because we saw what happened in one of the gay marches in Jerusalem, somebody got stabbed, and it was a Jewish person who committed that crime, even though the image of a rampantly homophobic Arab culture was used to counter this image of a liberal, open, anti-homophobic Israeli culture. World Pride was just used as another way to prop up and validate the Israeli state, at the expense of all Palestinians, but particularly queer Palestinians ... to have our identity associated with that kind of racism and

exclusion. I think the theme “Love Without Borders” was absolutely ridiculous in a climate where everything is negotiated through borders, absolutely everything; you can’t even go half a mile without crossing a check point. And borders in the sense of identity too ... the whole society, to me, is about borders, and I find as a queer person it is absolutely insulting that my sexuality would be used to justify a state that denies my existence on the grounds of ethnicity, and on the grounds of being indigenous to that land. So I think it’s important for queer communities to understand the way that discourse affects us as queer Arab people, as queer Iranian people, and queer people in countries that have been identified as part of the “axis of evil”.¹⁶

What M. points to in the linking of gay internationalism with state imperialism is the selective appropriation and use of sexual human rights. By pointing out that homophobic violence has also been perpetrated within the state of Israel, M. disrupts the image of Israel as the only safe haven for LGBT people in the Middle East. The ease with which states claim to be “safe” places for LGBT people should also raise suspicions, since states are rarely responsible for providing safety to queer subjects. Rather struggles against homophobic violence are always fought for at the grassroots level. This is an important point to make because while there is indeed a substantial amount of LGBT and queer organizing within Israel, discourses that claim it is the “only” place where people can be “out” obscures violence committed against LGBT people by Israelis, and ignores the substantive amount of work around sexual human rights in other places in the Middle

¹⁶ M. aka Osama, interviewed by author, Toronto, ON, June 6, 2007.

East, such as in Lebanon. M.'s critique also helps to disrupt the image of liberalism as free from homophobic and sexual violence, which is an important disruption to make, as Western, liberal-democratic states such as Canada and the US are not free of such violence.

Building on Massad's model of gay internationalism, and M.'s critiques of state appropriations of sexual human rights discourses, I would like to take a closer look at World Pride Jerusalem to better understand how discourses of sexual human rights fail when other forms of human rights are seen as dispensable.

World Pride Jerusalem

World Pride, which is coordinated by InterPride (the International Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Coordinators), was hosted for the first time in Rome in July 2000. The second World Pride event was hosted 6 years later in Jerusalem, from August 6th to 12th 2006. World Pride Jerusalem was organized by the Jerusalem Open House, a grassroots, activist organization for LGBT and allies in Israel. In October 2003, the Jerusalem Open House bid to host the second World Pride event in Jerusalem, Israel, which was initially scheduled for 2005, but was postponed and rescheduled for the summer of 2006.

From the outset, as a framework for international gay celebration, World Pride assumes a universal sexual subject. The concept of "world pride" suggests that people from across the world, first, identify with a Western model of sexual and gendered subjectivity as LGBT, and second, are both capable of and invested in international travel as sexual subjects. World Pride represents a kind of queer movement that is framed through gay internationalism. The celebration of LGBT identity in World Pride is

structured around the ability of Western sexual subjects to access international locations through travel. Thus, the movement that World Pride enables and calls upon is not a freedom of movement as a human right for all people, but instead a right for gay internationals or sexual subjects to move to other places and access LGBT spaces that meet Western standards of gay liberation.

Early criticism of World Pride Jerusalem was framed within the broader criticisms of Israel's occupation of Palestine and the international boycott and divestment movements. Calls to boycott World Pride Jerusalem emerged explicitly as part of the international boycott of Israel, and in particular, the boycott of travel to Israel. Even before the 2006 war broke out, queer activists had already begun to critique and resist World Pride through the Coalition to Boycott World Pride Jerusalem, which emerged out of a queer engagement with the already active international boycott of, and divestment from, Israel movement.¹⁷ Boycott debates around Israel had circulated for many years, especially as more and more individuals and groups made connections between South African apartheid and the treatment of Palestinians in Israel. However, following the launch of construction of the separation wall in 2002 and the International Court of Justice's decision in 2004 that such a wall was contrary to international law, in 2005 hundreds of Palestinian groups called for boycott, divestment and sanctions of Israel. For both the organizers of "Out Against the Occupation" and those involved in the Coalition to Boycott World Pride Jerusalem, the question of sexual liberation and celebration could not be detached from global discussions of human rights. A global conception of human rights requires examining the effects of war and occupation as well as globalization and

¹⁷ Groups like QUIT, Queers Undermining Israeli Terrorism, were actively involved in mobilizations against World Pride being hosted in Jerusalem.

imperialism, on the lives of queer people and non-queer people alike.

Boycotts provide an interesting model for resistance in the context of queer movement. They involve halting movement to and from the boycotted location, including stopping travel, importation, exportation, and other forms of circulation. To boycott gay travel to and from a location involves a boycotting of a certain kind of movement that is linked to gay internationalism; but it also suggests a different kind of queer movement, one that involves the strategic use of movement as an intervention into politics of resistance. While we might figure travel to World Pride as an obvious form of gay internationalism, travel to Queeruption, a radical queer gathering, raises other important questions about the role of queer movement, since Queeruption frames itself as a radical anti-capitalist event.

Queeruption Tel Aviv

Despite calls to boycott all travel to Israel, and particularly the campaign to Boycott World Pride Jerusalem, the organizers of Queeruption 2006 hosted its gathering in Tel Aviv, Israel from August 3rd to 13th 2006, coinciding with World Pride Jerusalem (see figure 1 in the Appendix). Although the organizers of Queeruption 2006 framed themselves and the Queeruption events as anti-occupation, they argued that organizing radical queer activities in Israel during World Pride was an important way to bring radical politics to the forefront during the depoliticized World Pride events, and bring to light “social issues such as the growing right-wing, neo-liberal economic system, the brutal exploitation of migrant workers, the huge scale of the traffic in women, etc.”

We are aware of the fact that for some people Israel, as a state that uses apartheid methods, is a target for boycott. We respect people's decision to

boycott. In fact, some of us support the campaign for boycotting Israeli goods and Israeli academic figures. Others among us believe boycotting Israel while both the UK and the US are themselves illegally occupying Iraq, and employing repressive methods in their war against terror, is a little hypocritical. But we all agree that visiting here can give people more information and a more rounded argument against Israel's colonialism.¹⁸

For Leila, one of the organizers of "Out Against the Occupation," the inability of Queeruption organizers, as radical queers, to properly respond to the disjuncture between queer activism and anti-occupation (and later anti-war) solidarity, was part of what drove her to organize "Out Against the Occupation."

What really upset me, was that I found out that Queeruption was also being held in Tel Aviv, as a response to the mainstream international pride event, and even within that, even though they were anti-occupation, and they had an anti-occupation stance, when there was an international call for a boycott of World Pride, they chose to ignore that and go ahead with Queeruption. They had some legitimate ways of thinking about it, reasons that I think made sense, but overall, I was pretty disappointed that even queer people who are supposed to be politicized and radical, and present themselves as such, couldn't make enough of the links that were so apparent to me, as a Middle Eastern queer person.¹⁹

The debate around whether or not to boycott Queeruption Tel Aviv demonstrates tensions

¹⁸ http://www.queeruption.org/q2006/faq_en.html#Why_boycott_Queeruption_Tel-Aviv [Last viewed: May 20, 2008]

¹⁹ Leila P., interviewed by author, Montreal, QC, May 24, 2007.

in the possibility of resistance in queer movements. While the organizers of Queeruption obviously maintain criticisms of World Pride along the same lines as criticisms of gay internationalism, a disjunction occurs between those queer subjects traveling to the state of Israel for Queeruption, and LGBT people traveling to World Pride. As Queeruption maintains a stance of resistance to colonialism and capitalism, it also invites queer subjects to move in similar ways that gay internationals move, to attend the Queeruption events. This disjuncture echoes Leila's frustrations with Queeruption's failure to make links between queer struggles and anti-war struggles given Queeruption's claim of radical anti-imperialist politics. In articulating these frustrations, Leila points to the way her location as a queer Middle Eastern person forms a perspective of analysis, or standpoint, that enables her to make links between war and queer activism in a context where other queer activists are unable to make these same connections. Leila's statement demonstrates that a radical politics is not enough in articulating a queer response to war. Instead, her statement suggests that we need to couple a radical queer politics with a perspective that emerges from situated knowledge to be able to make the connections between experiences as a Middle Eastern and queer person, and between radical queer activism and anti-war activism.

The failure of Queeruption Tel Aviv to make the connections between Middle Eastern or Arab subjectivities and queer subjectivity in the decision to host the gathering in Israel also plays out in their promotional material. In their guidelines for Queeruption participants on entering into Israel and passing through security checks, the organizers of Queeruption suggest the following:

You don't know what is ISM²⁰ and have no contacts to anything called ISM. Not knowing what "Queeruption" is might be also necessary.

Don't mention names of Palestinians you know.

It's better if you won't have any evidence in your passport of a former visit to a country that Israel might see as an enemy state. In case you do have a stamp of one of these countries we suggest you get a new passport before coming.

Don't enter Israel with any kind of radical-political material in your bags. Even a Kaffia (the Palestinian scarf) can cause some problems. Don't have any names of Israeli or international peace activists in your phonebook or address book, and of course no Arab names. You should save all of the important information in your email and get it out when you are in Israel.²¹

While these guidelines are quite practical and realistic given the context of security measure taken in Israel at border crossings, they demonstrate the inaccessibility of Queeruption for a significant group of people who were likely to experience difficulty entering. The suggestion that participants should not have "Arab names" in their phonebooks assumes that the travelers would not themselves have Arab names, or come from Arab countries, or even be Palestinian. Further, expecting participants to pretend that they don't know about groups like ISM assumes that radical queers would not already be members of groups like ISM. Overall, these guidelines failed to provide

²⁰ ISM (International Solidarity Movement) is a Palestinian-led resistance movement to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian that uses nonviolent, direct-action methods and principles

²¹ http://www.queeruption.org/q2006/faq_en.html#Guidelines_in_case_you_are_being_questioned [Last viewed: May 20, 2008]

effective advice for people who *are* involved with anti-occupation activism, or who have Arab names, to better manoeuvre the interrogation process. Leila's frustration with Queeruption for what is so apparent to her as a Middle Eastern queer person is quite poignant given these details that the organizers of Queeruption failed to provide. Instead, the participants of Queeruption are assumed to be non-Arab/Middle Eastern queers – the very same subjects of gay internationalism.

ii. Queer movement and the possibility of resistance

After the war broke out, calls for boycott and criticisms of World Pride Jerusalem increased as the organizers of World Pride continued with the scheduled pride events, despite the fact that Israel was in the midst of a war on Lebanon. The decision of World Pride Jerusalem to postpone the Pride Parade, which was initially scheduled to be held on August 10th, and replace it with an anti-homophobic violence protest, provides a useful way to interrogate the contradictions between pride, human rights, and violence. In their interviews, both Leila and Trish (the organizers of “Out Against the Occupation”) pointed to the problematic slippage that World Pride organizers made in translating an anti-war response into an action against homophobic violence. While the linkage of homophobic violence to war can provide useful ways of interrogating relations of violence through systemic social structures, the elision between the violence of war and the violence of homophobia foreclosed an analysis of the relationship between these two forms of systemic violence.

World Pride had an opportunity on August 10th to interrupt the language of pride and celebration by bringing to the forefront resistance to violence. However it failed to do so by disconnecting homophobia from war, and shifting the conversation away from

any criticism of war to an isolated perspective of homophobic violence. The slip from an anti-war to an anti-homophobic violence response also enabled the erasure of homophobia from state violence, from war, and disconnected anti-violence and human rights struggles from each other by turning the focus away from a broader analysis of the effects of violence, a connection that M. pointed to explicitly in her interview:

If we're going to talk about gay human rights, then what we're really talking about is patriarchy, poverty, globalization, and how economies are becoming eroded, and how this influences gender relations within families, and how gender relations influence people's attitudes on homosexuality. We have to talk about the war on terror and how people perceive that as a war on Islam, and then people develop reactionary responses and use queer people and women as scapegoats. That's what a human rights framework of queer liberation would look like for me. Capitalism and imperialism have influenced queer identity. Gay identity is still very much a middle-class identity, since few people have access to that language.²²

Here M. provides us with a useful way of reconceptualizing a sexual human rights outside of gay internationalism, and counter to a queer-elitism that expects to be able to move and travel as part of their sexual rights, instead of a human right. By pointing to the role of globalization, war and imperialism in the construction and manifestation of homophobia, M. suggests that we can talk about sexual human rights in a way that challenges the universalizing moment of "gay" identity. By linking issues of sexual-

²² M. aka Osama, interviewed by author, Toronto, ON, June 6, 2007.

violence and homophobia to those of patriarchy, imperialism, and globalization, M. argues that we need to address issues of a sexual human right by taking a critical position on occupation, war, poverty, and capitalism.

M.'s suggestion for a new kind of sexual human right, which I will call a queer human rights discourse, can help explain and locate the second major criticism of World Pride Jerusalem, which emerged from anti-imperialist critiques of state appropriations of human rights discourses. For Trish, part of the need to organize "Out Against the Occupation" came from the fact that "World pride was happening in Jerusalem in a way that was exploitative and politically damaging, and gained political capital through a certain enlisting of queer identity to Israeli state purposes."²³ What Trish points to here is the way state violence is masked by the co-opting of sexual human rights in the representation of Israel as the only safe-place for queers east of Europe. For Leila, exposing the myth of liberal democracy and addressing the realities of state violence was an essential component of "Out Against the Occupation." Therefore, during the second event, Leila brought in a speaker from ASWAT, a Palestinian Gay Women's group, who talked about "the reality of Arab GLBT and queer folks who are living in Israel, and how their lives were far from the romanticized notion of this liberated democratic state, and that in fact, they face so much racism as Palestinians, that that trumped any access to rights they had as GLBT."²⁴ The ASWAT speaker discussed the way state and military institutions use Palestinian and Arab GLBT people living in Israel as spies, and explained how Palestinian GLBT migrants in Israel end up working as sex workers, often unable to live in the same city as their partners.

²³ Trish S., interviewed by author, Montreal, QC, June 21, 2007.

²⁴ Leila P., interviewed by author, Montreal, QC, May 24, 2007.

In the section that follows, I examine the “Out Against the Occupation” events as a site that demonstrates a model of queer human rights through what I call transversal queer movement. I also examine the significance of what it means to have a “queer” anti-war response, what makes it “queer,” and how “queerness” is mobilized to articulate a form of critical resistance.

