“If you are writing, you are still alive”

The potential of sumud and the ‘Wall Museum’ for the women of the Arab Educational Institute in Bethlehem, Palestine

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Picture on front page: a poster in the ‘Wall Museum’ in Bethlehem, Palestine, taken by the author. All the pictures depicted in this thesis have been taken by the author, unless indicated differently.

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[2] References and appendices not included

Invictus

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul."

William Ernest Henley, 1888 (kensanes.com).

Executive summary

The objective of this major thesis was to analyse if sumud is a force that changes the materialisation of the Wall and the subjectivity of the women of the Sumud Story House through the act of sharing stories. In this research, the 'act' of sharing stories was framed as an 'intra-action' taking place between different material phenomena. With the use of concepts such as 'infrapolitics', 'the uncolonized subject', 'space invasion' and 'witness bearers', this theoretical frame made it possible to shed light on the potential of sumud.

To answer the research question posed in this thesis, data was collected during three months of field work at the Sumud Story House, a premises of the Arab Educational Institute in Bethlehem, Palestine. During these three months I interviewed 16 women of the Sumud Story House, organised three focus group discussions and observed weekly group meetings. The focus of attention was the 'Wall Museum', a project of the Arab Educational Institute in which stories of the Palestinian women of the Sumud Story House have been posted on the Wall in Bethlehem.

Sumud was identified by the women as representing the will to keep going forward. In relation to the research question posed, the act of sharing stories via the 'Wall Museum' was identified by the women as an (intra-)act(ion) that represents sumud. To share your story in the 'Museum' represented and enhanced sumud, which provided room for the women to take control of their own processes of subjectification. The act of sharing stories made it possible for the women, as witness bearers, to share their pain, enhance the social relations and show foreigners the unjust circumstances they were living in. This 'use' of the 'Museum' shows it is a creative form of appropriating the difficult situation the women are in.

However, although sumud and the sharing of stories in the 'Wall Museum' can be identified as having this potential, this did not seem to influence the materialisation of the actual, concrete Wall. The Wall materialised in an equally oppressive manner for the women, of which the majority preferred not to invade the space. To specify the relationship between space invasion and the materialisation of the Wall in Palestine, more research is needed but in this thesis it is argued that a disconnection can be seen between the room that has been created for/by the women in the 'Museum' and the actual space it is located in, namely on the Wall.

Key words: sumud, act of sharing stories, resistance, process of subjectification, space invasion, the Wall, Palestine.

Preface

This major thesis is the final assignment of the master International Development Studies at the Wageningen University. However, the thesis it not only the outcome of this master, but also of the master Gender and Ethnicity I completed at the Utrecht University and the previous research projects I executed. The skills I had learned during my years of academic studies gave me the tools to execute this research about sumud in Palestine. I wanted to execute this project because I have been thinking about Palestine and felt moved by and connected to Palestinians and their situation since I was a teenager. I found it very difficult when I was younger to not only realize such a blatant injustice was going on, but that no other countries seemed to care enough about it to stop it. Hopefully this thesis can show the humanity and strength of the Palestinian women I interviewed and work towards decreasing the gap between 'us, the West' and 'them, the Middle East'.

Doing research in Bethlehem and residing in the city was a wonderful experience. It has been a time of extremes, feeling sad, angry, frustrated, happy, enthusiastic and at home. This wonderful experience would not have been possible without the willingness of the women of the Sumud Story House to open the doors to their homes and their hearts. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to hear your stories and experience what sumud entails. A special thanks goes out to Mary and Jack, who provided me with a home away from home. I would also like to thank Rania Murra, Fuad Giacaman, Toine van Teeffelen and Elias Abou Akleh for all the support I have received from the AEI. Esther Kilchherr, without you Bethlehem would not have been the same. Thank you for laughing, crying and being pissed off with me!

I want to thank dr. Alberto Arce for his supervision and guidance as my supervisor. His feedback and trust encouraged me to think creatively and keep moving forward. I would also like to thank dr. Bram Jansen, who wanted to devote his time to reading this thesis as the second-reader.

Lastly, I want to thank my family and friends for the support during the months I worked on this thesis. The feedback provided by my parents and friends on earlier versions of this text were very helpful and guided me towards further developing my argument. Finally, I would like to thank Zohair for his love, encouragement and for providing me with a non-academic space to breath.

Content

Introduction

"Between mute submission and blind hate - I choose the third way. I am Samid."[3]

(Shehadeh: 1982)

Palestinians have been dealing with displacement, dispossession, occupation and insecurity for many generations and developed a mentality to deal with this. This mentality is described by Palestinians as sumud. In this thesis, sumud will be analysed as it is executed by women in Bethlehem in relation to the Wall.

The research question that will be answered is if sumud entails an intra-action that influences the process of subjectivity of the women of the Sumud Story House and the materialisation of the Wall through the act of sharing stories. This research question will be answered by discussing which stories are shared in the 'Wall Museum' in Bethlehem and why the interviewees shared these stories. It will be analysed what sumud means for the interviewees and how is it related to resistance. Finally, it will be described if the intra-action of sharing of stories via the 'Wall Museum' changes the materialisation of the Wall.

By discussing and analysing these phenomena, the potential of sumud as expressed by the women involved in the Sumud Story House, a project of the Arab Education Institute in Bethlehem, in relation to the Wall can become clear. The relationship Palestinians have with the Wall is often seen in a one-dimensional way, namely by focusing on the effect of the Wall on the lives of Palestinians. In this thesis, I will argue for the importance of analysing this relationship as a mutual relationship in which, via 'intra-action', both parties materialize in a significant manner. Due to this, the parties cannot be analysed as separate and static entities.

A thesis about sumud is important because sumud is a concept that comes from the ground. It is not a concept with a theoretical background but a concept that is based on the ways Palestinians have survived during wars, in exile and under occupation. The last ten years have seen a growing number of settlements in the West Bank, the building of the separation Wall, the start and effects of the Arab 'Spring', specifically in neighbouring country Syria, and the 65th anniversary of the state of Israel. All these developments have sparked new debates and research projects. However, the human experience of Palestinians is often not given enough space in these debates and academic studies. With this study, I wish to shed light on the human side of the Israel-Palestine conflict. By focusing on the human dimension and moving

[3] This statement is the subtitle of the Shehadeh's diary *The third way – a journal of life in the West Bank* (:1982).

away from a strictly political or historical discussion, the often unheard voices of the affected population can be given room to. The focus on sumud and the experiences of the women involved in the Sumud Story House, provide room for a move from the often epistemological focus in (geopolitical) research about Palestinians to an ontological focus. This focus on the agency and experiences of Palestinians living under occupation, in refugee camps or as second-tier citizens in Israel sheds light on how to move beyond stereotypical notions of Palestinians, who are often associated with images of suicide bombers, children throwing rocks and victims we should pity. Instead, there is a focus in this thesis on the creative and inspiring practices that are used by the Palestinians to survive and keep moving forward. By stepping away from the traditional image of one homogenous group, Palestinians, opposed to another homogenous group, Israelis, and by shedding light on the ways in which the women interviewed make sense of their lives, a step forward can be made towards a focus on entities/phenomena. This step, while outside the scope of this thesis, could also provide new ways to enter the political debate concerning the future of Palestine/Israel.

The data discussed in this thesis has been collected at the Arab Educational Institute in Bethlehem (AEI), where I volunteered for three months at the Sumud Story House (SSH), the premise that is focused on women. The AEI is a Palestinian organisation working with Christian and Muslim Palestinians in Bethlehem. It is an organisation involved in non-violent resistance to the Israeli occupation. The mission of the AEI is working with youth, women and educators. The aim is to build a free, democratic and culturally pluralistic Palestine and to share the daily life reality of Palestinians with broader audiences (aeicenter.org).

This thesis will be structured as follows: in the first chapter a short historical overview will be given of Palestine/Israel. In this chapter I will also provide four examples of the circumstances Palestinians in the West Bank live in. These examples will give an insight into what sumud in practice means. In the second chapter I will discuss the theoretical framework I will use to analyse the data collected. The third chapter will be used to provide an insight into the methodology I have used during my data collection in Bethlehem. In the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters I will analyse the data I have collected in Bethlehem through answering the sub questions posed in this introduction. The discussion chapter will shed light on some theoretical and methodological implications for further research. Finally, in the conclusion, the findings will be summarized and the research question will be answered.