The “Out Against the Occupation” events²⁵

The first “Out Against the Occupation” event was hosted on August 10, 2006. Leila P. and Trish S. both noted how the organizing of the first event was rushed, since they felt it was important to open up a forum for looking critically at the context of war, occupation and pride while the need for solidarity and relief efforts were at their peak. The first event took place at Café Esperanza (now le Cagibi), a café/restaurant and venue unofficially recognized as a queer space located in Montreal’s Mile-End neighbourhood. The significance of location for the two events reflects the contexts through which each installment of Out Against the Occupation was organized, and who it targeted and included. Café Esperanza, being a smaller venue, and through its reputation as a queer space, points to the particular intervention into queer community and discourse, while Club Lambi, located in the Plateau, is not commonly thought of as a “queer” space, but is rather seen as a low-cost venue for activist and small-scale events/shows. The second event, held on August 30th at Club Lambi, and cosponsored by Tadamon!²⁶, involved more extensive planning, and included a broader program and outreach. While the first

²⁵ The audience and advertisement of both events were primarily focused on the English-speaking activist community in Montreal; and the scope of both events was quite small, though the second event was in a larger venue and had a larger audience than the first. Similarly, the advertisements for both events were quite simple, with Leila P. doing the design work for the posters. Visually, the posters evoke a relation to the Middle East through the images of a Persian rug for the first event, and the frame of a Persian floral design for the second event (see Appendix).

²⁶ Tadamon! is a Lebanese solidarity organization based in Montreal

event targeted queer communities in particular, the second event sought to include a broader audience interested in queer, anti-war and anti-occupation activism.

In organizing the first event, Leila and Trish wanted to intervene into the queer community's response to the war, and to occupation more broadly. They accomplished this through a screening of the film "Zero Degrees of Separation," a discussion session, and a call for solidarity with The Coalition to Boycott World Pride Jerusalem 2006.

Trish did this really amazing presentation on the World Pride organization, and then I [Leila] focused more on Queeruption. So we did these presentations that started a dialogue, and then we screened a film called "Zero Degrees of Separation,"²⁷ which wasn't necessarily the most politically charged film about this specific issue, but because it was so fast, we had a really hard time finding stuff that addressed GLBT issues from a Middle Eastern perspective, on such short notice.²⁸

The first event primarily called on members of the queer and Trans²⁹ communities and allies to engage in a critical discussion of war, occupation and gay pride during a period of time when mainstream queer communities were not making these connections. These were connections that were particularly important for the organizers to make given the context of the GLBT organizing that summer – with the OutGames, its International Conference, and Divers/Cité preceding the first event, and World Pride and Queeruption happening concurrently.

At the second event, which was organized as a fundraiser for the Sanayeh Relief

²⁷ "Zero Degrees of Separation" is a Canadian documentary filmed in Israel and Palestine, documenting the relationships of two couples, where one partner is Israeli and the other is Palestinian.

²⁸ Leila P., interviewed by author, Montreal, QC, May 24, 2007.

²⁹ Trans commonly refers to transgendered and/or transsexual communities

Centre, focus shifted from dialogue for queer members of the community to the importance of solidarity, by making links between queer and anti-war/occupation organizing. For Leila, organizing the first “Out Against the Occupation” event opened up more questions about the role of queer resistance to war and occupation, especially given the types of homophobic and racist responses she received over email following the first event. “Through doing the first event, and looking at what was out there, I came across all this other stuff, and so we decided to do a second event. The second event was less focused on World Pride, and was more focused on GLBT and queer issues that related to the Palestinian struggle, Helem in Beirut, and the way Israel has been using Arab GLBT struggle as a way to legitimize itself.”³⁰

The “queerness” of “Out Against the Occupation” is significant in two ways. First, given the lack of response that World Pride, the OutGames, and Queerupton, had to the 2006 Lebanon War, anti-war, anti-imperial, and anti-occupation politics were not being articulated by other queer communities in Montreal. “Out Against the Occupation” intervened into the depoliticization of queer communities, but it also articulated a movement between politics and subjectivity by claiming that we cannot separate queerness, identity and subjectivity from anti-imperial, anti-war and anti-occupation politics. Second, “Out Against the Occupation” drew on the unfixed and shifting nature of queerness to enact a queer movement in the act of resisting war and occupation. This movement enabled a radical queer perspective to translate across locations – between Montreal and Lebanon, but also across differences – by holding a queer event as a fundraiser for the Sanayeh Relief Centre.

³⁰ Leila P., interviewed by author, Montreal, QC, May 24, 2007.

II. Queer movement as transversal

Sara Ahmed, in “Queer Phenomenology” states that “queer is, [...] a spatial term, which then gets translated into a sexual term, a term for a twisted sexuality that does not follow a ‘straight line’” (67). Here, Ahmed points us to the way queer refers to the orientation or alignment towards other objects. The locality and orientation of “queer” therefore requires a relation of movement between the subject and object of desire that is “not straight”. I would like to introduce the idea of a “queer movement” or “queering” of movement as a form of transversal movement. While I explore transversalism in greater detail in the final chapter of my thesis, I introduce the concept here so that I can begin to work through its implications for “Out Against the Occupation.” The transversal is a non-hierarchical, non-linear mechanism or process of movement that resists the fixing of location and paths of travel. Transversalism describes a way of thinking about movement by rethinking the way subjects come to orient themselves and travel. The transversal is shifting, and thus it enables the queering of orientation through a non-linear movement of desire. This moment of queered orientation allows us to make connections beyond the linearity of regular movement.

I would like to frame gay internationalism and LGBT identity into the kinds of fixed movements that prevent a translation of sexual human rights into queer human rights, in order to juxtapose these kinds of movements against the type of movement that “Out Against the Occupation” figures. When identity and sexuality are fixed into one relation – that of male-to-male desire, or female-to-female desire, the relation of desire is fixed into a straight, though different and opposing, direction. This framework does not enable the fluidity necessary for movement to travel in non-unidimensional ways. “Out

Against the Occupation” on the other hand, functions through a queer transversal movement, one that not only enables but also facilitates the shifting of orientation away from linearity. Queerness resists direction in any “straight” sense. Instead, queerness runs along the transversal lines that emerge through the shifting of direction shaped by politics, subjectivity and contexts. The transversal facilitates a way of thinking about movement through the subjectivity of queer positions and orientations, while also enabling the connections to various other forms of subjectivities, such as those under war and occupation. Because of the queerness of “Out Against the Occupation,” and the subjectivities of its organizers as Middle Eastern and local activists, the events were able to perform the transversal queer movement of linking queerness to anti-war and anti-occupation resistance. In the following section, I argue that the radical drag performance of Osama bin Thuggin’ at the second “Out Against the Occupation’ event particularly embodies the relation of transversal queer movement that I outline above.

Queer performance and Osama bin Thuggin’

M. refers to her character, Osama bin Thuggin’, as a *Palestinian* drag king, a distinction that she feels is important as she pays homage to the influence of hip hop culture and its discourses of resistance in shaping her approach as Palestinian.

There’s no visibility for Arab and Muslim people who fall outside of the image of being conservative and sexually repressed. I feel like Arab and Muslim people never get to define their sexuality for themselves, it’s always defined as a threat in some way to Western liberalism. In colonial times they were too sexually promiscuous, and now we’re too sexually repressed. Arab women’s sexualities aren’t even on the radar. Men of

colour are seen as hyper-masculinized and eroticized in a way that is seen as threatening, which is racist. To take the most famous Arab man in the world and do this gender-bending play of sexuality was both fun and something people were responsive to. It's [gender is] all performance that we've built up, and then people perform it because it's profitable, because they feel expected to, because it's passed down from one generation to another.³¹

For José Muñoz, the act of performing drag is a process of disidentification "that surpasses simple fetishization.... making them rich antinormative treasure troves of queer possibility" (x). Further, "the process of disidentification scrambles and reconstructs the encoded message of a cultural text in a fashion that both exposes the encoded message's universalizing and exclusionary machinations and recircuits its workings to account for, include, and empower minority identities and identifications" (31). The act of performing drag as Osama bin Thuggin' enables M. to disrupt relations of gender, racialization and sexuality by queering not only gender, but constructions of Arab masculinity that are circulated and called upon to act as villains in imperial projects in the Middle East. Taking the quintessential "evil Arab man," Osama bin Laden, M. disrupts the repetition of the image by disidentifying it and reconstructing it through the discourses of solidarity with hip hop and black resistance culture, and anti-imperial lyrics from Lupe Fiasco's "American Terrorist" and Palestinian-American hip-hop artist Iron Sheik's "Neocon Love" parody love song directed at Condoleezza Rice and Dick Cheney.

According to Muñoz, "disidentification is about cultural, material, and psychic

³¹ M. aka Osama, interviewed by author, Toronto, ON, June 6, 2007.

survival. It is a response to state and global power apparatuses that employ systems of racial, sexual, and national subjugation” (161). Osama bin Thuggin’ offers a performance that disrupts everyday implications of imperialism, colonialism, gender binarism, globalisation and nationalism. In this way, M.’s performance reveals new ways that social relations of resistance can emerge. M.’s location in queer, Palestinian and diasporic subjectivities enable and facilitate the moment for transversal queer movement. What Muñoz refers to as the process of disidentification is only made possible by the non-linear, transversal movement between spaces, politics and subjectivities. M. locates her own experiences of performing Osama bin Thuggin’ in the field of queered, gendered, racialized, and occupied subjectivities. Thus, her performance requires movement between these various subjectivities in order to articulate a politics of solidarity and resistance through her drag performance. For Muñoz, these performances “circulate in subcultural circuits and strive to envision and activate new social relations. These new social relations would be the blueprint for minoritarian counterpublic spheres” (5), and we can think of “Out Against the Occupation” as an example of one such counterpublic.

We can distinguish the types of drag performances that likely make up the World Pride events from the radical drag performance of Osama bin Thuggin’ by returning to the question I posed of gay internationalism. According to Muñoz, “commercial drag presents a sanitized and desexualized queer subject for mass consumption. Such drag represents a certain strand of integrationist liberal pluralism” (99). The political potential of this type of commercial drag, Muñoz argues, at best leads to a liberal tolerance rather than actual changes at the legislative or broader problem of homophobic violence. Here

we can revisit criticisms of gay internationalism and World Pride by juxtaposing how “Out Against the Occupation” responded to violence through anti-war and anti-occupation organizing. Where World Pride failed to respond to the links between state violence and homophobia, “Out Against the Occupation” succeeded in articulating a resistance to violence, rather than simply a celebration of sexual liberation.

Possibilities for Queer Movement

Transversal queer movement enables the articulation of a queer human rights rather than sexual/gay human rights. Queer human rights relies on the linkages and inseparability of the structures that limit and violate all rights, and recognize that sexual rights are meaningless if other rights do not come hand in hand. World Pride and the International Conference at the OutGames were both incapable of articulating of language of resistance to war because the framework of gay internationalism and sexual human rights is unidimensional. As a framework for organizing, it can only see itself in one dimension – through sexuality – and thus it is incapable of seeing how war and homophobia might be linked, or how queers who are victims of war and occupation are not reflected in the discourse of sexual human rights. It lacks the subjectivity of situated knowledge and queerness that enable a transversal movement to articulate a politics of resistance. “Out Against the Occupation” represents that moment where effective intervention into queer spaces and queer subjectivities are able to make the links between subjugated communities and subjectivities.

What is most promising in “Out Against the Occupation” is the possibility of creating new relations of transnational queer discourses that can mobilize around issues

of war and imperialism, while at the same time avoiding a gay humanism that codifies desire within a homo-hetero binary that Massad argues is part of the imperial projects of the 'Gay International'. Further, "Out Against the Occupation" provides a space for the emergence of embodied relations of queer transversalim, such as with the drag performance of Osama bin Thuggin'.

In the following chapter I examine the role of solidarity in "Out Against the Occupation". I expand on the role of solidarity and subjectivity to analyze how "Out Against the Occupation" is a site that introduces an important intervention into queer, anti-war and anti-occupation resistance and activism.

CHAPTER 2

Rethinking Solidarity

“Lebanon was being bombed and it didn’t matter who we were fucking”

- M. aka Osama bin Thuggin’

Just a few days prior to the Divers/Cité festival in Montreal, the International Conference for the Advancement of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Rights, “The Right to be Different” (July 26th -29th, 2006) was held, which were preceded by the first world OutGames (July 29th to August 5th, 2006). Trish, who attended the International Conference through her involvement in the labour movement - and spoke on a panel about Trans organizing in Canada - approached the organizing of “Out Against the Occupation” through her critique of the conference. Her criticisms of the OutGames’ conference, and the contradictions between LGBT rights as human rights in the context of war, emerged out of a plenary session that she attended, called “Focus on Africa and the Arab World”. A member of Helem-Beirut who was originally scheduled to attend the conference, but was unable to do so because of the Israeli blockades during the war, sent the organizers of the conference a video statement that she produced to replace her participation on the panel.

The statement drew attention to the atrocities being committed in Lebanon by the Israeli military, and urged the international LGBT community to express its solidarity with its brothers and sisters in Lebanon and Palestine by boycotting this year's World Pride event in Jerusalem. It also drew attention to the bind that Helem (indeed, any social justice movement in the region) finds itself in: struggling against oppressive governments at

home on the one hand and resisting the pull of neo-colonialist agendas that attempt to co-opt human rights causes to justify their ends on the other effectively neutralizes the voices of groups who wish to see genuine, sustainable social and political change.³²

Trish and Leila discussed what had happened at the International Conference for the OutGames when they met to plan the first “Out Against the Occupation” event. The video statement had had a profound effect on the participants of the session at the conference, who were touched and moved by the Helem-Beirut member’s words, to the extent that there was a debate and resolution by the participants of the Worker’s Out! section of the conference to condemn the war. However, when the resolution was brought to the conference organizers, the organizers refused the resolution, claiming that the conference was not a place for political organizing, and that they represented LGBT rights. The events at the International Conference for the Advancement of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Rights demonstrates the disjuncture between international discourses around human rights, and the application of human rights as they affect all people. What the Helem-Beirut statement attempted to do was apply the discourse of human rights to the context of war, and the effects that war has on queer peoples and communities. Though the members of the Worker’s Out! plenary were able to make these links as well, and attempted to engage in a queer human rights discourse, the conference organizers were incapable of applying the language of human rights outside of a purely LGBT context.

The story of what happened at the International Conference was quite similar to

³² Statement on the video found on the Helem website: <http://helem.net/news.zn?id=45> [Last viewed: May 20, 2008]

what happened with World Pride Jerusalem. In both cases, the discourses of rights and sexual rights in particular, failed to connect the rights of all humans and the rights of LGBT/gay internationals. In the previous chapter, I argued that queerness and queer movement distinguished “Out Against the Occupation” from events for queer subjects. However, while “Out Against the Occupation” can be understood as a queer event, it was not exclusively for queer subjects; rather, the events provided a queer response to the war and local and international pride events. The distinction between an event for queer subjects and a queer response is significant for two reasons. First, hosting an event that is not just for queer subjects shifts focus from issues of identity to those of political belonging. In this way, the queerness of the “Out Against the Occupation” events is not so much about queer subjects as it is about a queer political analysis and framework. Second, the framing of the event as a political response enabled “Out Against the Occupation” to be open to, and include, diverse peoples and groups from various other perspectives who might not normally situate themselves in queer spaces. This distinction is especially important given the role that Tadamon!, the Lebanese solidarity organization, played in co-sponsoring the second “Out Against the Occupation” event. “Tadamon! (Solidarity!, in Arabic) is a Montreal-based collective of social-justice organizers & media activists, working to build relationships of solidarity with grassroots political movements for social and economic justice between Beirut & Montreal.”³³ As a solidarity group, Tadamon! was already oriented towards working with other interest groups around issues of common political concern, so it was not a far jump for members of Tadamon! to help organize the second “Out Against the Occupation” event. Further, the ability of the “Out Against the Occupation” organizers to work with solidarity groups

³³ <http://tadamon.resist.ca/index.php/> [Last viewed: June 29, 2008]

that did not explicitly organize around queer issues points to the importance of the role that solidarity played in the events.