Chapter 1

Palestine: the story of a disappearing country

In this chapter I will give an overview of the recent history of Palestine/Israel. This history shows how the country 'Palestine' slowly disappeared. It shows how the area the Palestinians called home steadily became part of Israel until the current situation where the 'Palestinian Territories', i.e. the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, are occupied by Israel. However, as will be shown in the second part of the chapter, this does not mean that the concept of 'Palestine' and the hope for a homeland have also disappeared. As will become clear in this chapter, and this thesis as a whole, this hope and believe in 'Palestine' can be seen in Palestinian steadfastness and resilience

History of Palestine/Israel

Since the end of the 19th century, when Jewish immigration into Palestine started, there has been a continuous struggle between the new Jewish inhabitants of Palestine and Palestinians over the land located between Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and the Mediterranean sea. This Jewish immigration was the outcome of the growing popularity of Zionism. Zionism emerged in the 1880s in Europe as a response to a growing anti-Semitism. Although there are many different expressions and interpretations of Zionism, it is largely understood as a Jewish movement that strives for a Jewish national self-determination within the land of their ancestors. This land was described by the famous Zionist slogan as 'a land without a people', and because the Jewish people were 'a people without a land', they were a perfect match. The already existing population, the Palestinians, who had first been fighting for independence from the Ottoman rulers and later from the British, were conveniently 'forgotten' (Sharoni&Abu-Nimer: 2008). In May 1948, the state of Israel was officially established. This establishment and the war connected to it was experienced by the Palestinians as 'the Nakba', the catastrophe in Arabic. During the Nakba, 780.000 Palestinians became refugees. Some were driven out by force, others fled after stories of massacres in villages such as Deir Yassin.[4] During this time, 418 Palestinian villages were destroyed. After this war, Israel owned 77% of Palestine, and the remaining 23% was divided between Jordan (the West

[4] A village near Jerusalem where in 1948 one hundred Palestinians were systematically killed by Jewish commando's (deiryassin.org)

Bank) and Egypt (Gaza). However, after the war in 1967, these areas were also occupied by Israel, as were the Egyptian Sinai peninsula (from which the Israeli army withdrew in the 1970s) and the Syrian Golan heights (which is still occupied) (Philo&Berry: 2004). When in 1967 the occupation of the Palestinian territories started, all Palestinians were granted a general permit to enter Israel, with the exception of criminals and of people who were suspected security threats (Keshet: 2006).[5]

The first intifada

The first intifada, which means 'shaking off' in Arabic, erupted in 1987. The Israeli military rule had been in place in the Occupied Palestinian Territories for 20 years and home demolitions, detention without trial and a lack of human rights were characterizing this occupation. The intifada has often been categorized as a popular response to the injustice taken place (Allen: 2008). This intifada was predominately non-violent and carried by men and women from different socio-economic backgrounds, ages and different political affiliations. The Israeli government responded violently to the uprising and, due to this, lost a lot of national and international support. The conflict was described as the fight between David (the Palestinians) and Goliath (Israel) (Sharoni&Abu-Nime: 2008). During these years, the first military checkpoints were erected inside the West Bank and Gaza. The general permit which had been granted to all Palestinians in 1967 was withdrawn, and Palestinians who wanted to enter Israel needed a personal permit (Keshet: 2006). This permit system was the first step towards completely controlling the movement of all Palestinians living inside the Occupied Territories. The first Gulf War, which began in 1990, drew the international attention away from the intifada. The tension between the Israeli government and the Palestinians escalated when the Palestinians were put under curfew for 1,5 month during the US-led air attacks on Iraq. During this curfew many Palestinians were on the verge of starvation while the local economy and educational institutions crashed (Sharoni&Abu-Nime: 2008).

[5] The occupation also meant that the building of settlements within the occupied territories started. Settlements are communities of Israeli citizens living illegally within the Occupied Palestinian Territories. These settlements are illegal according to international law. Between 1967 and late 2012, 125 settlements have been established in the West Bank. Inside the Gaza strip there were 16 settlements, but these have been dismantled in 2005 (B'tselem.org). The influence that the settlements have on Palestinian life is a topic that is outside the scope of this thesis. Other sources, such as the UN-OCHA 2007 report on settlements (*The humanitarian impact on Palestinians of Israeli settlements and other infrastructure in the West Bank*: 2007) provide a more thorough analysis of settlements.

Oslo years

The first intifada ended in 1993 when the first agreements of the Oslo Accords were signed by the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) and the Israeli government. During the following years more negotiations took place and the second and third accords were signed (Quigly: 1997). The future of the independent governance of the Palestinians was established in these accords through the recognition by Israel of the PLO and the recognition by the PLO of the state Israel. This recognition paved the way for self-government of the Palestinians, which was realised in the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian territories were divided into three areas, area A (18% of the West Bank), B (22% of the West Bank) and C (60% of the West Bank) (btselem.org). It was agreed upon that Israel would withdraw from area A immediately after the negotiations and in the future from area B (which was controlled by the Palestinians and the Israelis) and C (which was controlled by the Israelis). Difficult issues such as the exact time schedule of withdrawal, the right of return of Palestinian refugees, the settlements and the future status of Jerusalem were postponed until the final negotiations. These final negotiations were planned to take place in 1996 but were postponed by the Israeli government until 2000. In the end, the Oslo Accords were mostly a disappointment for the Palestinians who did not receive independent governance, the end of the occupation, a solution for the refugees or a clear commitment to East Jerusalem as the future Palestinian capital (merip.org). The occupation is still in place and area B and C are still controlled by Israel, which means 82% of the West Bank is under control of Israel. In these areas the number of settlements has grown substantially and the Palestinians living there are often subjected to curfews, complete closures, house demolitions and raids (UN-OCHA: 2007).

During these Oslo years, the negotiations and intentions of peace were not experienced in the day-to-day life of Palestinians. With the support of the Israeli government, the number of settlements quickly increased in areas B and C (merip.org). Closures of villages deep within the Palestinian territories were often imposed and the movement of Palestinians inside the Palestinian territories and entry into Israel were further restricted (Keshet: 2006).

Second Intifada

The lack of improvement in the situation of the Palestinians after the Oslo years led to the Second Intifada. On September 28th in 2000, hard-line politician Ariel Sharon entered the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem accompanied by hundreds of Israeli soldiers. The visit to the compound was seen as underlining the Jewish claim to the city of Jerusalem

(news.bbc.co.uk). Demonstrations occurred all over the Palestinian occupied territories as a response to this visit. While the first intifada was largely a non-violent popular uprising, the second intifada was led by armed Palestinian men. The Israeli government tried to suppress it quickly by a massive use of force; more than 7.000 Palestinians were injured during the first five weeks with the majority of the wounds being located in the upper body and head (Sharoni&Abu-Nimer: 2008). During the following years, the violence continued. Israel responded to the stones thrown and the small-arms used by Palestinians with tanks shells and artillery, including the shelling of civilian neighbourhoods in the occupied territories (Allen: 2008). The intifada escalated by Palestinian suicide bombers, the assassinations of Palestinian politicians by the Israeli secret police Mossad and eventually led to a complete lack of freedom of movement for Palestinians by the building of the Wall (Keshet: 2006).

In the second section of this chapter I will discuss four examples of the current situation that Palestinians are in and how they respond to this situation. These four examples are 'The Wall', 'The Checkpoints', 'Surrounded by Settlements' and 'Singing under Occupation'.

Life in Palestine

The Wall

The name attached to the barrier that is being built between Israel and the occupied West Bank is contested. Official Israeli documents call it a 'security barrier', Palestinians often call it the 'Annexation Wall' or 'Apartheid Wall'.[6] Large sections of this barrier or wall do not consist of an actual concrete wall but of a fifteen-foot high electric fence with a security zone. Within this security zone, which varies from a minimum of 150 feet wide up till 300 feet, there is "barbed wire, an anti-vehicle ditch, one or two intrusion-detection pathways, and at least one patrol route, all under constant surveillance by remote-control cameras and other detection systems" (Backmann: 2010, p. 3). The sections of the barrier/wall that are actual concrete wall are 8-9 metres high, as is the case in Bethlehem (UN-OCHA: 2011). In this thesis I will use the term 'Wall'. This is partly because in Bethlehem the barrier indeed has the form of a concrete wall, but also because the term 'Wall' more correctly indicates the fixed and exclusionary characteristics of the existing separation. The Wall is part of the

[6] The state of Israel is often called 'Apartheid' state to show the similarities between the unjust way in which Israel treats Palestinians and the way in which the Apartheid regime in South Africa treated black South Africans (e.g. Davis (:2003), Yiftachel (:2005) and White (:2009)).

intricate ‘curfew-closure-checkpoint’ system, as explained by Yehudit Kirstein Keshet. In this system, the Wall, with its checkpoints, radically curtails the freedom of Palestinians. “Israel has turned the West Bank, and even more so Gaza, into virtual prisons” (Keshet: 2006, p. 47).