In this chapter, I examine how solidarity functioned in the “Out Against the Occupation” events beyond simply the gesture of fundraising for relief efforts in Lebanon. Instead, I argue that we must rethink the role of solidarity as a necessary condition for the possibility of “Out Against the Occupation” and queer anti-war responses. I begin by defining solidarity as both a theoretical concept and as an activist practice to construct a model of solidarity that acts as both an approach and a way of being in relations of resistance and activism. I then explore the relationship between community and solidarity, and examine instances when solidarity fails, such as in the case of Helem-Montreal. I conclude by arguing for a model of solidarity, drawing on the work of “Out Against the Occupation” and Helem-Beirut’s involvement in the Sanayeh Relief Centre to inform a model of solidarity.

I. Defining solidarity

The concept of solidarity has been severely under theorized given the vast amount of work that focuses on social movements, postcolonialism, critical race theory, feminism, and other areas of inquiry related to issues of social justice. This absence is ironic given the extensive use of the concept of solidarity in everyday activism and the frequent circulation of solidarity as a central framework for organizing in grassroots activist movements. Academic and intellectual work around the concept of solidarity have largely focused on Marxism and labour movements, which is perhaps a consequence of the popularization of the term by these very movements. In his book The Ends of

Solidarity, Max Pensky argues that during the Enlightenment, solidarity arose through the notion of the civic ideal of fraternity, and then came to be understood as “a strong bonding between members of subordinated groups in a condition of sociopolitical asymmetry” (3) during the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century. Pensky ends his trajectory of solidarity through Marx in socialism (7),³⁴ however, the story of solidarity does not finish with socialism. Although labour unions and movements continue to use solidarity as a central framework today, at some point in the circulation of the word during the twentieth-century, solidarity was appropriated by other forms of activism and came to be used by non-labour activists. I can only speculate when and why this shift occurred, since tracing the history of solidarity is a project too vast for me to investigate in this thesis, and is a project I will have to endeavour in my future research. Instead, in this section I investigate how we might define the form of solidarity that is expressed in “Out Against the Occupation.” I do so by first defining solidarity and then locating it within relations of social movements and activism.

The word solidarity can be traced back to the Enlightenment, and comes from the French word *solidarité* or *solidaire*, which means interdependent. “Solidarity refers, first and foremost, to the status of *intersubjectivity*, in which a number of persons are *bound* together, whether by the facts of their existing needs or their interpretations of their own interests, into definite *relations*” (Pensky, 9).³⁵ To be in solidarity is to be unified or connected across different, or common, interests. In its basic sense, solidarity refers to a mode of relations and describes how we come to connect across differences. However, I would like to problematize Pensky’s definition of solidarity for two reasons.

³⁴ The focus of Pensky’s book is on the role of solidarity as a central thread in Habermas’ work and discourse theory.

³⁵ Original emphasis

First, though the act of coming into solidarity may indeed bind people together, the characteristic of being bound is not a pre-condition for solidarity, rather, it is solidarity's effect. Second, Pensky's definition might easily be read to suggest that all relations between individuals function through solidarity. I argue against this reading, since concepts such as relationships, cooperation, and collaboration are all well suited to describe intersubjectivity. Instead, I argue that solidarity is an especially important concept to distinguish because of its investment in social and political change. According to Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "solidarity is always an achievement, the result of active struggle to construct the universal on the basis of particulars/differences" (7). This quality of struggle is at the very root of what solidarity stands for. Therefore, I propose that we define solidarity as rooted in activism and resistance, as both a mechanism and process for joining together various individuals, groups and interests in struggles against injustice. This definition of solidarity will prove to be more useful in understanding how "Out Against the Occupation" emerged and functioned the way it did, and also provides a useful way for rethinking what role solidarity can take in other movements of resistance.

The language of solidarity and the connections between struggles – between queer resistance, occupation, war, and other struggles against colonialism, capitalism and imperialism – were central to the content of the second "Out Against the Occupation" event. Though the timeframe of the second event placed it a few weeks following the end of the war and gay pride events, its focus on solidarity suggests a longer-term goal of developing and maintaining links across interests and issues. Nayrouz, a member of ASWAT (a Palestinian Gay Women's Group) was invited to speak about the contexts of queer Arab and Palestinian experiences living in Palestine and Israel, and resisting

occupation; Trish, one of the organizers, gave a poetry reading of some of her work; there was a radical drag performance by Osama bin Thuggin, who lip-synched to anti-imperialist hip hop; and a video screening of the statement shown at the OutGames' International Conference from Helem-Beirut. The night's events were followed by DJing by local Montreal DJs, who mixed hip hop with Arab pop music throughout the night. This second "Out Against the Occupation" event represents the role of resistance and struggle in the building of solidarity. The diversity of presentations and participants at the event demonstrate the articulation of universal rights, such as freedom from war and occupation, and freedom from homophobic violence, while at the same time respecting the plurality of voices, perspectives and interests.

II. The role of community in solidarity

For Trish, the conjunction of queer identity, mainstream and corporatized queer events, affiliations with the Middle East and solidarity through an anti-imperial, anti-war, and anti-occupation politics enabled the emergence of a particular queer/anti-war response in the moment of war and gay celebrations.³⁶ These conditions informed the organizers of "Out Against the Occupation," and enabled them to articulate an intervention into mainstream queer communities both locally (e.g. Divers/Cité) and internationally (e.g. World Pride), without laying claim to an alternative "truth" of queer identity or authentic community. Instead, the organizers interrupted the homogenization of queer community by speaking to the conditions of war in the context of gay pride. In this section, I argue that "Out Against the Occupation" both refused and constructed community. I make this claim by distinguishing between two types of communities –

³⁶ Trish S., interviewed by author, Montreal, QC, June 21, 2007.

those based on essential or homogenous membership, and those constructed through solidarity.

I would like to call communities that are formed exclusively through categorizations of identification, exclusion, essentialism, and hegemonic power relations, homogenous communities. To call any community homogenous erases the differences and diversity of individuals who are members of that community, and while it is not my intention to perform the violence of erasure of difference, hegemonic relations do a good job of punishing those who do not conform to homogeneity on a daily basis. Indeed, queer communities largely arose through the need to find spaces free from the violence of hetero- and gender-normativity. According to Jenny Burman, “generalizations make communities internally homogeneous, in spite of members' articulations of differentiation and multiple identifications” (107). My point here, however, is not to argue that communities are inherently, or always, homogenous or violent, but to articulate a way of thinking of community beyond the idyllic way it is often ascribed in grassroots activism. The reason I make this distinction is because “Out Against the Occupation” itself responds and refuses the homogenization of queer community. According to Ahmed and Fortier

the refusal of community can also be the refusal of community as resolution. Rather than seeing the refusal of narratives of unity and togetherness as a symptom of the failure to achieve community - a failure that is taken up as a signal to call for the urgency of community - we can consider it a cogent critique of the violent modes of ascription, conscription and erasure perpetrated in the name of community. (256)

If “Out Against the Occupation” acts as a response to the disjuncture between queer identity and anti-war politics, then what these events are actually refusing is the reification of identity and identity-based-communities in favour of communities based on solidarity. It is important to note that “Out Against the Occupation” was not framed as a gay-Arab response to war, but rather was informed by queer and diasporic subjectivities. The events both drew on and included a variety of non-queer and non-diasporic activists, whose shared community was based on relations of politics and solidarity rather than identity. Thus, solidarity influences the way communities function, and shapes the way they are structured.

In her work on the use of the Internet in anti-globalization activism, Natalie Fenton argues that solidarity is a necessary condition for mediating social movements through new communication technologies. For Fenton,

social solidarity can be described as a morality of cooperation, the ability of individuals to identify with each other in a spirit of mutuality and reciprocity without individual advantage or compulsion, leading to a network of individuals or secondary institutions that are bound to a political project involving the creation of social and political bonds. (49)

Fenton’s focus on the role of cooperation and the construction of networks in solidarity points to the importance of communities and community building. I would like to distinguish community from solidarity, however, since at first glance it might appear that the two are mutually inclusive. While community building often relies on relations of solidarity, not all communities emerge through solidarity. In models of homogenous communities, there is no real need for solidarity to connect individuals to each other, as

membership is based on some form of shared characteristic. For instance, I would argue that members of a church or sports team do not require solidarity, as their involvement and cooperation are based on group membership rather than through shared struggles. Solidarity becomes a necessary condition for community building, however, once we encounter groups that are diverse, fragmented and polycentric. The construction of social and political communities in these cases requires solidarity in order to build connections across locations, perspectives, and standpoints. In this case, solidarity is the mechanism that links those who might not normally be linked together through shared struggles or interests. Fenton herself argues that multiplicity and polycentricity (40) require solidarity in order to create viable political communities (39). This approach to solidarity is particularly relevant to current work on what some call cosmopolitanism or transnationalism (much of this work focuses on places and spaces of urban centers composed largely of migrants). Concerns over how solidarity can function across differences are also important for thinking through broader social movements, such as feminism.

For Mohanty, solidarity provides a useful strategy for rethinking how feminism can work across differences within a global context. Mohanty uses solidarity as an alternative to the popular feminist approach of global sisterhood (193), and suggests that we base solidarity on “common differences” (225). The notion of common differences offers a productive way for rethinking how we come together in solidarity, since common *differences* are not oppositional to common *interests*. Instead, common differences asks us to rethink what joins us in shared struggle by focusing on the effects of injustice rather than a particular goal. In doing so, Mohanty provides us with a new way of thinking

solidarity through a model of struggle rather than goals. Here, the process of struggle in solidarity is emphasized over particular end-goals of liberation and freedom. Though to be clear, I am not arguing against goal-based organizing. Rather, I am claiming that goal-based organizing needs to be defined through the language of coalitions, rather than solidarity. Although solidarity and coalitions are very much linked as concepts, there is a distinction that I will make clear between the two at the end of this chapter. Here, my emphasis on solidarity focuses on “mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities. Rather than assuming an enforced commonality of oppression, the practice of solidarity foregrounds communities of people who have chosen to work and fight together. Diversity and difference are central values here” (Mohanty, 7). Through Mohanty’s approach, therefore, solidarity comes to define how diverse communities come together over shared struggles and provides a basis for non-homogenous communities.

While models of community built through solidarity offer a framework that is multiple, fragmented, and diverse rather than homogenous, community alone cannot act as the necessary or defining factor for solidarity. Queer community groups such as Helem-Montreal demonstrate the shortcomings of community’s ability to respond to injustices through solidarity. Helem-Montreal is one of the five chapters of the Beirut LGBT rights organization, Helem.³⁷ Helem’s primary purpose is advocacy and health awareness initiatives for LGBT people living in Lebanon, however its chapters located in Montreal, San Francisco, Sydney and Paris function autonomously of Helem-Beirut. Though each Helem chapter functions differently from the others, the Helem-Montreal

³⁷ Helem is both the Arabic word for *dream* and stands for the Arabic acronym “Lebanese Protection for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders” <http://helem.net> [Last viewed: April 25, 2008]

chapter's initial mission was to provide support for Helem-Beirut, particularly through fund-raising efforts.

During our interview, Trish framed the organizing and sponsorship of “Out Against the Occupation” through the sustained links that exist between groups like Helem, Tadamon!, and QPIRG. These links include those that are built through the individuals who participate and work with various groups, as well as organizational links made through regular communication between organizers, the practice of co-sponsoring events, the financial and resource support that organizations like QPIRG share with smaller groups, and the unavoidable encounters that come from organizing and participating in activism in Montreal. Trish explained the involvement of other groups in the organizing of “Out Against the Occupation” through these links, and points to shared politics as the grounds for solidarity. For Trish, the possibility of links between the various local groups, such as QPIRG and Helem-Montreal, remains constant, even though they are not regularly exercised. According to Trish, however, QPIRG and Tadamon! share an anti-capitalist background, which she suggests is what facilitated the relationship of solidarity between both groups and the organizing of the “Out Against the Occupation” events. Though Helem-Montreal might be a queer organization that is linked to Lebanon, the underlying framework created through anti-capitalist and other kinds of activist organizing enabled a relationship of solidarity to emerge.

The importance of activism and politics of resistance to the possibility of solidarity is central here, since the majority of Helem-Montreal's activities focus on social networking and participation in cultural diversity events in the Montreal region. While Helem-Montreal supported the first installment of “Out Against the Occupation,”

they surprisingly did not take on an organizing role, nor did they participate actively in putting together any kind of response or fundraising effort for Helem-Beirut and the Sanayeh Relief Centre during the war. This lack of political engagement, despite the organization's mandate and the very political activities of Helem-Beirut, speaks to the need for a framework of activism and resistance in solidarity. While Helem-Montreal *should* have been able to mobilize under the context of war, it failed to do so because it framed itself in Montreal as a *social* rather than political group, removing the condition necessary for solidarity, which is shared struggle. Instead, by focusing its efforts on cultural diversity activities and social gatherings, Helem-Montreal refused to orient itself politically in solidarity during the war. Thus, the choice to not take a political position on the war resulted in the failure of the possibility of solidarity, even though many members of Helem-Montreal were directly affected by the war as their families and friends remained in Lebanon.

III. Models of solidarity

The model of solidarity that I argue is at work in “Out Against the Occupation” is both nuanced and specific, and in many ways contradictory to popular uses of the term solidarity. To recap, I have thus far argued that: (1) solidarity is a form of intersubjectivity, not simply cooperation; (2) solidarity is rooted in activism and resistance, and does not simply arise from an already existing community; (3) communities built through solidarity are diverse and polycentric rather than homogenous; (4) solidarity needs to be about common differences built through struggle, not about common interests built through goals; and (5) solidarity needs to be based in the political

rather than in social networking. I have already examined how Helem-Montreal failed to respond to the 2006 Lebanon War, and thus failed at solidarity, however, I would like to clarify that the failure to embody solidarity was not by virtue of Helem as an organization, but rather its individual manifestation and political investments in different locations. I argue that unlike Helem-Montreal, Helem-Beirut set an example of solidarity when it actively participated in relief work during the war. With the outbreak of the war, and the devastating consequences of Israeli bombings in Beirut on the community surrounding the Helem office, the organizers of Helem-Beirut converted their office into the Sanayeh Relief Centre. By providing frontline support work and resources to the victims of the war, and organizing for international support, Helem's shift of focus to relief work demonstrates its investment in solidarity. For Leila, framing "Out Against the Occupation" in solidarity with Helem-Beirut and the Sanayeh Relief Centre, as well as including video statements from Helem and a speaker from ASWAT, was an important part of the events. In this section, I look to "Out Against the Occupation" to inform and construct a model of solidarity that I argue is necessary for effective responses to injustice and collective struggles.

i. Further Defining Solidarity

In the previous chapter, I introduced the transversal to describe a form of movement and orientation that is not unidirectional. Through the work of Sara Ahmed, I argued that queerness resists the fixing of orientation, and as such, it follows a model of movement based on the transversal. I would like to return to the transversal once again to examine how we can rethink solidarity as a process of embodiment. In English the word solidarity, which is a noun, does not express the same quality as the French *solidaire*. In

French, the idea of *être solidaire*, to be solidarity, implies that one embodies the relationship of solidarity, that one comes not only to align oneself with another over shared interests, but that the relationship between the self and the other move you to not simply occupy another position, but embody that movement. Thus, the subjectivity of those in solidarity is essential, as those implicated in solidarity, such as in “Out Against the Occupation,” do not simply stand in the place of solidarity, but embody it. Here, the context of solidarity requires a relationship of inter-subjectivity, where each of us is moved to change the way we not only relate to others, but to ourselves. Hence, we cannot be in solidarity without first embodying a subjectivity that recognizes the difference between the self and others, and yet can find common ground and align across differences. In the context of “Out Against the Occupation” the act of being in solidarity with those living under war and occupation, as well as queers living in these conditions, is an important political position to occupy, because the position of solidarity requires the investment of oneself into the struggles of another.

The role of embodiment in rethinking solidarity is of central importance, as the organizers of “Out Against the Occupation” articulated their motivations to organize the events through embodied standpoints. Donna Haraway argues that “‘subjugated’ standpoints are preferred because they seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world” (584), where knowledge is acquired through embodied locations rather than disembodied viewpoints from above (589). Linking up with feminist standpoint theory, Haraway points to the location of the lived body of those who are subjected to oppression as the source of an objective view of the world. Haraway argues for a critical position rather than using identity/self-identity in

order to produce objectivity (586), a critical position enabled by and through its locatedness. While identity is important for framing situated knowledge in a location of embodied reality, our understandings of the world cannot come from an explanation of the body alone. Rather, embodied positions allow us to investigate how knowledge is produced in a non-deterministic fashion. "Feminist embodiment ... is not about fixed location in a reified body, female or otherwise, but about nodes in fields, inflections in orientations, and responsibility for difference in material-semiotic fields of meaning" (588). This un-fixed location of embodiment suggests a form of movement that enables alignments of solidarity. Location and experiences inform subjective positions and embodied experiences, and this location also helps us to better understand the locations of other subjugated positions. From the knowledge that emerges through our situation, we are able to form the links of inter-subjectivity necessary for solidarity, and through the process of recognizing commonality across difference through our own locations in subjugation and privilege, we move to embody that inter-subjectivity through solidarity. Thus the movement between the subjective locations of situated knowledge to the embodiment of solidarity is a transversal movement, one that allows us to move in alignment with other positions while still maintaining our own subjectivities.

The transversal quality of movement in solidarity is important because it acts as the mechanism that both grounds us in embodied location, and enables us to pivot, move, and shift to other positions through solidarity, without becoming unfixed from our own embodied subjectivities. What is important here is that transversal movement allows us to maintain our subjectivity while in solidarity with others. Thus we can embody solidarity without co-opting others' struggles, and without dismissing our own struggles.

Leila, who is situated in Montreal and locates herself through queer, gendered and diasporic subjectivities, was able to articulate and embody solidarity in her organizing of “Out Against the Occupation.” During her visit to Beirut just prior to the outbreak of the war, Leila met members of Helem-Beirut, but did not become a member of the organization. At this point, Leila’s presence in Beirut was figured on two conditions. First, Leila was in the Middle East because she had traveled to Iran to visit family. Second, Leila connected with Helem-Beirut through the organization’s chapter in Montreal. Leila’s subjective location within diasporic relations connected her through movement to particular places (like Lebanon) and people (queer Lebanese subjects and members of Helem-Beirut). Once the war broke out, Leila’s connection to Lebanon and queer struggles in the Middle East informed her move to stand in solidarity with the struggles of Helem-Beirut and the Sanayeh Relief Centre. Leila’s move towards solidarity, and her decision to organize “Out Against the Occupation” was not because she herself was a victim of the war, or because she viewed herself as victimized through the war. Rather, Leila was able to embody a relationship of solidarity because she was oriented towards a transversal form of movement that facilitated her position of inter-subjectivity with Helem-Beirut. Under other circumstance, Leila might not have had the same response, since the ability to move transversally towards solidarity requires some form of subjective movement as well. Transversal movement requires some form of subjective shifting, whether it is informed by situated knowledge or other forms of connections made through movements, such as through migrancy and diaspora, as I will discuss in the following chapter, or queerness, as I addressed in the previous chapter.

Fenton argues that a model of solidarity based in “multiplicity and polycentrality,

interactivity and participation ... is key to the future success of popular mobilization and our understanding of it. Solidarity insists on material engagement and goes beyond mediation. It requires mutuality and reciprocity resulting in collective action” (53). For Mohanty, a feminist model of solidarity emphasizes “relations of mutuality, co-responsibility, and common interests” (242). In a postmodern and poststructuralist understanding of the world, as subjects are fragmented and diverse, solidarity represents the possibility for unified or shared struggles against oppression and injustices. Here, solidarity does not have to do the work of representing all the interests of all parties, nor does it imply that subjects must somehow give up their individual interests for collective interests, but rather that solidarity enables subjects to come together in shifting and changing ways to enable collective responses without having a homogenous collective subjectivity. Here, the work of coalition building provides an important framework for thinking about how solidarity functions.

ii. Solidarity and Coalitions

In her work on Arab Americans, Nadine Naber argues that multi-racial anti-war coalitions in the US post-September 11th “have simultaneously provided new vantage points from which to link local and global issues” in the context of mainstream progressive organizing, which she argues has failed to adequately respond to conditions of racism, colonialism, and imperialism in relation to Palestine in particular (218). For Naber, “coalition building is a power-laden process where differences of race, class, gender, and nation are constantly transformed and reproduced” (219). As such, coalitions risk reproducing asymmetrical relations in collective action. The focus on collective action for a common goal is both the foundation of coalition building, and its site of

potential failure. Here, the risk of coalitions resides in the focus on goals rather than processes. Earlier in this chapter I argued that what distinguishes solidarity from coalition-building is the difference between a focus on struggle and the effects of injustice rather than a particular goal. Thus, solidarity provides a model for long-term and sustained change, while coalitions offer a model for short term or immediate change by temporarily bringing together diverse interests for a common goal.

Naber argues that effective coalitions require a “willingness to forge political unity with a variety of struggles against racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, colonialism, and imperialism, despite differences in the benefits or repercussions of supporting one struggle as opposed to another” (219). In arguing for a model of coalition building based on struggle, Naber points to the need for a relationship of solidarity at the foundation of coalitions. Thus, while solidarity and coalition building make for a better model of collective organizing, the two are not mutually inclusive. Rather than assuming that coalitions are necessarily symmetrical and non-hierarchical, we need to consciously work towards a model of solidarity to construct coalitions that are accountable to those involved. Mohanty argues that a “feminist solidarity” model “provides a way to theorize a complex relational understanding of experience, location, and history ... to construct a real notion of universal and of democratization rather than colonization” (238). Thus, we can imagine coalitions built through relations of solidarity, where those implicated are invested in long-term change through continuous struggle together, and who are able to come together in the short-term when needed through coalitions to effect change around a present issue.

iii. A Model of Solidarity

Throughout this chapter I have investigated how we might think of solidarity as a model for effective resistance. Using “Out Against the Occupation” as a framework to build from, I have distinguished between how solidarity should and should not function, and what conditions it needs to be effective. For Fenton, solidarity requires a “commitment to the value of difference that goes beyond a simple respect and involves an inclusive politics of voice and representation. It also requires a non-essentialist conceptualization of the political subject as made up of manifold, fluid identities that mirror the multiple differentiations of groups” (49). Similarly, Mohanty calls for “informed, self-reflexive solidarities” (251). I propose three conditions necessary for a model of solidarity:

- 1) *Solidarity Requires Unequal Relations of Power*: In its contemporary sense, the concept of solidarity requires asymmetrical relations of power, where “to be in solidarity in an oppressed group is to resist oppression by sticking together” (Pensky, 9). Thus, solidarity is not about fraternity or simply collaboration, but emerges and is useful because it acts as a process whereby groups can stand together against injustices. A model of solidarity that simply claims that people and groups are “working together” without a relation of resistance against an oppressor is simply a model of cooperation.
- 2) *Solidarity Involves a Process of Embodiment*: Building on the French concept of *être solidaire*, solidarity needs to be thought of as a process of embodiment. Rather than being something we simply stand in the place of, solidarity requires that we embody a relationship with – and orientation towards – others through struggle. Thus, a model of solidarity that is both long-term and sustained requires a form of internal movement as we embody a relation of solidarity.

3) *Solidarity Needs to be Process Driven*: It is important that solidarity be clearly defined and differentiated from other forms of relations and approaches in activism and politics of resistance. While solidarity and coalitions complement each other well, I have distinguished both of them in two ways. First, I have argued that there is a temporal difference between the two, where solidarity requires a long-term investment, and coalitions are more useful for short-term or immediate change. Second, I have argued that solidarity must be process-driven, where the emphasis is placed on struggles and common differences, whereas coalitions are based primarily on common goals. Thus, while goal driven organizing can be both important and meaningful, I argue that solidarity needs to be process driven in order to be effective.

By using “Out Against the Occupation” as a site for constructing a model of solidarity, I suggest that we can rethink how social change and resistance can shape social movements. According to Fenton, “the distinction between institutional politics and social movements rests upon the former acting as bureaucracies founded upon delegation of representation and the latter being founded on participation and direct engagement. This encourages us to move away from the notion of participative, deliberative democracy being realizable only through the traditional political structures of the nation-state” (42). Theory and research around contemporary social movements (Della Porta & Diani, 2006; Goodman, 2002) focus largely on large-scale mobilizations linked to issues of globalization. Indeed, the types of movements that are most likely to have visible and immediately recognizable effects are those that mobilize large numbers of people across locations. In comparison to these large-scale actions (such as anti-World Trade Organization, and solidarity with the Zapatistas in Chiapas), “Out Against the

Occupation” might seem to be fairly insignificant as a site of resistance. However, while the scope and size of the “Out Against the Occupation” events and their visible effects might seem insignificant, these events signify an important moment in the emergence of new possibilities for activism and resistance. Since there are “multiple ways of conceptualizing resistance and multiple ways of resisting” (Fenton, 47), scope and size are not always the most desirable indicators of effective social movements. Instead, the “Out Against the Occupation” events suggest that we look to sites of resistance as locations for different parameters of subjectivity and the articulation of new modes of solidarity. Thus, “Out Against the Occupation” demonstrates how solidarity can function in ways that respond to injustices, such as war, without reifying or homogenizing a queer community. Rather, “Out Against the Occupation” exemplifies a model of solidarity that is capable of connecting through struggles across difference while maintaining multiple, diverse, and fragmented subjectivities. This model enables a flexible approach to organizing, one that is able to shift and move given different contexts and needs, whether engaging with a primarily queer community or a broader audience with other organizations. Building on the role of the transversal, in the next chapter I will investigate the role of movement in “Out Against the Occupation” with particular focus on relations of migrancy and diaspora.

CHAPTER 3

Movement and Map-making: Approaches to Reading Political Paths

In the previous two chapters, I introduced movement as a way of rethinking the relationship between queerness, the politics of solidarity and activism. I proposed that we think of movement in terms of orientations, and introduced the transversal as the mechanism through which orientation and directionality are unfixed. The “Out Against the Occupation” organizers – whose subjectivities were informed by situated epistemologies of diasporic, queer, gendered, and political relations – facilitated the process of transversal orientation when they articulated a queer anti-war response to the 2006 Lebanon War and gay pride celebration. Movement provides both a conceptual and material framework for thinking through relations across locations, as well as across identities, groups, and political positions. In this chapter, I argue that movement provides an important framework for thinking through activism and resistance. I begin by examining “Out Against the Occupation” through movement, and construct a map of political path-making. I then return to the transversal to argue that orientation shapes the possibility for new forms of solidarity and resistance to emerge. Finally, I explore the relationship between location and movement in migrancy and diaspora to articulate how we are mobilized to shift our orientations.

I. Movement & Maps

The organizers and participants of “Out Against the Occupation” neither consist of an authentic or clear diasporic community based on shared ‘homeland’, nor do they share common generational or historico-political immigration histories to Canada. Rather, the

investment that those involved in “Out Against the Occupation” had in relation to the Middle East were in political belonging and diasporic subjectivity. While Leila and Trish have different family histories both within Canada and the Middle East, their shared participation in Montreal's queer activist spaces and their alliances with anti-occupation politics informed similar responses to the outbreak of the war and gay pride events. The networks of movement at stake for Leila and Trish were those made in, and between, queer communities (through Helem-Beirut, Helem-Montreal, World Pride Jerusalem, friend networks and family throughout Canada and the Middle East), political discourses and communities (through anti-war and anti-occupation politics, solidarity and activist groups like Tadamon! and Helem), and diasporic communities (such as the Lebanese and Middle Eastern diasporas in Montreal and Canada, and Helem Montreal).

Movement implies a relationship of in-between. When we move from one place to another, the act of moving occurs between the points of origin and destination. If we trace the paths traveled in movement, we can think of movement as a way of constructing networks between people and places. Movement – between places, between politics, between identities and subjectivities – lays at the foundation of “Out Against the Occupation.” As a site of performance and activism, “Out Against the Occupation” builds on the subjectivities of its organizers, participants and performers, to critically engage, and complicate everyday notions of identity and belonging by politicizing queer community and diasporic identity through the politics of solidarity. As I argued earlier in this thesis, subjectivity is informed by situation, and as such, location – and thus movement – plays an important role in how we think about activism. Here, I look at the “Out Against the Occupation” events through movement in order to explore how these

events emerge through the retracing of previous paths, and the construction of new orientations and relations of movement. By examining “Out Against the Occupation” as a networked, interactive, political movement, I analyze how it reorganizes the relationship between place and political activism in between Montreal and Lebanon.

As I have mentioned earlier, movements leave traces of their paths just as people do. Politics travel, in other words, because people are its carriers. The traces of these paths also linger as they are re-traveled, and new paths of political possibility branch off of them. Because new movements build on the remains of paths of older movements, I am arguing here that “Out Against the Occupation” emerged through the layers of political paths that have been created through diasporas, queer communities, and politics of solidarity. The project of mapping movement, therefore, provides a way of locating the places where resistance resides, and offers the possibility of locating other forms of activism situated within the in-between.

Looking at the map of “Out Against the Occupation” (see figure 2 in the Appendix), we can see how these events are located within relations of movement and politics. Here, the lines between Canada and the Middle East represent the paths and grounds of connection between places. It is on these paths that new approaches are built. At the end of Chapter 2, I suggested that sites of resistance framed through a model of solidarity that is diverse and fragmented, and that emerge through mechanisms of transversal orientations, are strong models for activist movements. The role of movement, therefore, provides an important intervention into rethinking how activism functions.