Image 1. the route of the Wall (Human Rights Watch: 2013).

Image 1 shows the route of the Wall. As can be seen, the Wall (the red line) does not follow the 1949 Green Line (which in this picture is represented by the black dotted line), which is

the (most often) agreed upon border between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, but snakes into the West Bank to enclose settlements build deep inside. The building of the Wall started in 2002 and it is still under construction. When finished, it is estimated that 85% of the Wall will run inside the West Bank (UNRWA). According to International Law, the Wall is illegal.[7]

Image 2. Hebron Road in Bethlehem, before the Wall was built this was the liveliest street of the area, now it is abandoned.

For the people who live in the Rachel's Tomb Area in Bethlehem,[8] the 9 meter high concrete Wall snakes into their neighbourhood. The Wall has been built in the middle of Hebron Road, once the liveliest street of the area (see image 2). Toine van Teeffelen, who was already living in Bethlehem when the Wall was built, remembers the changes as follows: "This was once the busiest road in Bethlehem, lined with restaurants that attracted a young and lively clientele. Now the road is sliced in half by the Wall, its watchtowers, and the military terminal through which anybody wanting to reach Jerusalem must pass (…) the area became desolate." (V. Teeffelen: 2011, p. 15). The Wall in Bethlehem was built in 2004-05 (V. Teeffelen: 2011). Sections of the Wall can be put in place in only hours, creating situations where children would go to school in the morning and come home in the afternoon to find out that next to their home a large concrete Wall has been built, segregating them from their friends, families and freedom.

Image 3. C's house, which is surrounded on three sides by the Wall.

This, for instance, happened to one of the women involved in the SSH and her children. C.'s house has been surrounded by the Wall on three sides (see image 3), which took her children by surprise one day when they came home from school (personal interview, 08-11-2013). When it

[7] In 2004 the International Court of Justice in The Hague ruled that "the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the Occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law (Qumsiyeh: 2010, p. 180).

[8] which is where I lived, the SSH is located and the section of the Wall is with the 'Wall Museum' on it.

became clear that the Wall build was permanent, C. and her husband discussed whether or not they would leave their home: "We knew that if we would leave, we would lose this building. Because we struggled [during the Intifada's] and decided to stay at that time, it was not fair at all. It was supposed to get better [when the second intifada ended]. The children asked, 'how are we going to live? It is a big tomb, we are buried alive'" (personal interview, 08-11-2013). In the end, they decided to stay and used their shop to sell products they designed, such as the a wooden representation of the Nativity play with a Wall.[9] They also sell traditional products of women who live in the surrounding villages, such as embroidery. For these women it is very difficult to sell it in Jerusalem, as the trip to Jerusalem is more difficult since the Wall has been built and because on the market in Jerusalem they have to compete with cheap products that are 'made in China'. C. said that because of these activities, they still have hope and are able to stay in Bethlehem.

The Checkpoints

"'Switzerland? What brings you from heaven to hell?', I was asked by a Palestinian medical student. Seeing thousands of people squeezed behind bars, pushing each other, climbing on the roof and over people's heads, squeezing through holes, is just heartbreaking. I never felt as helpless, angry and sad as I felt this morning when I looked in all the desperate eyes, asking me to help them while I couldn't." (E. Kilchherr, EAPPI volunteer,[10] personal communication 2013).

This quote is of a Swiss volunteer who shared her experience while working at checkpoint 300, the checkpoint that Palestinians from Bethlehem have to pass to go to Jerusalem or other places on the other side of the Wall.[11] For a Palestinian citizen, a permit and an ID are necessary to be able to pass, which are both granted by the Israeli government. The possession of the ID card indicates you are not seen as a security threat, have a misdemeanour on your record or have a family member with a misdemeanour on their record. When a misdemeanour is recorded, such as trespassing into Israel without the proper ID card or permit, it can take years before you are allowed again to apply for the card and permit.[12] The majority of the

[9] A product that can be bought almost everywhere in Bethlehem by now (by shop owners who all say they designed it). The idea behind the depiction of the nativity play with a wall is that if this wall would have been in place at the time Mary and Joseph came to Bethlehem, they would have been unable to reach the stable.
[10] The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is one of the international organisations that provides a protective presence in the West Bank. One of the activities of the EAPPI is being present at the large checkpoints during rush hour (from 4 am until 7 am).
[11] Many Palestinians work, study or have family inside of Israel, i.e. on the other side of the Wall.
[12] During these years, movement is heavily restricted as there are also checkpoints within the West Bank.

permit applications, which can be made after the ID is received, are denied, often without a reason for refusal (Keshet: 2006). When the ID card and the permit are granted, the Palestinian has to cross a checkpoint to enter Israel or specific areas of the West Bank.

It is difficult to describe what it is like to be inside a checkpoint. When entering the checkpoint for the first time, the system is confusing. Most communication is in Hebrew and the first time I was present I could not decipher clearly which direction I should be taking when inside. This created the fear of walking in the wrong direction and attracting the attention of the armed Israeli soldiers present. After I had been inside checkpoints more often I learned to follow the Palestinians present and ignore what was being shouted in Hebrew. The checkpoint entails a direct confrontation between the occupied and the occupier. The unequal power relations between the occupier and occupied is materialized in the way the space is organized within a checkpoint. Where the Palestinians have to stand in line, the Israeli soldiers sit in booths with bullet-proof windows. Inside the checkpoint in Bethlehem there is a bridge above the waiting lines where soldiers or private security guards look down at the Palestinians. Their guns are pointing down, keeping the waiting Palestinians at constant gunpoint. Checkpoints are described by Keshat as "fully fledged war zones, complete with watch towers, screaming jeeps, armoured vehicles and even tanks. Heavily armed and equipped soldiers check coincident civilians at gun point, demanding to see their identity cards and the precious, hard to come by, permits" (Keshet: 2006, p. 57).[13]


Image 4. Men waiting to cross checkpoint 300 in Bethlehem at 6 am.

From 4 am until 7 am it is rush hour at the checkpoints. At a large checkpoint, such as Checkpoint 300 in Bethlehem, the Palestinians, mostly men at this time, start lining up around 3 am. They do this to ensure that they will arrive at work in time, as it can take hours to cross the checkpoint. Image 4 shows the men standing in line at 6 am, squeezed together and climbing on top of the construction to cut in front of the line. In these militarized zones there are, during rush

[13] *Soldiering under Occupation: process of numbing among Israeli soldiers in the Al-Aqsa Intifada* (:2013) by Erella Grassiani provides a more thorough discussion of the use of space inside checkpoints and how this influences the relationship between IDF soldiers and Palestinians.

hour, over a thousand people waiting to cross the different sections of surveillance within the checkpoint. At these sections the permit, ID card and possessions of the Palestinians who want to cross are checked. This is done by young Israeli soldiers.[14] The communication between the, often bored, soldiers and the waiting Palestinians is done mostly through the shouting of commands in Hebrew (a language many Palestinians don't speak) or almost inconceivable Arabic or English (Grassiani: 2013). It is strange to see young men and women shouting in the faces of people old enough to be their grandparents, especially in a region where the elderly are highly respected. Even when a Palestinian has the correct permit and ID card, her/his entrance into Israel can be denied at any time. Besides hindering the entrance of an individual, the checkpoint can also be closed completely without providing a clear explanation to or informing the Palestinian citizens who use it every day.[15]

Although some people argue that applying for a permit and going through the system is a way of accepting the occupation, others say that by going through the checkpoint and to Jerusalem or other places on the other side of the Wall is a way of challenging the Wall and the wish of Israel to keep Palestinians behind the Wall. At the checkpoint, however, it seems people are just concerned with getting to work or school without too much trouble, delay and a bad mood. Even at the busiest times, some of the people in line are still chatting, smiling and shouting 'Sabah Al-Khair' to each other, which means good morning in Arabic.

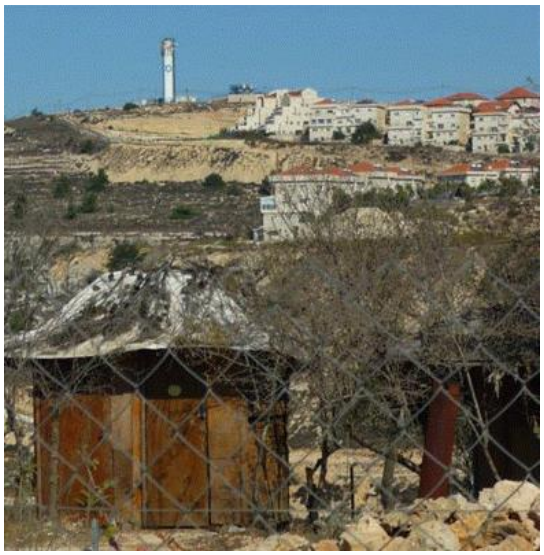

Image 5. In the forefront one of the buildings of the Tent of Nations. In the background an Israeli settlement.

Surrounded by Settlements

There is a small farm near Bethlehem on a hilltop. The farm, which has been called 'Tent of Nations', is owned by a Palestinian family. Israeli settlements are located on all the hilltops surrounding this farm, as can be seen on image 5. The family that owns the farm, the Nassar family, has been offered large sums of money, and even

[14] The IDF, Israeli Defence Force, is a conscript army. Both men and women are subject to compulsory IDF service. For men this entails 3 years, for women 2 years of full-time service, starting when they turn 18 years old. This means that the soldiers at the checkpoint are between the ages of 18-21.

[15] During my 3-month stay in Bethlehem the checkpoint was closed three times, once for two days without an explanation or indication of duration, once when John Kerry visited Bethlehem and once because of snowfall. During these closures it becomes even more difficult for Palestinians to reach their work or education as they have to take a detour that may take many hours to go around the wall or to cross at another checkpoint. If an emergency arises, ambulances have to take these same detours.

blank checks, by the settlers for their land, who want to connect all the settlements on the different hills and make one large settlement. The Nassar family does not want to sell their land and has refused all offers. As a response, they have been the victim of harassment, intimidation and at times even violence.

But the family has not only decided to stay on their land, they also made the choice to use their situation to inspire others to resist the growth of settlements by representing love, forgiveness, steadfastness and creativity. An example is how they make their live on the farm possible. The farm has been cut off electricity, has no access to running water and they are not allowed to build anything. But with the use of solar energy, cisterns and by building underground the family is making it work. Daoud Nassar, the owner of the land, explained to me when I visited the farm that he would never give in to the pressure that the settlers put on him: "while Daoud takes a hand full of sand and rubs it between his fingers he looks at me and says: 'I am this land, I could never leave it'." [translated from Dutch by A.R] (memo, recorded on 15-10-2013).

Image 6. The SSH Choir performing

Singing under Occupation

In Bethlehem, as in other cities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, there are many organizations active to support the Palestinians to deal with their lives under occupation. The Arab Educational Institute (AEI) is such an organization. One of the activities of the AEI, besides the 'Wall Museum', is the Sumud Story House Women's Choir. This choir is part of the Sumud Story House of the AEI and exists of twenty women and a female choir leader. Every week the women come together and practice their repertoire, which they perform for tourists visiting the SSH, on the yearly Sumud Festival of the AEI and on cultural evenings organizing by the AEI and other local organizations. The women sing traditional Palestinian

songs and some English songs that relate to the situation Palestinians are in. The choir leader explained to me during an interview why she considered the choir to be important for herself and the women involved: “I believe that music does not have any borders, does not have any walls, any soldiers, any checkpoints. Singing, for me is like screaming. It is like I am shouting, but shouting in a rhythmic way. Even if you don’t understand us or what we are singing, because it is in Arabic, there is a sound coming out. And my sound is coming from the bottom of my heart, which contains all the stress and depression that I have and it is coming out.” I asked her if she wanted to shout, to which she responded by saying: “Everybody here wants to shout but they can’t or maybe they don’t have the opportunity to shout. But I am trying with them actually, with the twenty women, to shout. But in a rhythmic way.” (personal interview, 06-11-2013).

What can be seen in the four examples provided in this chapter is the reality the Palestinians under occupation are living in. This is a reality in which your land and freedom of movement is taken away by a Wall, a reality in which you have to pass a checkpoint with soldiers who treat you like a criminal to go to work, a reality in which your neighbours threaten you and a reality in which singing and screaming, two acts that are usually not seen as linked, are seen as one and the same. The way the people described in this chapter deal with this reality is an attitude that shows the will to go on, to stay in the land, to retain one’s humanity and to keep hope alive for a better future. This attitude is often characterized by Palestinians as s*umud*.

Sumud

While sumud seems to be a word which is impossible to translate into English, it would be best explained as representing Palestinian steadfastness and resilience. It implies a certain degree of agency and choice in the face of powerlessness. This attitude of sumud is often unnamed and invisible but it is categorized as something typically Palestinian (van Teeffelen and Rijke: accepted for publication). Sumud is a complex and multi-layered concept and it loses part of its meaning when translated to English. As explained by one of the Palestinian women of the SSH: “Sumud is not easy. It is a difficult word. We have to think about it, we have to love the land to speak about sumud. It is not an easy word” (personal interview: 06-11-2013).

Development of the term sumud

As a national concept sumud came in frequent use at the end of the 1960s, although it is often argued by Palestinians that sumud was already part of Palestinian consciousness of struggling for the land and staying on the land during the British mandate time. However, in the 1960s it became a symbolic concept that was used in a nationalist revival project of Palestinian consciousness of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). Sumud and being samid[16] was especially associated with the refugee camps in Lebanon, where being a refugee entailed that you were identified as samid by definition (van Teeffelen and Rijke: accepted for publication).

In the 1970s, sumud became part of a larger Arabic strategic development debate. One of the arguments in this debate was that it was important that Palestinians stayed in Palestine and needed help to be able to do this. During the Arab Summit in 1978 in Bagdad, the sumud aid fund was founded. This fund, which was named *The Steadfastness Aid Fund of the Jordanian-Palestinian Joint Committee,* was designed to ensure the continued presence of Palestinians in the Palestinian territories and Israel. The Arab states send 110 million dollars annually from 1980 on to the West Bank, Gaza and Palestinians living within Israel during the following years. This money was allocated by the PLO and was meant for agriculture, housing, education and supporting municipal activities. However, corruption became rampant. The money mostly went to big land lords in the Jordan valley, industrialists and Jordanian civil service (Tamari: 1991). Due to this, the term sumud lost its positive connotation. Besides the personal agendas being pursued through the allocation of this money, the money was also seen as guilt money. It was deemed to be paid by Arab states who did not want to intervene directly but felt guilty by their lack of action to improve the situation of the Palestinians. As explained by Salim Tamari: "the word sumud became a term of cynical self-denigration, often used as a mocking reference to the nouveau niche recipients of patronage money. Only to the external observer did it retain any positive content of glorification, thus enhancing its irony" (Tamari: 1991, p. 63). As a response to this negative connotation associated with sumud, the term was re-appropriated in the 1970s and 1980s by grassroots movements in the Occupied Territories. This was done through the development of local committees directly connected to the concept sumud, such as committees for women, education and agriculture. In this way, sumud again became associated with a more bottom-up movement, and not with the top-down sumud aid fund (Van Teeffelen and Rijke: accepted for publication).

[16] Someone who has sumud. The plural of samid is samidin.

In the beginning of the 1980s, and in line with the more bottom-up use of the concept sumud, sumud was introduced outside of the Arab countries for the first time through the diary of the Palestinian lawyer Raja Shehadeh, *The Third Way – a Journal of Life in the West Bank* (1982). The title comes "from an intriguing saying attributed to Jewish inmates of a Nazi concentration camp: "Faced with two alternatives, always choose the third'" (Audeh: 1983, p. 77). As the opening quote of the introduction of this thesis showed, Shehadeh argues that where the samid is pushed to choose between submission and blind hate, he, together with other samidin, chooses a third way, the way of sumud. Shehadeh chose to hang on and to be steadfast and illustrates this through narrating his own daily life under occupation. In the book, Shehadeh shows the human side of being samid, which entails doubt, fear, guilt and pain.

This more bottom-up use of the term sumud was enhanced during the first intifada. Staying on the land, as represented by sumud, became a shared value (Allen: 2008). During the following Oslo years, 1993-2000, sumud lost its central place within the Palestinian narrative and symbolism as the focus was on the negotiations and making sacrifices for the larger picture of reaching peace. In the second intifada, the focus in the media and public debate was on the very violent clashes between Palestinian youth and the IDF, the suicide bombers and assassinations of politicians, not on the steadfastness and resilience that was shown.

During the last ten years, sumud as a mobilizing call has come back in the popular non-violent resistance struggles against the Wall, settlements, land confiscations and house demolitions. This non-violent resistance can be seen as a response to the very violent second intifada, which, as said, has not brought anything positive for Palestinians.