Mapping “Out Against the Occupation”

As Trish and Leila began the early stages of organizing “Out Against the Occupation,” they discussed the war and their frustrations with the queer organizing occurring in Montreal and Israel at the time, all of which seemed indifferent to the conditions of war and occupation. Their frustrations shaped their decision to respond with an alternative queer perspective on the relationship between sexuality and the freedom from occupation and war – a perspective which the mainstream queer organizing both in Montreal and internationally did not express. Trish had attended the opening human rights conference of the OutGames as a speaker on Trans organizing in Canada when she learned that a representative of Helem-Beirut, who was originally scheduled to present at the same conference, was unable to do so because of the bombing of the Hariri International Airport at the outset of the war. For Trish,

the absolute failure of the human rights conference to engage with the challenge of some kind of solidarity with the Lebanese and Palestinian people, queers in Lebanon and Palestine, seemed to collude with the kind of whitewashing that Israel does of the occupation through its spinning of its image as a cosmopolitan, queer positive society. So there was a real nexus in terms of failure of responsibility at a certain level within the politicized left-queer community and labour to respond to the situation, and the egregiousness and cynicism of what was going on in terms of the occupations at that point.³⁸

The Helem-Beirut video presented at the International Human Rights conference

³⁸ Trish S. 2007. Interviewed by author. Montreal, QC. June 21.

(in place of the Helem-Beirut representative's participation on the panel) called for solidarity and support as the organization shifted its efforts to relief work during, and following, the war. This call for solidarity and support was to a large extent the basis of Trish's motivation for organizing "Out Against the Occupation." Trish described her own politicization around the lack of anti-war response from queer communities in Montreal as arising from her affiliations and interests with local queer and activist communities and her perspective on the political situation in Israel, Palestine, and Lebanon during the summer of 2006. Further, her connections to Lebanon through her family living there, and other family members who were traveling to Lebanon that summer to visit, compelled Trish to take some form of action as she was directly connected to many people subject to the violence of war.

Trish's location within the Lebanese diaspora in Canada and Montreal is of particular significance to her position on the war. Since the late 19th century, people from the Middle East, and Lebanon in particular, have immigrated to Canada for a variety of reasons, ranging from economic interests to seeking refuge from war. The organizers and participants of "Out Against the Occupation," like Trish, came to participate in queer and activist communities through a politicized perspective informed by diasporic relations. For M., who performed as Osama bin Thuggin', the relationship between political action and diasporic subjectivity are intricately related.

Solidarity is important because of what happens in diasporic communities, especially in diasporic Palestinian communities. For example, my family is in Lebanon. Lebanon is very immediate to me as a Palestinian. Palestinians have become scattered across Lebanon, Jordan, and Canada,

etc., and we are limited in travel. Solidarity is not just about my politics and beliefs, it's also about reclaiming your identity and the survival of Palestinian and Lebanese histories, and the ways those histories have been disjointed by war, and become so splintered. To reassert those connections [is important to me]. Solidarity seems to imply an outsider offering assistance, but to me it's more of a holistic relationship that literally affects family and is a necessary thing that I have to do. It's important to do that work here because we *can* do that work here. And the people who can do that work in Lebanon *are* doing that work, as evidenced by all the people who are organizing around the wars, and who are standing up, who did all sorts of things during the civil war (e.g. in the communist party). It ends up being a necessary part of survival of our identity and it's what you do for family or for people who you consider to be part of your community or have some sort of affinity with.³⁹

Both Trish and M. locate themselves among relationships of movement in diasporic attachments. If we map these types of movements then (figure 2.1) we can follow the paths between the Middle East and Canada to trace the connection between both places. Here, Trish and M. are invested in that connection even though they might not be, at present, physically moving across those paths, or even ever have crossed them in the first place. Therefore, it is not by virtue of their own movements that Trish and M. relate to the Middle East, but rather through a political and social investment in what those paths enable. In this way, their critiques of the war and their investment in

³⁹ M. aka Osama, interviewed by author, Toronto, ON, June 6, 2007.

resistance is intricately linked to the traces that linger in movements of migration and diasporic links back to homelands. It is interesting to note here that both Trish and M. describe their investments in these connections through the language of solidarity. Looking at the map of solidarity (figure 2.3), we can see how solidarity functions in similar ways, by connecting people and groups across locations and differences. Here we can see groups like Tadamon! who connect to anti-war protests and “Out Against the Occupation” through their solidarity work around grassroots and anti-occupation politics in Lebanon. Similarly, members of diasporic and other communities acted in solidarity through the anti-war protests in Montreal throughout that summer.

If we look at “Out Against the Occupation” on the map of solidarity, however, we can see that the events do not relate to the ongoing activities located on the surface of my map in the same unidimensional way. Instead, “Out Against the Occupation,” in responding or building on all of the relations at play, is itself located on top of all the paths of connection between places. I argue here that when we read “Out Against the Occupation” on this map, we can only understand its activities through an understanding of all the nodes and connections of movement and perspective that its organizers build on. If we turn to the map of queer paths (figure 2.2), we can see how queer movements and travel both influenced and inspired the “Out Against the Occupation” response to the war and gay pride events. We can distinguish between the types of travels and movements that occur in World Pride, Queerupton and the OutGames, for instance, from those that occur with Helem. The movements between Helem-Beirut and Helem-Montreal consist of both diasporic (as Lebanese LGBT people immigrate to Canada and then return to Lebanon to visit) and political (through LGBT rights and advocacy)

movement. International LGBT celebrations and events however, function through internationalism and tourism. What motivates these different types of movements informs the social and political investments that each event and group has in those locations, as we can see with World Pride during the war.

As I discuss earlier in my thesis, Helem is an LGBT organization based in Beirut with chapters around the world, including Montreal. Helem's chapters emerge through the movement of migrant Arab and Middle Eastern subjects to countries such as Canada, where they become situated within diasporic communities. Helem-Montreal in particular acts as a diasporic network for queer Arab and Middle Eastern diasporic subjects in Montreal. During the summer of 2006, LGBT and queer subjects from both Canada and the Middle East moved across locations to participate in queer spaces such as World Pride and Queeruption. For the moment, I would like to generally call these movements queer, even though some of the movements during that summer might best be described as LGBT travel or internationalism. Here queer movement functions in a variety of ways. First, as World Pride drew in LGBT subjects from across the world, people from Canada traveled to Israel to celebrate gay pride. Similarly, Queeruption invited radical queers internationally to come to Tel Aviv for its gathering in response to World Pride. Back in Canada, international subjects traveled to Canada for the first ever World OutGames, and LGBT and queer subjects in Montreal came out to the Pride and Divers/Cité events happening concurrently. At first glance, it might seem that queer or LGBT subjectivity facilitated travel across multiple locations. However with the outbreak of the war, the fallacy of this freedom of movement was revealed. The cancellation of Helem-Beirut's participation in the International Human Rights

conference in Montreal due to the war represents a disjuncture between the rights and freedoms of sexual subjects and their myth of universal application. Further, if we remember the guidelines for travel to Israel on the Queerupton website (as I discussed in Chapter 1), we can see that sexual rights do not guarantee freedom of movement for all subjects. However, not all queer or LGBT groups were able to recognize or articulate this interruption the way “Out Against the Occupation” did. “Out Against the Occupation’s” location on the map demonstrates the role of location and relations that enabled the organizers to articulate their critical perspective on the war in Lebanon from within Montreal and the international networks of which they were part. Because “Out Against the Occupation” is situated on top of the political paths of previous movements, its position enables us to easily view and assess the types of movements and connections across its various locations.

I have suggested so far that we can interpret the map of “Out Against the Occupation” as layered, where each layer builds on the next to create a terrain for thinking through the work of queer anti-war movements and what makes a response such as “Out Against the Occupation” possible. I now expand on these layers in order to demonstrate the scope of what mapping political path-making can make visible. At its lowest layer, we can think of the “Out Against the Occupation” map as emerging through the social relations made through processes of colonialism, migration, transnationalism, and globalization. Here, the conditions and connections between and across places made through processes of colonization, such as the colonization and settlement of Canada, the waves of immigration from the Middle East to North America, and the Israeli occupation of Palestine lay the groundwork for initial paths and investments in different places.

From colonization and immigration, we can see at the next layer the relationship between places of origin and homelands, or between colonial centres and colonies. Here, movement follows a back-and-forth pattern between locations. We can think of the frequent travel of diasporic subjects between Lebanon and Montreal (or even the circulation of diasporic media and culture between both places), and the movements of migrant labour as shaping how initial paths of movement are retraced as they are retraveled. Movements of gay internationalism, other forms of international travel, and the circulation of media and cultural practices also retrace many of these initial paths as routes are given permanency through the circulation of commodities (including cultural commodities).

At the next layer, movement becomes more complicated, as it shifts from simple back-and-forth relations in transnationalism and activist politics. Groups like Helem, located in Beirut and Montreal, queer undergrounds in Canada and the Middle East, and anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist activists move along established paths, but with different orientations. At this layer, movements begin to show more fluidity as those who follow connections between places do so for different reasons, and perhaps even deviate from the more permanent paths as they construct new connections between places. At the top layer, I locate “Out Against the Occupation” as a site that emerges out of the groundwork laid by the previous layers of political path-making. “Out Against the Occupation” not only responds and is informed through the connections made through older paths, but also demonstrates the possibility for other kinds of movement along the terrain of political paths. In this instance, maps of political paths enable different ways of responding and relating to connections and movements across locations. Concretely, this

type of relation is demonstrated in the way “Out Against the Occupation” responds in solidarity to the Sanayeh Relief Centre and Helem-Beirut, and critiques World Pride, Queeruption and the OutGames. In this sense, “Out Against the Occupation” crosses the paths between Canada and the Middle East perpendicularly as the events intersect connections made through movement in their critiques and solidarity work.

II. Transversal Movement

While movement is commonly thought of as linear through time and across places, and shaped through the directionality of straight lines, the map of the political paths I examine is not a linear one. There are back-and-forth movements and indirect lines of travel. Therefore, the concept of movement alone cannot explain the relations at play in “Out Against the Occupation.” The transversal provides a non-hierarchical and non-linear way of thinking about movement and relations across locations. We can think of the transversal as the moment, the mechanism, or the process where subjects come to orient themselves in relations of movement. Typical notions of movement rely on a unidirectional model, where the subject moves from a point A to a point B in a linear fashion. This is especially true of discourses around migration that suggest that subjects simply move in one direction from homelands to new homes of settlement.

Transversal movement is both a mechanism and a process of orientation and directionality where subjects are not fixed in location; rather, they are able to shift and orient themselves fluidly in both a physical and conceptual sense. For instance, Leila’s movement between Canada, Iran and Lebanon follows the paths created through movements of migrancy, which may initially appear to be directional and linear; however

her trip to Lebanon was not framed within diasporic relations (as Leila has no family in Lebanon). Instead, Leila's trip to Beirut marks a shift outside of the unilinear diasporic relationship between Canada and Iran, and can be characterized as a shift in directionality informed by social and political contexts in Montreal. When Leila traveled to Lebanon, she was not simply a tourist⁴⁰, but a political subject. Her orientation towards Lebanon emerged through the process of shifting towards the Middle East, a process informed by her relationship to groups such as Tadamon! and Helem-Montreal. This moment of shifting is the transversal. As a mechanism and process, the transversal does not control the way that we orientation towards others, but rather describes the moment and type of re-orientation that occurs when we face directions in other ways.

In unidirection or linear forms of movement, orientation is fixed in "straight" directions. However, as I have suggested earlier in this thesis, queerness, political subjectivity and location can unfix us from straight orientations through the transversal. The transversal is a way of thinking about directionality and orientation in movement, and acts as both a mechanism for shifting and a process of reorienting. In Queer Phenomenology, Sara Ahmed suggests that we need "a new way of thinking about the spatiality of sexuality, gender, and race" (2), and offers "a model of how bodies become orientated by how they take up time and space" (5). Ahmed sets forward a phenomenology of orientation, which she uses as a way to rethink how we embody sexual orientation. Ahmed argues that a "queer phenomenology might offer an approach to sexual orientation by rethinking how the bodily direction "toward" objects shapes the

⁴⁰ While I do not investigate the movement of tourism and tourist travel, I make the distinction between the type of travel Leila followed in visiting Lebanon from tourism through her political and social investments in travel. Tourism relies on a certain type of consumption of both national and ethnic culture and resources, whereas Leila's travel is one that relies on connections between groups and peoples across locations through solidarity.

surfaces of bodily and social space” (68). In rethinking orientation in relations of sexuality, Ahmed points to the possibility of re-orienting. Since “‘orientations’ depend on taking points of view as given” (14), the ability to shift directionality in our orientation in movement opens up the possibility of new perspective in point of view. Thus, as I have argued, the transversal represents the mechanism and process by which we can reorient ourselves.

For Marjorie Pryse, the transversal requires a “‘shift’ and ‘pivot’ while remaining grounded in a lattice-work of identities” (110). We can think of this “grounded lattice-work of identities” as the place where embodied subjectivity informs the possibility for reorientations in movement. The transversal represents the moment when the subject, informed by situated knowledge, embodies a new approach or direction. Returning to the role of the transversal in the model of solidarity that I argue for in Chapter 2, I argue that in solidarity, the transversal is the mechanism whereby we come to orient ourselves towards others in a relationship of struggle without losing our own selves in the process of orienting. In this sense, the transversal represents not simply the ability to reorient and pivot ourselves physically, but the ability to shift ourselves politically to align with others in solidarity. Thus, transversal movement describes both physical and conceptual ways of reorienting ourselves outside of binary relations, for instance in the places we look to and feel connected to, and in political acts in which we embody solidarity.

III. Location and Movement; Migrancy and Diaspora

If we think of the transversal as way to orient ourselves in solidarity while maintaining our individual subjectivities, then the role of location in informing our standpoints is essential to the possibility of any form of transversal movement or politics

of solidarity. Earlier in this chapter, I described movement as the in-between of location. However, I do not want to suggest that movement is only significant for its paths. The role of location is therefore important in rethinking how we can enter the process of re-orientation and embodying solidarity. Coming from a Lebanese diasporic background as a first generation Canadian, Trish's location in Canada was informed by diasporic relations. Though Trish was not connected to Helem-Beirut through her connections to a location "back home," her affiliation with Helem as a queer person who identified diasporically with Lebanon oriented her towards Helem-Beirut. Helem links Beirut and Montreal through queer diasporic Lebanese people who join up with Helem-Montreal. Here, some diasporic subjects are located more directly in relation to Lebanon if they were recent migrants, whereas others, like Trish, are located ideologically through an orientation in Montreal towards Lebanon through the connection made by Helem.