This attitude, sumud, is the focus of this thesis. In the next chapter I will discuss the theoretical concepts that will be used in the analysis chapters to analyse the potential of sumud as practiced in Bethlehem.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

In this chapter the theoretical concepts will be discussed that I will use to analyse the data collected in Bethlehem. These concepts are the following: 'infrapolitics', 'the uncolonized subject', 'space invaders', and 'witness bearers'. Firstly, I will describe the theoretical lens used in this thesis. This will explain in which manner I frame concepts such as 'acts', the relationship between acts and context (i.e. the Wall) and the body within research. Secondly, I will introduce the concepts and explain in which ways I will use these concepts to analyse sumud and the process of subjectivity of the women involved. As will become clear in this theoretical discussion and the data analysis in the analysis chapters of this thesis, the terms discussed here are all used in an intertwined manner to help answer the research question posed in this thesis, namely if sumud entails a force that changes the subjectivity of the women of the Sumud Story House and the materialisation of the Wall through the act of sharing stories on the Wall.

How matter comes to matter

Since I will be analysing the impact of the act of sharing stories in the 'Wall Museum', there is a need to explain how I theorize the concept 'act' and the relationship between the 'act' and the 'context' (i.e. the Wall). In this thesis, I understand the concept of 'act' and the relationship with the 'context' through the lens of posthumanism within feminist theory. Within posthumanism, as formulated by Karen Barad, acts should be seen as 'intra-actions' between material phenomena. Barad uses the term phenomena instead of objects because the term object suggests an independent material, with defined boundaries. The term phenomena is used to indicate the way different materials, say 'human, non-human, natural, technological', have relationships. The relationships are the "causal relationship between specific exclusionary practices embodied as specific material configurations of the world (i.e. discursive practices/(con)figurations rather than "words") and specific material phenomena (i.e. relations rather than "things"). This causal relationship between the apparatuses of bodily production and the phenomena produced is one of "agential intra-action"." (Barad: 2003, p. 814). During these 'intra-actions', the properties and boundaries of the materials become determined and embodied. The intra-action is defined as agential because during the

relationship there is agency present in all phenomena involved, human, non-human, natural, technological. Agency, as explained by Barad, is not something that someone/something 'has', but is "a matter of intra-action: it is an enactment" (Barad: 2003, p. 826).

I argue that 'affect' is connected to these intra-actions and the associated agency. Affect in this case refers to "states of being, rather than to their manifestation or interpretation as emotions" (Hemmings: 2005, p. 551). Where emotions could be argued to represent the manifestation of a state of being in an individualised manner, affect places an individual in a circuit of feeling and response. As explained by Clare Hemmings: "affect connects us to others and provides the individual with a way of narrating their own inner life (likes, dislikes, desires and revulsions) to themselves and others" (Hemmings: 2005, p. 552). As argued by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (:2010), affect is found in "those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and world (…)" (Gregg and Seigworth: 2010, p. 1). In these intensities and resonances, affect motivates and always has the capacity to extend further still. What I argue is that the intra-actions taking place between the women of the SSH as a group, and between the women and the Wall, are the outcome of affect, but also (re)produce affect. In this thesis, the concept 'affect' provides the tools to shed light on the relationship between living under occupation, sharing stories and sumud.

Affect and intra-actions should not be seen as connected to a 'bodiless' mind or a 'discourse-free' body. As explained by Stacey Alaimo and Susan Hekman (:2007), the linguistic turn within social and humanistic fields such as feminist studies, anthropology and sociology has created a sole focus of theorists on social constructionist models. These models were very useful since they provided room to analyse the discourse in place. This was, for instance, helpful within feminist theory since it created room to move beyond the essentialist notions of what constituted 'women', as famously done by Judith Butler (:1990, 1993). While one of the arguments for the use of these models within feminist theory was to work through the binaries that have been experienced as detrimental to women, the majority of the theorists seemed to stick to the binary created between language/reality. A group of feminists, such as Donna Haraway (e.g.:1991, 2008), argued that women have bodies and that the materiality these bodies inhabit needed to be analysed. However, this did not mean a return to modernism and the disregard of discourse. Within feminist theory some theorists, such as Iris Marion Young, accomplished a deconstruction of the dichotomy between material and discourse. Her 'lived body' (:2005) is an example of analyses that characterizes this deconstruction. This lived

body is a physical body that acts (or better: intra-acts as argued by Barad) and experiences affect within a specific sociocultural context. The discourse or the body are both not privileged but materialize in the common relationship. In this way, as argued earlier, matter comes to matter.

In this research, the body will be analysed in relationship, as 'intra-acting', with the Wall. While I had already read the arguments of many theorists concerning the importance of bodily experiences in research, when I was in Bethlehem I came to understand this in practice. In my field notes I wrote down notes that indicate my own bodily experiences while there. Examples are: "I have a nervous stomach ache but I don't know why" [translated from Dutch by A.R.](memo, recorded on 12-10-2014), "I literally feel enclosed and locked in" [translated from Dutch by A.R.](memo, recorded on 14-10-2014[17]), and, right before I was leaving: "Although I have felt the occupation in my body, cried, felt angry, nervous, hopeless and scared, I have laughed just as much, loved my experiences and the people I have met and will always come back" [translated from Dutch by A.R.](memo, recorded on 13-12-2014). As I wrote down in my memos, I felt the occupation in my body and how the existence of the Wall influenced my bodily experiences. The affect described here materialized in my relationship with the Wall and the occupation. Due to my state of being, I felt locked in, angry, happy, nervous, scared and loved/loving. This influenced the intra-action taking place between myself and the Wall, but also myself and the women of the SSH and the Palestinians living in Bethlehem. While these intra-actions are not the focus of the thesis, but the intra-actions between the women of the SSH and the Wall are, they illustrated for me the importance of the affect connected to the context and intra-actions taking place and (bodily) experiences.

In this thesis, I will use the lens discussed here because it provides me with the tools to move beyond the viewpoint that there is a singular relationship between the Wall and the Palestinians, in which the Wall is a static object that influences the Palestinians. I will be able to analyse the relationship between the women of the SSH and the Wall as a relationship that is characterized by the 'intra-action' taking place between different phenomena and the (re)created affect. Secondly, it also indicates that the Wall, the 'Wall Museum' and the women of the SSH are not 'entities' that can be analysed as separate. As explained by Barad: "it is through specific intra-actions that a differential sense of being is enacted in the ingoing ebb and flow of agency. That is, it is through specific intra-actions that phenomena come to matter (…)" (Barad: 2003, pg. 817). This also points towards the fact that the intra-action

[17] Recorded on one of the days the checkpoint in Bethlehem was closed.

between the women of the SSH and the Wall and between a foreign tourist, or myself, and the Wall can be very different. The specific intra-action, which is specific for all phenomena, influences in which manner matter comes to matter. It will be analysed in this thesis in which way the Wall matters and how, through the 'intra-action' between the lived bodies of the women of the SSH and the Wall, via and with the 'Wall Museum', the Wall and the women materialize.

In the remainder of the chapter the theoretical concepts I will use to analyse the intra-action taking place between the Wall and the women of the SSH, via and with the 'Wall Museum', will be introduced. These are: 'infrapolitics', 'the uncolonized subject', 'space invaders', and 'witness bearers'.

'Resistance' – Infrapolitics

The 'intra-action' taking place between the Wall and the women of the SSH, via and with the 'Wall museum' is, as I will argue in the analysis chapters, an expression of sumud. Sumud has often been discussed within academia in relation to the question whether or not it can be seen as 'resistance'. In the majority of these analyses, sumud has been categorized as opposed to 'resistance' (which in these cases is described as actively disrupting the order). An example is the author Samar Tamari (:1991) who argued that sumud represented pessimism. Sumud was described by Tamari as a way of surviving, not a way of moving forward. It was a strategy that was used by Palestinians while they were waiting for the circumstances to change so they could actively work towards a better future. Leonardo Scchiochet also did not identify sumud as a way of working towards a better future via active resistance. In the report *Palestinian Refugees: Different Generations, but One Identity* (:2013), Scchiochet opposed sumud, passive resistance, to muqawama,[18] active resistance. He used the sentence 'existence = resistance', which is often used by Palestinians, to illustrate the passivity he associated with sumud. In his research, which is focused on refugees living in Lebanon, all Palestinian refugees are automatically said to be samidin, but they are not all participating in the muqawama.

I argue that these discussions of sumud in relation to 'resistance' are disconnected from what is taking place in everyday life. Some authors already indicated this difficulty with the term

[18] The Arabic word for resistance.

'resistance', although they do stick to the traditional opposition created between sumud and muqawama. Rashmi Singh (:2012), for instance, also argues that sumud is not the same as active (and, in his article about Hamas, militant) resistance. Singh uses the same opposition between sumud and muqawama, and cites Scchiochet on this, but does move further than Scchiochet when he states that although sumud is indeed not the same as muqawama, sumud "becomes resistance through the sheer fact of continued Palestinian political, social and cultural presence and existence on the land" (Singh: 2012, p. 538). Where Scchiochet represented sumud as solely passive and a 'default identification' for refugees, Singh indicates that sumud does represent agency and a specific strategy. Sumud, together with sabr,[19] provides the tools for a counter-narrative and in this manner is a 'crucial signifier of Palestinian passive heroic resistance' (Singh: 2012, p. 538).

This analysis of sumud is a line of thought I would like to follow and push further by using the work of James Scott about everyday forms of resistance (:1985, 1990). Where Scott focuses on a more historical discussion of peasant resistance during feudal and colonial times, his theoretical insights are still very useful. I argue that the term resistance, or muqawama, is used in a too restrictive manner. By only categorizing direct and visible acts of resistance as resistance, a large spectrum of everyday forms of resistance and the lives of *ordinary* Palestinians[20] are overlooked. If people are not openly contesting the Israeli occupation, this does not mean they are accepting it or are not covertly resisting it. These everyday forms of resistance are called *Infrapolitics* by Scott (:1990). With infrapolitics Scott means the unobtrusive realm of political struggle waged on a daily basis by subordinate groups. Scott provides examples such as 'dragging one's feet while working', 'not greeting the master in the appropriate manner' and 'poaching when strictly forbidden'. These actions do not challenge the dominant party in a direct and overt manner, but indicate that the subordinate groups do not completely accept the domination in place. Scott calls these forms of political struggle infrapolitics because these provide "much of the cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action on which our attention has generally been focused" (Scott: 1990, p. 184). Infrapolitics are compared to the infrastructure for commerce that makes such commerce possible, such as transport, banking currency and contract law. These small acts of resistance are important because they test the limits of the occupying power. The occupation is not kept in place because the occupied have internalized their position as subordinate, but

[19] The Arabic word for patience.

[20] With which I mean Palestinians who are not trying to actively disrupt the order of the everyday life via resistance, such as by going to demonstrations or by participating in clashes with IDF soldiers.

because of a complex organisation of surveillance, discipline, punishment and reward. If any weakness is found in this organisation, this will be exploited by the occupied. These successes are shared with others via the sharing of stories and these stories will encourage them to keep hope and push further against this structure of occupation. This unobtrusive realm of political resistance is thus not the opposite of "loud, headline-grabbing protests" (Scott: 1990, p. 183), or a way of retaining the status-quo (i.e. compliance), but is the basis upon which visible resistance can be build.

While sumud is also expressed via frontal and visible assaults, such as at the demonstrations that take place every Friday in multiple locations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, sumud can also be seen as expressed in small acts of resistance that can be characterized as infrapolitics. These everyday forms of resistance could be seen as what *ordinary* people can do while being oppressed, as infrapolitics provides the framework to see these 'ordinary' people as agents of resistance. Some acts are in direct relationship with the occupier in the public sphere, such as the man at the checkpoint who acts as if he does not understand that his permit will not let him pass via the humanitarian line, [21] which can be seen as an example of the category 'feigned ignorance' as used by Scott (:1985), and others are more indirect, such as keeping the ability to smile and laugh and can take place in both the public and private sphere. All of these acts can be seen as an expression of the will to retain one's humanity while being dehumanized and a rejection of the relationship of occupier-occupied that Israel imposes. This political resistance at a more unobtrusive level is the focus of this thesis.

Scott's theories concerning everyday forms of resistance have become widely popular after his first publication in 1985. However, he has also been criticized for creating a too simplistic image of the 'dominant power', the 'subordinate' and their relationship. As, for instance, argued by K. Sivaramakrishnan (:2005), Scott is said to create a too dualistic relationship in which a uniform, simplified 'dominant power' is opposed to 'the subordinate'. This was also argued by Christine Chin and James Mittelman (:1997), who connected this simplistic image of the 'dominant power' to the simplistic image of the 'subordinate'. The critique entails that Scott focuses too much on class as the organizing principle of 'the subordinate' and "by putting a unidimensional face on resistance, Scott inadvertently assigns a similar unidimensional face to domination (…)" (Chin and Mittelman: 1997, p. 32). Sivaramakrishnan argues that there is a need for an analysis of the everyday practices of

[21] A special line at the checkpoint that is meant for older people, women, children, students and people with medical problems.

power, together with the everyday practices of resistance, and the intersection of power and resistance and the complex processes in which both are enmeshed and realized. Chin and Mittelman also argue that Scott ascribes the behaviour of the subaltern too easily to resistance. Resistance is not the only driving force in the lives of the subaltern and in this manner, the scholar runs the risk of romanticizing the lives of the subaltern (for which authors such as Saba Mahmood (:2005) and Lila Abu-Lughod (:1990 and 2000) also warned).

With the abovementioned critiques in mind, I do wish to use the concept 'infrapolitics' to analyse sumud and the act of sharing stories in the 'Wall Museum' because the concept provides the possibility to enlighten in which ways a more inclusive conceptualisation of resistance can show all the dimensions and possibilities of sumud. I do not wish to argue that all behaviour of Palestinians can be seen as an expression of sumud or as a conscious act of resistance. I also do not wish to argue that my analysis represent 'all Palestinians' but I discuss the actions of a specific group of women, namely the women involved in the SSH. The relationship between sumud, infrapolitics as resistance and the act of sharing stories is not taken as a given, but will be discussed and analysed in the fifth chapter of this thesis.

'Appropriating the Occupation' – the Uncolonized Subject

The concept sumud points towards the agency that is present in the intra-actions taking place between the Palestinians and the occupation and the connected materialities of this occupation such as the Wall. Lori Allen already argued for recognition of the agency that is expressed in sumud (:2008). She argues that sumud, and the attitude of adaptation of Palestinians to the violence during the second intifada in general, should be categorized as 'getting by'. Lore explains that while Israel made the lives of Palestinians during the second intifada a living hell, the Palestinians adapted to this hell. This process of adaptation, or 'getting by' as Allen calls it, makes sumud, staying on the land in a healthy way, possible. She explains that while it may sound as passive and as if the violence is normalized, this is not the case. Agency is expressed in this adaptation. Yara Sharif (:2011) also argued for shedding light on the creative manners in which Palestinians adapt to the occupation. This adaptation can be seen in the ways Palestinians use the architecture that has been developed in Palestine because of the occupation to create space to ensure the sustainability of the everyday life. Examples are taxi drivers who know the (off-road) ways to get passengers around the checkpoints and a

zookeeper in the Gaza strip who smuggled zoo animals through the tunnels[22] and painted his donkeys black and white to look like zebras to ensure the children could enjoy seeing foreign animals. Sumud and adaptation to occupation is explained by Allen and Sharif as the agency of the everyday and as the way in which the subjectification of Palestinians is not successfully controlled by Israel.

While I agree with Allen and Sharif that sumud indicates the ways in which life under occupation becomes possible, I would also argue that the term 'adaptation' is too passive to indicate the creative ways in which Palestinians not only deal with the occupation but also strive to move forward to a time in which their land will no longer be occupied. Due to this, I will use the term appropriation. With appropriation I point towards the ability to not letting the occupation determine your life and the creative ways in which the context is used to keep striving towards a change. Sumud is a way of appropriating the current situation Palestinians are living in and a way in which the process of subjectification of Palestinians is not successfully controlled by the occupying power.