Meanwhile, Leila had been following the boycott of World Pride Jerusalem, and discovered that Queeruption, the do-it-yourself radical queer gathering that in 2006 was being organized in Tel-Aviv in response to World Pride Jerusalem, had decided to continue its events in light of the war⁴¹. Leila and Trish's frustrations stemmed from both the way World Pride Jerusalem was being used as a way to represent the state of Israel as a queer positive, cosmopolitan, liberal democratic state, and from the lack of anti-war and -occupation analysis in the "radical queer" organizers of Queeruption. Both Trish and Leila's locations within diasporic communities enabled them to articulate a critical analysis of queer organizing and the conditions of war and occupation. Trish further explained that "Out Against the Occupation" was also responding to the way queers located in places like Montreal similarly failed to articulate a response to war in

⁴¹ Leila P. 2007. Interviewed by author. Montreal, QC. May 24.

the corporatized gay pride events of Divers/Cité and the International Human Rights Conference prior to the OutGames. Many of the frustrations that Trish and Leila expressed about the proximate gay celebrations are rooted in the way community becomes homogenized and incapable of shifting. In Chapter 2, I argued that we can rethink community through solidarity. Here, I argue that we can open up the possibility for a strategic form of community building that is capable of being diverse and polycentric, and organizing around solidarity, by rethinking the relationship between community and location. Since

communities are an effect of the very relations of proximity and distance between bodies. As such, questions of space are crucial to communities. It might be assumed that the present global context of flows, fluidity and transnational connections disturbs, if not forever dissolves, the temporal, spatial and emotive certainties of 'communities', whether national, regional or local. (Ahmed & Fortier, 255)

By questioning the certainty of community through an understanding of the shifting and fluid nature of who, and what, is local in the context of transnational movement, the reification of community as homogenous is problematized. Thus, as we begin to think of community as located in multiple and shifting contexts, the possibility of community-building that is diverse increases. Thinking of community through multi-locality also allows us to think about the role of migrancy in movements and path-making.

Transnational and multi-local approaches to community building suggest that migrancy can be thought of through community as a constantly changing emergence of peoples, bodies and spaces joined through solidarity. Thus spaces of community resistance such as

“Out Against the Occupation” emerge through relationships of location, politics and subjectivity in the politics of solidarity.

In its broadest sense, migrancy refers to the processes, histories and contexts of movements of peoples from one location to another. In Uprootings/Regroundings, Ahmed et al. frame migrancy in the movements of relations, rather than in the dichotomy between old and new homes. “The task is therefore not to categorize ‘home’ as a condition distinct from ‘migration’, or to order them in terms of their relative value or cultural salience, but to ask how uprootings and regroundings are enacted - affectively, materially and symbolically - in relation to one another” (Ahmed et al., 2003, 2).

Migrancy provides a useful framework for thinking through movement in three ways: first, migrancy shifts our focus from fixed locations in homes (of origin, of settlement) to the processes that spur those movements; second, migrancy places emphasis on the relations produced through these movements; and third, migrancy enables us to locate multiple modes of migration without universalizing experiences and processes of migration. Thus, migrancy offers an encompassing, but not universalizing, framework for looking at immigration, seasonal labour, refugees, and non-status and illegal immigration. While this approach to migrancy could obscure the important historical, political, economic and social violences that frame most migration (such as colonialism, economic exploitation, war), I approach migrancy strategically to discuss the role of movement in politics of solidarity and activism.

Using the language of migrancy, rather than immigration or migration, allows me to talk about the relations of movement between and across locations beyond a unilateral or unidirectional framework. It complicates the way we think about settlement and travel

back to places of ‘origin’ for diasporic subjects. Diaspora commonly refers to the subject formation of a group of people who continue to identify with some form of migrant, ethnic, racialized, or nationalistic belonging within the new location of settlement.

The concept of diaspora specifies a matrix of economic, political and cultural inter-relationships which construct the commonality between the various components of a dispersed group. The concept of diaspora delineates a field of identifications where ‘imagined communities’ are forged within and out of a confluence of narratives from annals of collective memory and re-memory. (Brah, 1996)

Brah’s concept of diaspora “offers a critique of discourses of fixed origins, while taking account of a homing desire which is not the same thing as desire for a ‘homeland’” (180). This definition provides a useful way of describing the role of subjectivity in the context of community belonging. For instance, Leila, who was born in Iran, can be framed as a diasporic subject even though she did not participate in an Iranian diasporic community through her involvement in “Out Against the Occupation.” Rather, Leila’s subjectivity as a diasporic person informs the type of queer activist community she chooses to participate in, since her involvement in queer activism is not exclusive of her diasporic subjectivity. Similarly, Trish, whose family immigrated to Canada from Lebanon, is active in the same circles of queer activist community that Leila participates in.

“Out Against the Occupation” and its organizers offer a way of rethinking queer communities as formed and informed through diasporic subjectivities. The distinction between diasporically informed and diasporic communities is important to make, because while diaspora frames the relations of possibility for “Out Against the Occupation,” it

does not define “Out Against the Occupation” as a diasporic event. Although anti-war responses from Lebanese diasporic communities were prominent throughout the 2006 war, most diasporic responses were not particularly interested or invested in the proximate queer events. Further, while many of the participants of “Out Against the Occupation” were themselves diasporic, both events were focused on a politics of solidarity beyond diasporic identification. For example, the second “Out Against the Occupation” event drew in a diverse crowd of local activists, university students, and people not normally implicated in queer and/or anti-war organizing. Thus, “Out Against the Occupation” was informed by diasporic affiliations in and to the Middle East, but it was not described as “diasporic.”

Ahmed et al. suggest that we can “complicate the unilateral relationship between belonging and location by investigating the ways in which new forms of political and cultural belonging are anchored in multi-local ties” (3). By emphasizing the role of political belonging, we can better understand how migrancy and diaspora informed how the organizers of “Out Against the Occupation” came to organize their queer response to the Lebanon war. Returning to the map of movement (figure 2.1), we can see how diasporic subjects move within and across locations through their travel in relations of migrancy. Mapping the traces of the paths of movement made between Montreal and Lebanon through frequent diasporic travels back to Lebanon, the circulation of information, culture, and media from Lebanon in Montreal, and the political involvement of groups like Tadamon! making regular contact between Lebanon and Montreal through their events, website and mailing list, demonstrates how diasporic Lebanese subjects in Canada and Montreal were able to mobilize around a political response to the conditions

in the Middle East when the war broke out.

Although both Helem-Beirut and “Out Against the Occupation” provided queer responses to the Lebanon war, we can distinguish the two through the relations of migrancy and diaspora. When the war broke out, Helem-Beirut did not mobilize a particularly queer response to the war, but rather converted its office into the Sanayeh Relief Centre. Under the conditions of war, Helem, located in Beirut, was primarily invested in the most basic level of advocacy and intervention – that of human survival during a war. It was those subjects who were situated within Montreal, located between celebrations of LGBT and queer identity and community on the one hand, and anti-war mobilizing on the other, who were able to articulate a queer anti-war response. The ability of diasporic subjects located in Montreal to respond in such a way to the war was particularly informed by the framework constructed through relations of migrancy and diaspora. Trish and Leila responded to the outbreak of the war, from their locations in diasporic and queer activist communities, through the paths that were maintained through processes of migrancy in their family histories of immigration, in the establishment of diasporic groups like Tadamon! and Helem-Montreal

The diverse perspectives of “Out Against the Occupation’s” organizers, participants and the event’s affiliates (co-sponsoring organizations and beneficiaries of fundraising efforts)⁴² speak to the need to talk differently about diasporic relations between homes of origin and homes of relocation. Rather than expressing clear relationships of home and longing within diasporic communities, “Out Against the Occupation” provides an alternative way of thinking about diaspora by demonstrating how diasporic relationships

⁴² Co-sponsoring groups include Helem-Montreal and Tadamon!, groups presented at the events in videos or speeches include ASWAT and Helem-Beirut; affiliate groups that the events allied with include Boycott of World Pride Jerusalem and Helem-Beirut.

open new possibilities for social and political relationships across places. Thus, the traces of diasporic movement enable the opportunity for non-diasporic subjects to connect to places other than here. Looking at the map of movement (figure 2.1), the lines located between Montreal and the Middle East represent the traces of paths made through various forms of movement. These movements include those of migrancy and diaspora (as people immigrate and then visit homelands, and objects and ideas circulate back and forth between both places), as well as political paths traced through the relations of queerness (figure 2.2) and politics of solidarity (figure 2.3). By mapping political-paths, I have been able to demonstrate how “Out Against the Occupation” neither consists of a fixed diasporic community with a shared homeland or place of origin, nor a unified identity-based group. Rather, what the events build on are the commonalities people share politically and their shared frustrations with the events surrounding their lives, including war, pride celebrations and the disjuncture they felt between their politics and these “identity” celebrations. Both Trish and Leila follow political paths as they participate in political groups informed by their diasporic subjectivities. Leila’s trip to Iran and Lebanon, for example, demonstrates the relationship between migrancy, diaspora and political belonging in political path-making, since after leaving Iran following her family visit, she traveled to Lebanon and met with members of Helem-Beirut. In this movement, Leila traveled diasporically to Iran to visit family, however her movement was not simply diasporic, as her visit to Beirut was framed through migrancy – since Leila has no diasporic connection to Lebanon. Instead, Leila followed the paths created through relations of migrancy, paths that emerged through Tadamon!’s involvement in solidarity work and the links between Helem-Montreal (which Leila is familiar with) and Helem-

Beirut.

In building a map of political path-making for “Out Against the Occupation,” I have argued that we can rethink the relationship between location and belonging through new approaches to movement. Here, the role of migrancy and diaspora inform embodied, located, and situated knowledges that in turn facilitate the process of solidarity building. Thus, the ability for us to reorient ourselves through the mechanism of the transversal is dependent upon where we are located and how we approach the act of embodying relations of solidarity. For “Out Against the Occupation,” the foundations of political paths that I outlined above and the approaches to community and belonging enabled the organizers to reorient themselves in solidarity with Helem-Beirut and the Sanayeh Relief Centre when other radical queers and mainstream queer communities failed to connect the context of war with queer rights.

CONCLUSION

The “Out Against the Occupation” events on the one hand acted as a response from the organizers to what they interpreted as a lack of acknowledgment that the Montreal OutGames gave to the ensuing war, and the implications of holding World Pride in the state of Israel as it waged war on Lebanon and continued the occupation of Palestine. However, the events also posed interesting questions for how and why queer anti-war responses emerge, and what meaning, value and implications it holds for engaging with broader questions of globalization, war, colonialism, migration, and the possibilities of activism and resistance. In Chapter 1, I examined the role of queerness in “Out Against the Occupation” to argue that queer/ing movement resists the unidirectionality of orientation. I introduced the concept of transversal movement as a way of rethinking how movement functions in non-linear and unfixed ways. In Chapter 2, I examined the role of solidarity in “Out Against the Occupation” and argued for a particular model of solidarity built on the process of embodiment in relations of shared struggle. Finally, in Chapter 3, I further conceptualized the role of movement in activism and resistance by examining the place of the transversal in relationships of location and distance, including migrancy, diaspora, and space.

Throughout this thesis I investigated the “Out Against the Occupation” events as a model for activism. As someone situated within local activist communities in Montreal, I am always struck by mobilizations and forms of activism that are able to bridge divisions in order to enact effective actions of solidarity. When I participated in the second “Out Against the Occupation” event, and then later co-organized a third “Out Against the Occupation”-inspired event with Leila called “Queer Resistance and the War on Terror:

Rethinking a Middle Eastern Perspective” in the fall of 2007, I was not only inspired to mobilize around queer resistance to colonialism and imperialism, but I also became interested in questions of solidarity and the relations that shape and motivate our investments in political organizing. During the last year of my degree, while researching and writing my thesis, I also worked for a campus-based labour union, and helped coordinate one of the longest strikes in the history of McGill. The combination of these events and the culmination of my research as I spent the summer writing have raised a number of questions for me, some of which I hope to explore during my doctoral research at the University of Toronto. If solidarity functions best when it is structured around a model of community that is both fluid and shifting, then how can we concretely create long-term, global and sustainable social movements based on solidarity? Thus far, I can only think of effective forms of solidarity at the small scale, since most of the larger social movements I have encountered end up replicating systemic hierarchies internally. Should we even be thinking about long-term social movements, or is solidarity rather best thought of as a long-term approach to developing short-term emerging moments of resistance?

“Out Against the Occupation” was not simply an emergent moment of resistance. Rather, the events demonstrate the possibility for solidarity and resistance across diverse interests and perspectives. When the 2006 Lebanon War broke out and gay celebrations in Canada and Israel failed to provide any kind of anti-war response, the disjuncture between sexual identities and mobilization around the concept of human rights weighed heavily on queer activists such as Trish and Leila. Discourses around sexual rights that are in isolation of other rights, such as “gay internationalism,” assume a homogeneity of

experience and are incapable of responding to fragmented and complicated identities.

“Out Against the Occupation” provides an opportunity for us to rethink how we approach discourses and activism around rights. It critiques binary models of identification while organizing across diverse and fragmented perspectives and interests.

What I have tried to argue here is that our orientation in how we approach the world is very much influenced by our political investments and our willingness to move beyond binary and unidirectional logics. I have demonstrated that the queerness of “Out Against the Occupation” is not simply an incidental occurrence, and it is not by chance that such a queer response to war and occupation emerged. Rather, queerness enables a disruption in nationalisms and cohesive categorizations as it encounters violence. It does so by not simply orienting subjects to view the world through queered identity, but rather functions transversally to interrogate war and occupation beyond a unidirectional framework. Therefore, the queerness of “Out Against the Occupation” made the events capable of linking the context of war and occupation to queer subjectivities, and was able to articulate a discourse of resistance and rights beyond a liberal model. The International Human Rights Conference, World Pride Jerusalem, and even Queerupton Tel Aviv, were all unable to articulate a similar position as they were all invested in nationalist readings of queer subjects; and though it is true that Queerupton usually articulates an anti-nationalist politics, its insistence on hosting the gathering in Israel during the war as an act of intervention into corporatized LGBT pride celebrations speaks to the implicit investment in a national queer subject.