Control of the process of subjectification is essential according to Ashis Nandy in successfully colonizing a society. In his work *The Intimate Enemy* (:1983), Nandy analyses the psychological defences that were used during the British rule of India. According to Nandy, colonization has two phases. The first is the colonization of land. During this phase power structures are installed with a system of punishment and discipline. These structures are placed within the colonized society to ensure the submission of the colonized people. The second phase is the colonization of the mind. In this phase the colonizing power "releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once and for all." (Nandy: 1983, p. 11). The West is after this phase everywhere, as explained by Nandy, in the power structures created in the colonized society and in the minds of the colonized people. The power structure that has been put in place with a system of punishment and discipline becomes obsolete because by being in the minds of the colonized people, resistance disappears as the colonization is internalized. Nandy argues that the largest threat to a colonizing power is that this process of the colonization of the mind is not successfully completed. He argues that this will mean that "the colonized will reject the consensus and,

[22] As the Gaza strip has been closed off from the outside world by Israeli checkpoints, that are more often closed than open, illegal smuggler tunnels have been made that connect the Gaza strip with Egypt. Through these tunnels a diverse set of goods are smuggled such as food, refrigerators, (farm) animals, scooters, petrol and cement and many more. The majority of the tunnels have been destroyed by the war in Gaza in December 2008, but Gazans keep inventing ways and building new tunnels to get necessary goods into the completely closed of Gaza strip (Sharif: 2011).

instead of trying to redeem their 'masculinity' by becoming the counter-players of the rulers according to the established rules, will discover an *alternative frame of reference* within which the oppressed do not seem weak, degraded and distorted [wo]men trying to break the monopoly of the rulers on a fixed quantity of machismo." [emphasize added](Nandy: 1983, p. 31).

Although Nandy's work has been published 30 years ago and the colonial rule of Britain in India has ended, this theorization of colonialism is still very useful today, especially in relation to the occupation of the Palestinians. While most countries in the world are not colonized anymore in the ways that they were a century ago, namely via the colonization of land,[23] the Palestinians have been colonized in this more 'traditional' way. Starting from 1948, their land has been taking from them and they have been degraded to refugees dispersed all over the world, second-tier citizens within Israel and an occupied community inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The colonization of Palestine started in 1948 and is still progressing today with the building of the Wall.

I would like to criticize one aspect of Nandy's theory. He calls the second phase the 'colonization of the mind', in which he seems to imply that the mind and the body are two opposed parts of a 'human being'. This dualistic view of the relationship between the mind and body has been widely criticized, and it relates to the discussion concerning discourse and body that was mentioned earlier in this chapter when it was explained how matter comes to matter, as being essentialist and as disregarding bodily experiences. Besides the problematic nature of the binary that is created between body/mind and the disregard of the ways in which the bodily intra-action between the Palestinians and the Wall indicates how the occupation materializes, the sole focus on the mind is also inaccurate in the case of the Palestinian occupation. Through the building of the Wall, the existence of checkpoints and the complex system of permits, the movement of the Palestinian people is largely controlled by Israel, which has a very large influence on their lives. In this way it could be argued that Israel also tries to colonize the bodies and bodily movement of Palestinians. As the first phase of colonization is called the colonization of 'the land' by Nandy, I would call the second phase the colonization of 'the process of subjectivity of the colonized people', or in short; 'the

[23] This does not mean that other forms of colonization cannot be identified on a large scale in the current times, such as colonisation via economic means. Examples of these forms of colonization originating from Western countries are (economic) 'support' from organisations such as the World Bank and NGOs, international trade regulations and large multinationals who evade local laws and regulation to obtain the highest profits (e.g. Escobar (:1995) and Shohat (:1992).

colonization of the subject'. In this second phase, the people are colonized via the normalisation of the colonization, not only in the 'minds', but in their process of subjectification and frames of reference, which is a matter of the body/mind and the intra-action between the Palestinians and materiality of the occupation such as the Wall. These two phases should not be seen as consecutive, but are taking place simultaneously in the case of the occupation and elimination of Palestine.

Nandy's 'uncolonized subject' provides the tools to analyse if sumud can be identified as providing the tools for Palestinians to formulate an alternative frame of reference, outside of the occupier-occupied relationship, which fixes the unequal power relation in the disadvantage of the Palestinians. By moving beyond the fixed pattern of being victimized by the occupation and the expected roles of the angry youth, mourning mother and depressed father, creative forms of appropriation could become visible. If sumud indeed provided the tools for an alternative frame of reference, which types of appropriation I observed in Bethlehem and how this influenced the experiences of the women involved in the Sumud Story House and their intra-action with the Wall will be discussed in the analysis chapters.

'Ownership of space' – Space Invaders

The 'ownership' of public space has been contested in many ways and locations in the world. 'Public space' can be theorized as a place that is designed on behalf of the public and not privately owned by an individual (Visconti et al: 2010). While it is argued that public space is designed for all the people who are part of the public, it can be seen that certain spaces are intended to be used by specific people more than by other people. Spaces are not "blank and open for any body to occupy" (Puwar: 2004, p.8). This especially concerns private spaces of 'dominance', such as the places where politics are practiced and inside businesses, but also public spaces that have traditionally been reserved for specific groups within a society, such as certain restaurants, places of entertainment and shops. As was explained by Fanon: "And then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. The real world challenged my claims. In the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema." (Fanon: 1952, p. 110). For Fanon, racism stopped his black body from inhabiting space with as much ease as white bodies inhabited the same space, "the familiarity of 'the white world' (…) 'disorients' black bodies such that they cease to know where to find things." (Ahmed: 2006, p. 111). While in

theory all people can enter the same space (assuming the space is indeed public), some bodies can be identified as 'natural' inhabitants of this space. Racism, and other 'isms' such as sexism, affects how bodies take up this space (Ahmed: 2006, Puwar: 2004). If the world is made white, or masculine, or heterosexual, according to Sara Ahmed, then the body that is at home is the body that can inhabit this whiteness/masculinity/heterosexuality; the white, male and straight body is the body that 'fits in'. However, bodies that do not 'fit in' do enter this space and these non-white/feminine/non-heterosexual bodies stand out. One way this standing out can be seen is that terms such as 'race' are only used for people who are categorized as non-white (white people do not have a 'race'[24]), 'gender' for women (men do not have a 'gender') and 'sexuality' for non-heterosexual people (heterosexual people do not have a 'sexuality'). The white, heterosexual male is the norm and thus goes unnoticed.

These bodies that enter the spaces from which they have historically been excluded, are called 'space invaders' by Nirmal Puwar (:2004). 'Space invaders' can be seen as causing a disruption of the status quo and in that process, cause a moment of change. In these moments of change, the space itself is disrupted and can be changed. Following the argument of Barad's 'intra-action', it can be argued that when bodies enter spaces that they traditionally have been excluded from, the different phenomena involved in the 'intra-action' taking place materialize in an unique manner. The affect that can be seen as motivating the space invasion (re)creates itself, transforming and extending further in the intra-action with the space and with other (non)bodies. Due to this, I would argue that space is not owned, but invaded and, in that process, intra-acted with.

Creative means have been used to enter the spaces from which specific bodies have historically been excluded. The use of art has been analysed in many academic texts as an example of the invasion of space (though not identified with this term). Street art, for example, is seen by Visconti et al (:2010) as an active place of space making and in this act, agency can be seen. Graffiti is described by Ponterotto (:2012) as a means through which the elitist character of cities such as New York and Chicago is questioned by marginalized and oppressed groups. These groups are often not seen or heard and their "graffiti writing is an assertion of the right to write, an aggressive public statement of counter presence and opposition voice" (Ponterotto: 2012, p. 121). By using the walls of the city to let their voices

[24] With the use of the term 'race' I do not wish to argue race is a natural categorisation, but, following the argument of Sara Ahmed, state that while race is an invented categorisation by science, this does not mean that race does not exist. Race, invented or not, still affects bodies and what they can do (Ahmed: 2007).

be heard, these groups (re)enter space in a city where they are often not granted this mobility. Through these claims, Ponterotto argues, these groups claim the right to exist.

However, this contestation of public space described here is located in countries where people live in freedom[25] and are not under occupation. The Wall that is in place in the Palestinian public space has not been put there on their behalf by a government or organisation that they can hold accountable. The Wall has been put in place by Israel to keep Israeli citizens 'safe'.[26] The Wall has been put on the land of Palestinians, without their permission, and it keeps them from moving freely around. But as was argued earlier, the intra-action taking place between the Palestinians and the Wall is not one-dimensional and only oppressive. Living under occupation and in the shadow of a wall does not mean there is no room for creativity and actions that influence the intra-action taking place. Lauara McAtackney (:2011) has shed light on the possible multi-dimensional character of walls with her study of the 'Peace Lines' in Belfast. She explains that walls can have dual roles; walls can facilitate communication but also prevent interaction. Walls are barriers and, at the same time, canvases. Walls, via the creation of murals on the wall, can create space for the retaining of a collective identity. However, at the same time, they create isolation and make the people living on the other side an Unknown Other. This perspective, in which the walls are not seen as only oppressive and negative, but where the intra-action is analysed between the walls and the community they are located in, is useful when looking at the Wall in Bethlehem. By looking at the Wall in this manner, room is created to see if the Palestinians (re)invade the space and creatively 'intra-act' with the Wall.