By rethinking questions of queer subjectivity through the practice of resistance, queerness provides a new approach to thinking about movement. Here I would like to

return to the map of political path-making that I discussed in Chapter 3 to read the paths that situate the subjects of “Out Against the Occupation.” Queerness functioned in “Out Against the Occupation” as a necessary condition for resistance, since had the events simply been LGBT gatherings, the step between a critical and resistant orientation and a situated subjectivity would have been lost. A queer reading of movement demonstrates how queerness informs the transversal moment that enabled “Out Against the Occupation” to articulate a queer anti-war response.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1: Timeline, Summer 2006

Figure 2: “Out Against the Occupation” Map of Political Path-making

Figure 2.1: Map of Movement

Figure 2.2: Map of Queer Movement

Figure 2.3: Map of Solidarity Movement

Advertisement for the first “Out Against the Occupation” event

Advertisement for the second “Out Against the Occupation” event

REB Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

Figure 1: Timeline, Summer 2006

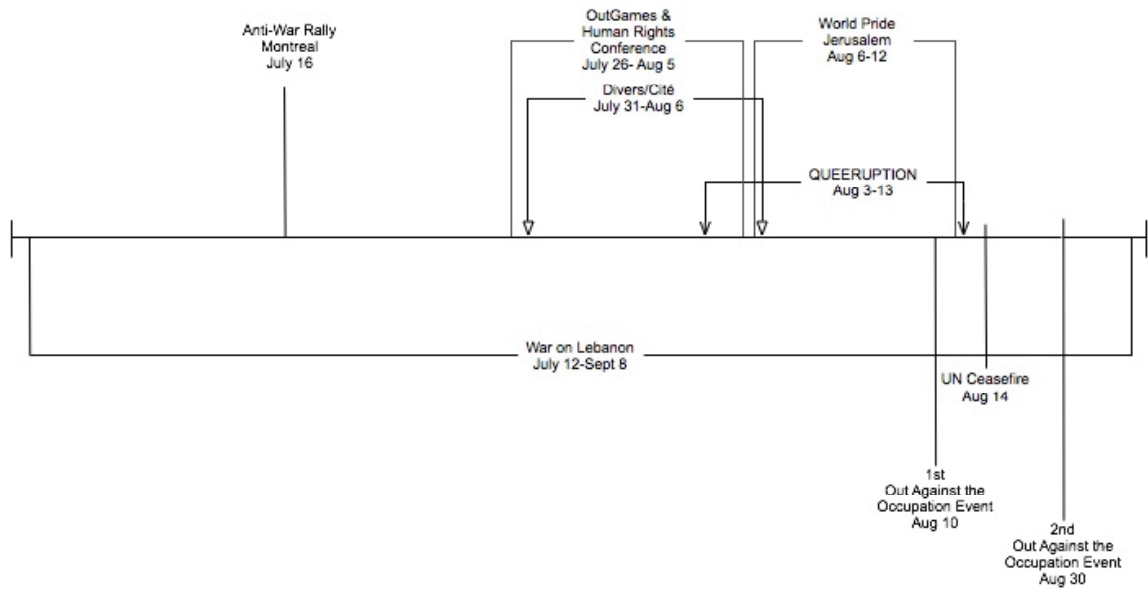


Figure 2: “Out Against the Occupation” Map of Political Path-making

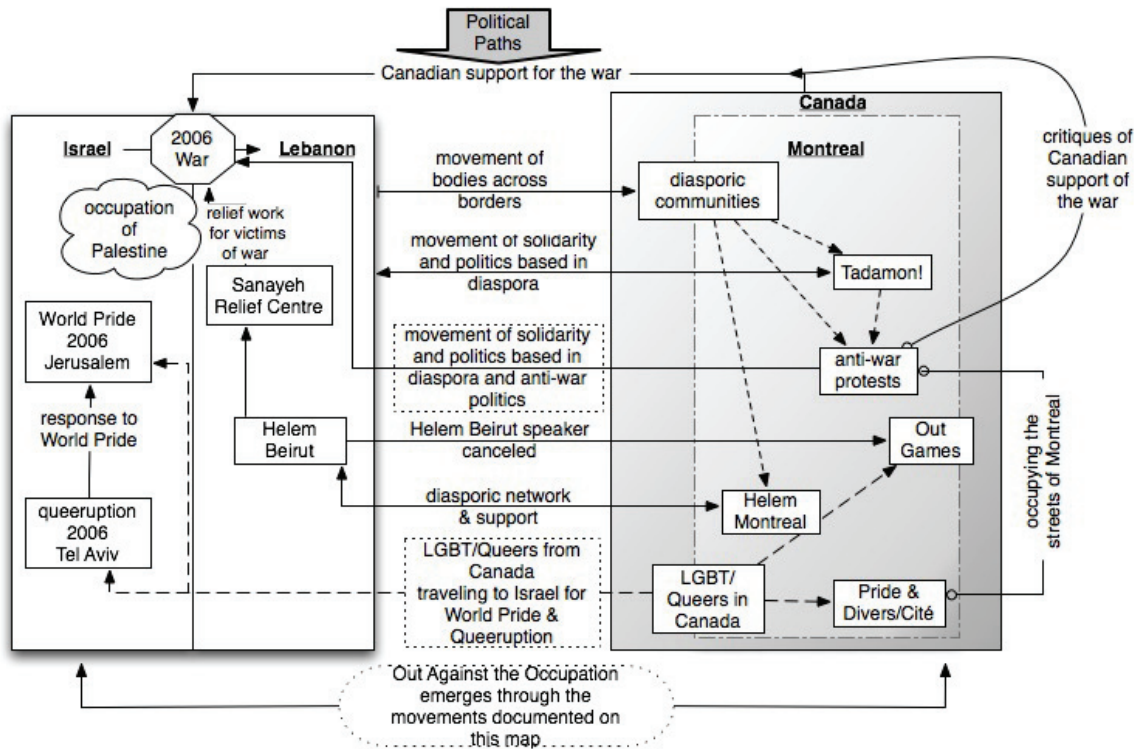


Figure 2.1: Map of Movement

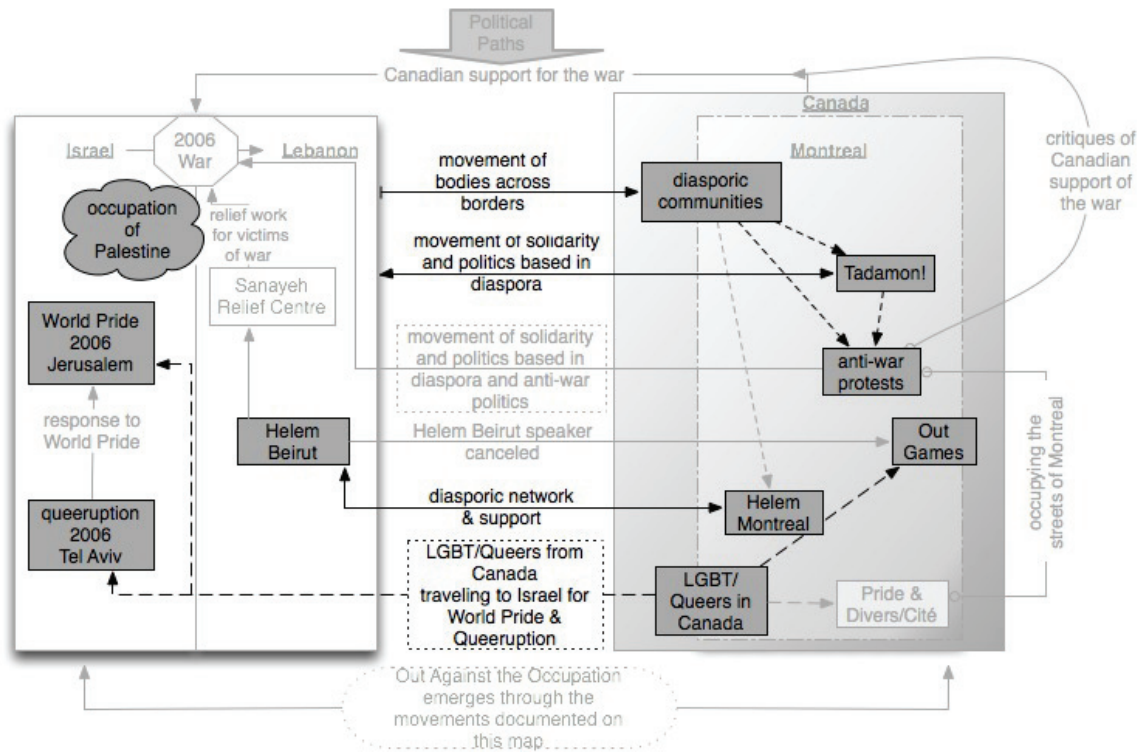


Figure 2.2: Map of Queer Movement

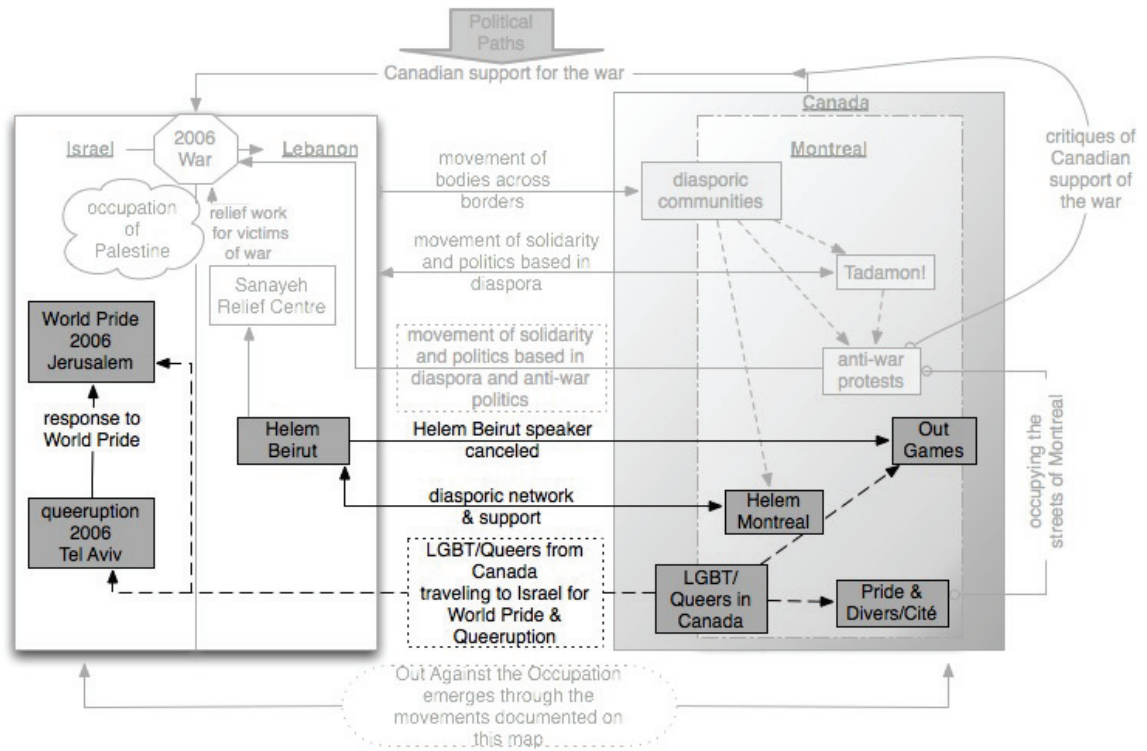
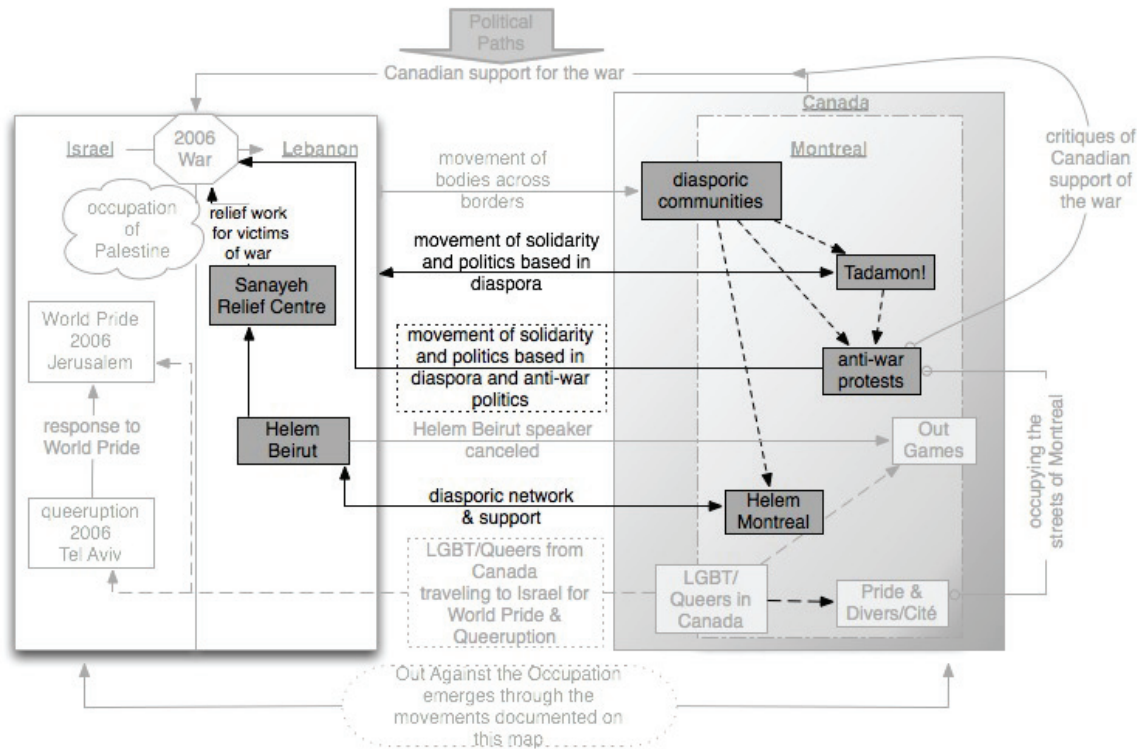



Figure 2.3: Map of Solidarity Movement



Advertisement for the first “Out Against the Occupation” event

QPIRG McGill & the Queer Bookfair present:



**out
against
the
occupation**

Un soir de films et discussion en solidarité avec La Coalition pour le Boycott du World Pride Jerusalem 2006
An evening of film and discussion in solidarity with The Coalition to Boycott World Pride Jerusalem 2006

JEUDI LE 10 AOÛT 20h
Cafe Esperanza (5490 St. Laurent)

Par donation Des dons vont au Sanayeh Relief Center a Beirut

Film:

<p>Zero degrees de separation est une documentaire qui examine la situation des couples Palestinien-Israelien gay et lesbiennes en train de vivre avec les realitees de l'occupation.</p>	<p>Zero Degrees of Separation is a feature-length documentary examining the situation of gay and lesbian Palestinian-Israeli couples contending with the realities of occupation.</p>
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Advertisement for the second "Out Against the Occupation" event



OUT AGAINST OCCUPATION II
A FUNDRAISER FOR THE SANAYEH RELIEF CENTRE IN BEIRUT
www.sanayehreliefcenter.blogspot.com

Wednesday, August 30 2006
Doors at 9 pm, Performance 10 pm
Club Lambi 4465 blvd. St-Laurent (corner of Mont-Royal)
Pay What You Can/Suggested Donation: 5-20\$


FEATURING
Screenings:
A Public Service Announcement from Electronic Lebanon
From Beirut to... those who love us!: a video by Beirut DC film and cinema collective

Poetry:
Trish Salah

Speakers:
Nayrouz from ASWAT (a Palestinian Gay Woman's Group) talks about negotiating a queer Arab identity while resisting occupation and Israeli apartheid.
Dirna Ayoub from Tadamon! reports back from Beirut.

Performance:
Radical Drag by Osama Bin Thuggin
(Condoleezza Rice and Dick Cheney like you've never seen them before...)
Drag Performance by Farah Abdill

and Dance Party with:
Dj's Lolita P., Kandis and more laying down beats from Hip Hop to Arab Pop!



Presented by QP/RC/MCGII and Tadamon!
For more info: www.ssmu.mcgill.ca/qpg

REB Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

McGill University

ETHICS REVIEW RENEWAL REQUEST/FINAL REPORT

Continuing review of human subject research requires, at a minimum, the submission of an annual status report to the REB. This form must be completed to request renewal of ethics approval. If a renewal is not received before the expiry date, the project is considered no longer approved and no further research activity may be conducted. When a project has been completed, this form can also be used as a Final Report, which is required to properly close a file. To avoid expired approvals and, in the case of funded projects, the freezing of funds, this form should be returned 3-4 weeks before the current approval expires.

REB File #: 194-0307

Project Title: Identity, activism and solidarity in the "Out Against the Occupation" events

Principal Investigator: Natalie Kouri-Towe

Department/Phone/Email: Art History and Communication Studies/514-999-5069/Natalie.kouri-towe@mail.mcgill.ca

Faculty Supervisor (for student PI): Dr. Carrie Rentschler

1. Were there any significant changes made to this research project that have any ethical implications? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes, describe these changes and append any relevant documents that have been revised.

2. Are there any ethical concerns that arose during the course of this research? ☐ Yes ☒ No. If yes, please describe.

3. Have any subjects experienced any adverse events in connection with this research project? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes, please describe.

4. ☒ This is a request for renewal of ethics approval.

5. ☐ This project is no longer active and ethics approval is no longer required.

6. List all current funding sources for this project and the corresponding project titles if not exactly the same as the project title above. Indicate the Principal Investigator of the award if not yourself.

N/A

Principal Investigator Signature: _____

Date: March 5, 2008

Faculty Supervisor Signature: _____
(for student PI)

Date: March 3, 2008

For Administrative Use

REB: ☒ REB-I ☐ REB-II ☐ REB-III

☐ The closing report of this terminated project has been reviewed and accepted

☒ The continuing review for this project has been reviewed and approved

☒ Expedited Review

☐ Full Review

Signature of REB Chair or designate: _____

Date: March 28, 2008

Approval Period: April 11, 2008 to April 10, 2009

*****NOTE NEW MAILING ADDRESS*****

Submit to Lynda McNeil, Research Ethics Officer, 1555 Peel Street, 11th floor, fax: 398-4644 tel: 398-6831

(version 12/07)



McGill

Research Ethics Board Office
McGill University
845 Sherbrooke Street West
James Administration Bldg., rm 419
Montreal, QC H3A 2T5

Tel: (514) 398-6831
Fax: (514) 398-4644
Ethics website: www.mcgill.ca/researchoffice/compliance/human/

Research Ethics Board I
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 194-0307

Project Title: Identity, activism and solidarity in the "Out Against the Occupation" events

Principal Investigator: Natalie Kouir-Towe

Department: Art History & Communication Studies

Status: Master's student

Supervisor: Prof. C. Rentschler

Funding Agency and Title: N/A

This project was reviewed on April 3, 2007 by Lynda M'Neil, Research Ethics officer
Expedited Review ☒
Full Review ☐

Lynda M'Neil, Research Ethics officer
for Catherine Lu, Ph.D.
Chair, REB I

Approval Period: April 11, 2007 to April 10, 2008

This project was reviewed and approved in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects and with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct For Research Involving Humans

-
- *All research involving human subjects requires review on an annual basis. A Request for Renewal form should be submitted at least one month before the above expiry date.
 - *If a project has been completed or terminated and ethics approval is no longer required, a Final Report form must be submitted.
 - *Should any modification or other unanticipated development occur before the next required review, the REB must be informed and any modification can't be initiated until approval is received.



Research Ethics Board-I
Application for Ethics Approval for Human Subject Research

(please refer to the Application Guidelines at www.mcgill.ca/research/compliance/human/ before completing this form)

Project Title: Identity, Activism and Solidarity in the "Out Against the Occupation" Events

Principal Investigator: Natalie Kouri-Towe

Dept: Communication Studies

Phone #: (514) 999-5069

Fax #:

Email: natalie.kouri-towe@mail.mcgill.ca

Mailing Address (if different than Dept.): 2214 Quesnel, Montreal, QC, H3J 1G2

Status: Faculty ☐

Postdoctoral Fellow ☐

Other (specify) ☐

Ph.D. Student ☐

Master's Student ☒

Undergraduate ☐

Type of Research: Faculty Research ☐

Thesis ☒

Honours Thesis ☐

Independent Study Project ☐

Course Assignment (specify course name and #) _____

Other (specify) _____

Faculty Supervisor (for student PIs): Dr. Carrie Rentschler

Email: carrie.rentschler@mcgill.ca

Co- Investigators/Other Researchers (list name/status/affiliation): none

List all funding sources for this project and project titles (if different from the above). Indicate the Principal Investigator of the award if not yourself.

Awarded:

Pending:

Principal Investigator Statement: I will ensure that this project is conducted in accordance with the policies and procedures governing the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects at McGill University.

Principal Investigator Signature: _____

Date: March 5, 2007

Faculty Supervisor Statement: I have read and approved this project and affirm that it has received the appropriate academic approval. I will ensure that the student investigator is aware of the applicable policies and procedures governing the ethical conduct of human subject research at McGill University and I agree to provide all necessary supervision to the student.

Faculty Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Respond directly on this form below each question. Do not delete the text under the question. Do not omit or reorder any questions. Answer each question.

1. Purpose of the Research

Describe the proposed project and its objectives, including the research questions to be investigated (one page maximum). What is the expected value or benefits of the research? How do you anticipate disseminating the results (e.g. thesis, presentations, internet, film, publications)?

This research is being conducted for my Master's thesis, which investigates the ways that contemporary women of Arab and Middle-Eastern descent, located in communities in Montreal and situated in Canada more broadly, use identity and self-representation in their participation in local solidarity movements. Further, I want to investigate how these women talk about their experiences and identity through encounters with discourses on race and representations of themselves as raced. Since little research has been done on issues of identity from the perspective of contemporary young Arab and Middle-Eastern identified women, my research seeks to fill a gap in current knowledge and theory relating to the relationship between identity and social movement participation in Arab diasporic communities in Canada.

Using "Out Against the Occupation," a series of events aimed at fundraising for relief-efforts in Lebanon during and after the July 2006 war, I will explore how the organizers and performers of the event negotiated identity and representation through resistance. Organized by Middle-Eastern/Arab women as well as organizations and individuals who were standing in solidarity with the Lebanese, these events were also responding to the lack of acknowledgment that the Montreal "Out Games" gave to the ensuing war in Lebanon. Examining the "Out Against the Occupation" events to look at the way the events' organizers and performers talk about their relationships to the mission of the event and their understanding of their own identities as diasporic Arab/Middle-Eastern and queer identified women.

2. Recruitment of Subjects/Location of Research

Describe the subject population and how and from where they will be recruited. If applicable, attach a copy of any advertisement, letter, flier, brochure or oral script used to solicit potential subjects (including information sent to third parties). Describe the setting in which the research will take place. Describe any compensation subjects may receive for participating.

I will be conducting interviews with the organizers of the "Out Against the Occupation" events, as well as some of the performers who I have identified as playing a central public role in these events. Subjects will not receive any compensation for their participation. I will conduct interviews with the subjects in a location most comfortable for them – most likely a quiet location.

3. Other Approvals

When doing research with various distinct groups of subjects (e.g. school children, cultural groups, institutionalized people, other countries), organizational/community/governmental permission is sometimes needed. If applicable, how will this be obtained? Include copies of any documentation to be sent.

Not Applicable.

4. Methodology/Procedures

Provide a sequential description of the methods and procedures to be followed to obtain data. Describe all methods that will be used (e.g. fieldwork, surveys, interviews, focus groups, standardized testing, video/audio taping). Attach copies of questionnaires or draft interview guides, as appropriate.

I will be conducting individual open-ended interviews with the organizers and performers of the "Out Against the Occupation" events (see draft interview questions attached). With interviewee's consent, I will audio-record interviews for reference and analysis, and possible follow-up work.

5. Potential Harms and Risk

a) Describe any known or foreseeable harms, if any, that the subjects or others might be subject to during or as a result of the research. Harms may be psychological, physical, emotional, social, legal, economic, or political.

(version February 2006)

I can see no potential harms to the subjects. Should an interviewee wish to cease participation, they can terminate the interview at any time. Since the interview questions will ask the interviewees to talk about the relationship between their choice to get involved in activism and the dimensions of identity that bear upon that, it may be possible that some subjects might choose to refrain from discussing certain topics in detail. In such cases, I will respect their desire to omit those issues and will redirect the interview away from those questions.

b) In light of the above assessment of potential harms, indicate whether you view the risks as acceptable given the value or benefits of the research.

I view the risks as acceptable.

c) Outline the steps that may be taken to reduce or eliminate these risks. If deception is used, justify the use of the deception and indicate how subjects will be debriefed or justify why they will not be debriefed.

I will refrain from continuing to ask questions on a topic to which the subject expresses discomfort.

6. Privacy and Confidentiality

Describe the degree to which the anonymity of subjects and the confidentiality of data will be assured and the specific methods to be used for this, both during the research and in the release of findings. This includes the use of data coding systems, how and where data will be stored, who will have access to it, what will happen to the data after the study is finished, and the potential use of the data by others. Indicate if there are any conditions under which privacy or confidentiality cannot be guaranteed (e.g. focus groups), or, if confidentiality is not an issue in this research, explain why.

I will be using the interviews as primary sources for my research. I will be quoting the subjects directly and citing them in my thesis. The interviews will not be confidential, and anonymity cannot be guaranteed as the interviewees are public figures in conjunction with the "Out Against the Occupation" events. The recorded interviews will not be available publicly, and recordings will only be available to myself and my co-supervisors. After my research is finished, I plan to keep the recordings for future research use, pending consent of the interviewees.

I cannot protect their confidentiality because they are public figures who represent the event, and I have specifically identified them because of that.

7. Informed Consent Process

Describe the oral and/or written procedures that will be followed to obtain informed consent from the subject. Attach all consent documents, including information sheets and scripts for oral consents. If written consent will not be obtained, justification must be provided.

Before I begin the interview, I will describe my thesis and the research I am conducting. Subjects will be informed that the interview will not be confidential or anonymous, and portions of the interview may be quoted, cited or referred to in my thesis. I will inform them that I will be recording the interview with their consent, and will go through the details listed in the consent form and inform them that if at any point they are uncomfortable being recorded, I will stop the recording. I will also inform them that they may retract consent from participating at any time, and following their request, I will delete the entire recording or portions of it.

8. Other Concerns

a) Indicate if the subjects are a captive population (e.g. prisoners, residents in a center) or are in any kind of conflict of interest relationship with the researcher such as being students, clients, patients or family members. If so, explain how you will ensure that the subjects do not feel pressure to participate or perceive that they may be penalized for choosing not to participate.

Not applicable.

b) Comment on any other potential ethical concerns that may arise during the course of the research.

Not applicable.

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM
McGill University

Title of Research: Identity, Activism and Solidarity in Montreal's "Out Against the Occupation" Events

Researcher: Natalie Kouri-Towe, M.A. candidate, Communication Studies

Supervisor: Dr. Carrie Rentschler; tel: (514) 398-4932

Contact Information: Tel: (514) 999-5069; email: natalie.kouri-towe@mail.mcgill.ca

Purpose of the research: To investigate the ways that contemporary women of Arab and Middle-Eastern descent, located in communities in Montreal and situated in Canada more broadly, use identity and self-representation in their participation in local solidarity movements. Further, I want to investigate how these women talk about their experiences and identity through encounters with discourses on race and representations of themselves as raced. Since little research has been done on issues of identity from the perspective of contemporary young Arab and Middle-Eastern identified women, my research seeks to fill a gap in current knowledge and theory relating to the relationship between identity and social movement participation in Arab diasporic communities in Canada.

I will be using the "Out Against the Occupation" events of August 2006 as a site to interrogate the above questions, and I would like to interview you about your participation in these events as an organizer and/or presenter. Specifically, I would like to talk to you about how you think about the relationship between your own identity and the solidarity movement you participate in.

This research is being conducted as part of my M.A. thesis. Like all such works, the finished text will be available to the public. The information gathered in this interview may also be used in subsequent research projects that develop from this research.

What is involved in participating: I will ask you a series of interview questions related to your participation in the "Out Against the Occupation" events that happened in August 2006. With your consent, I will audio record the interview. I will be using your interview responses as a primary source for my research. Your interview responses may be quoted, cited, and referred to in my thesis. There are no potential risks associated with participating in this research. There is no compensation for participating.

Based on your responses to the questions below, your signature serves to signify that you agree to participate in the interview and be recorded.

In the interview, you will be asked questions about your involvement in the "Out Against the Occupation" events, your opinions on the events, your role within them, and how you understand the relationship between your own identity and your activist work. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can choose to stop the interview at any time. If the recording has already begun and you choose to retract your consent, you may request to either delete the entire recording or a portion of the recording, and you may halt all further recording. Please be assured that a decision not to participate will not affect my academic standing.

Due to your standing as a known organizer of and/or performer at the "Out Against the Occupation" events, by giving consent to being recorded and quoted means that you agree that confidentiality cannot be ensured unless you retract consent and participation in my research. If you agree to be recorded and quoted, your name may be revealed in my thesis, other written work that draws on my research, oral presentations, and possible publications of my research.

Consent:

I agree to be audio-recorded _____YES _____NO

I agree to be quoted in the researcher's thesis and other work she might produce using this research _____YES _____NO

I agree to allow the researcher to keep copies of the audio recordings and transcripts of my interview for use as reference, possible future research, and to share with with her supervisors. _____YES _____NO

Participant's signature _____ Researcher's signature _____

Participant's printed name _____ Date _____

Draft Interview Questions

Research Title: Identity, Activism and Solidarity in Montreal's "Out Against the Occupation" Events

1. Tell me a little bit about the work you did for the "Out Against the Occupation" events? Did you play a particular role in the events and if so, can you talk to me about what you did and how you became involved.
2. What drew you to organize or participate in the "Out Against the Occupation" events?
3. I'm really interested in the kinds of concepts and ideas that people draw on, both in their own way of thinking about their identity, but also in the ways they draw upon different concepts in their activist work. Are there any particular concepts that you draw upon that direct your own activist work?
4. I'm also interested in exploring how identity shapes experiences and involvement in activism, particularly in what ways people are invested in certain ideas and goals, and how their social positions allow them to engage with activism in different ways. How would you describe your own identity? Are there elements of your identity that you feel are relevant to the kind of work you do, especially in relation to the "Out Against the Occupation" events?
5. I think as either organizers or participants in activist events, we go into the event with certain ideas about what the purpose is and what we are trying to achieve. Sometimes these goals are overtly decided by the organizers, though often what the event comes to represent in the process of involving the organizers, performers, participants, audience, and communities can be quite different from that. Can you talk a little about what you think the goals of the events were, and if you think that these goals were achieved?
6. Following this idea of how events are shaped by all the people and groups who come to be involved with them, how do you think the "Out Against the Occupation" events were received by the participants who attended as audience members? Was this reception in line with the goals of the events or with your own goals?
7. The events were organized in response to the lack of recognition and dialogue surrounding the 2006 war in Lebanon at the Montreal Out Games and the critiques of the World Pride events occurring in Jerusalem from "the Coalition to Boycott World Pride Jerusalem 2006". In light of this, why was it important for you that the "Out Against the Occupation" events were framed as "queer" events? What does it mean to you to call it a *queer* event?
8. Both events were framed pretty explicitly in the advertisements as *solidarity* events, and to raise funds for the "Sanayeh Relief Centre" in Beirut. I'd like you to talk about how you think the "Out Against the Occupation" events functioned in terms of solidarity and resistance for those involved with the events and for yourself more personally.
9. Since the "Out Against the Occupation" events were framed in terms of solidarity with the victims of war abroad, how do you think the location of the events (in Montreal, and during the particular local and global context of the Out Games, World Pride, and the 2006 War in Lebanon) is relevant?