The section of the Wall in Bethlehem where the Sumud Story House is located and where the 'Wall Museum' can be found, is probably one of the sections of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories that has the highest density of graffiti on it. Famous artists such as Banksy have used this section of the Wall to express their opinions and show support for the oppressed Palestinians.

[25] This 'freedom' in Western countries is subjective as freedom is relative and influenced by factors such as race, gender, sexuality and age. In Western countries such as the Netherlands white, middle-aged, middle- or high-class, heterosexual men have the most freedom of movement within society and black, young, homosexual women of a low class have the least amount of freedom (Ahmed: 2006). However, this amount of freedom and the possibilities that are available for these least-privileged group are not available in the same manner for Palestinians as they are living under occupation.

[26] Which I put between inverted commas as it is contested why the Wall has been designed by the Israeli government and while the argument that is often used is 'security', land grab and complete control over the West Bank seem more accurate arguments (Keshet: 2006).

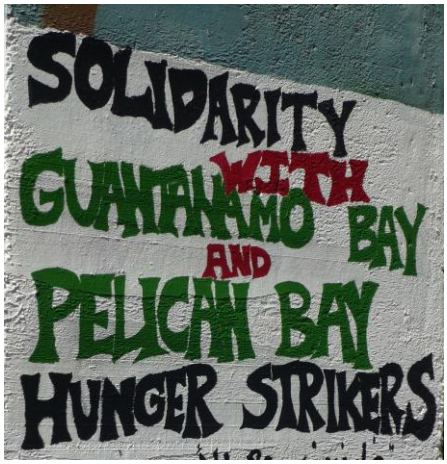

Image 7. An example of graffiti on the Wall in Bethlehem that is not connected to Palestinian solidarity

Graffiti on the Wall in cities such as Bethlehem and Ramallah have been identified by Brigitte Piquard as a way to "re-claim, to re-appropriate symbolically or even re-gain the occupied/confiscated space" (Piquard: 2009, p. 68). She argues that paintings on the Wall can be seen as a means for non-violent resistance. Via the paintings on the Wall, the character of the Wall changes and the efficiency of the violence of the Wall and the feelings of imprisonment attached to the Wall are reduced. Using the argument of Barad and Puwar, via the intra-action taking place between the people who paint on the Wall and the Wall itself, the space the Wall occupies is invaded and the materialisation of the Wall changes. However, the fact that the majority of the graffiti on the Wall in Bethlehem has been done by international artists and activists makes the impact of the graffiti on the character of the Wall for Palestinians more complex (Piquard: 2009). These international activists have used the Wall in Bethlehem to show their support for Palestinians, but also to express their concerns for global issues of injustice, as can be seen in image 7. According to Piquard, this has caused confused feelings for Palestinians, as she argues that one of their main means of non-violent action has been appropriated by international activists for a different, more global agenda. The 'Wall Museum' is, opposed to the graffiti discussed by Piquard, a product of a Palestinian organisation and the stories depicted in the museum are stories of Palestinian women. Whether or not these stories do represent a way of invading space that the Wall occupies, and in which ways this influences the materialisation of the Wall, will be analysed in the next chapters.

'Narrative' – Witness Bearers

"The interesting thing is that there seems to be nothing in the world which sustains the story; unless you go on telling it, it will just drop and disappear." (Said: 1994, p. 118-119).

Narrative can be identified as representing a spoken or writing statement of a group/individual. In this thesis, the statement narrated are called 'stories' and are said by the narrators to represent their experiences. I use the term 'stories' because this term was used by

the AEI and the women of the SSH themselves and because the term sheds more light on the personal and emotional quality of the statements made.

The importance of story-telling to Palestinians has been theorized by Tahrir Hamdi (:2011) via the use of the concept of *Bearing Witness*. To bear witness as an artist/author is to speak of an unspeakable past whose stories have been silenced in dominant History.[27] This silencing, and the occupation associated with it, created the state of being, the affect, that moved Palestinians to speak up. These stories (or images) communicate to the present the unthinkable stories of the past, and through this process rewrite these stories into the current narrative. What has deliberately been erased from history is written back into it. This rewriting of history is for Palestinians important because they not only face a loss of land, but also a loss of the Palestinian identity. By narrating stories and remembering the past, the future of Palestine is not lost.

Bearing witness is also a move against other narratives that become dominant, such as the success story of the brave Jewish men and women who were able to found the state of Israel with all the odds against them. The act of writing the story of, for instance, the Nakba becomes a kind of 'reclamation' (Hamdi: 2011). A *truth-telling urge* can be detected in authors such as Mahmoud Darwish, one of the most famous voices of Palestine, who explained his act of inviting other authors to the West Bank to see what was happening by stating the following: "No propaganda, we let them see *the truth*." [emphasis added] (quoted by Hamdi: 2011, p. 24).

Bearing witness in this way becomes a tool of resistance against the deliberate erasure of the Palestinian future: "Creative resistance entails, writing, drawing, *documenting* the Palestinian narrative, creatively shaping a Palestinian experience that would be meaningful to the story teller and his or her audience, and which would enable a mass witnessing of that experience, thus keeping the idea of Palestine alive in the Palestinian and Arab psyche." [emphasize in original](Hamdi: 2011, p. 40-41). As explained by Hamdi, this importance is also acknowledged by the State of Israel. This can be seen in the assassinations of artists and authors such as Ghassan Kanafani, who is said to have written 'the Palestinian story', in 1972 and Naji Al-Ali in 1987. Naji Al-Ali shows how the narration of stories can also be done

[27] The capitalized H is often used to indicate that history itself is not a 'true' insight in past events but the chosen 'truth' by the dominant, often pre-dominantly masculine, community in a society. History (his story) is often opposed to Herstory (her story), which also not seen as a 'truth' but as a different perspective provided within feminism (Morgan: 1970).

through images. Al-Ali, who himself was a refugee of the Nakba, created an important symbol of Palestinian resistance, namely Handala.

Handala is a cartoon of a child of the refugee camps whose face is always turned away from the viewer, witnessing the violations that happen to his people. It is said that Handala will only face the public when there is justice for the Palestinian people (Hamdi: 2011). Although Al-Ali was killed in 1987, Handala lives on and is reproduced on the Wall on a large scale. An example is image 8, which shows Handala on the Wall in Bethlehem. Handala is lying in the arms of the Statue of Liberty who is crying for the injustice happening to the Palestinian people. Hamdi explains that this assassination of artists and authors who bear witness can be seen as a way of trying to kill the will of a people to resist. The witnesses and voices of the people are silenced and through this, "the flame of resistance" (Hamdi: 2011, p. 23) is extinguished. The 'witness writer' must safeguard against the assassination of the idea of Palestine, which, according to Hamdi, is a greater loss than any loss of land. The survival of the narrative as expressed via Handala after the assassination of the artist who created it, shows the power enclosed in stories and images.

Image 8. Handala on the Wall in Bethlehem.

While Hamdi focuses on 'professional' authors and artists who are the voice of the people, I would like to attribute this same importance to the narration of stories by 'ordinary' people. By sharing stories via, for instance, the 'Wall Museum' about the intifada's, the building of the Wall, the pain suffered and the courage showed, the Stories of Palestine do not disappear. The stories about a diverse set of human experiences reclaim the humanity of the Palestinian people and moves beyond the fixed role of occupied people. The narrative that is created counters the disempowering narrative that is currently often used of the angry youth, mourning mother and depressed father. Also, by using the Wall to share their stories, the women invade the space that the Wall occupies. If the Sumud Story House provides the needed room for women to share their stories and, via the 'Wall Museum', to reclaim the

narrative that is created about Palestine and how this 'intra-action' influences the way the Wall materializes, will be discussed in the analysis chapters.

Conclusion

In this chapter the theoretical framework was discussed that will be used in this thesis to investigate the potential of sumud. It will be investigated if sumud, via the sharing of stories on the Wall in Bethlehem, is a form of intra-action that can be categorized as everyday resistance in which the humanity of Palestinians is retained via the invasion of the space and the reclaiming of the processes of subjectification by the women involved. In this process, it will be discussed if sumud can be seen as a form of everyday resistance following the infrapolitics of Scott. As was explained via the work of Hamdi, the sharing of stories within the Palestinian context can be identified as a form of resistance because the narrative about Palestine, and in this way the concept of Palestine itself, stays alive. The literature indicated that the majority of the graffiti on the Wall in Bethlehem has been created by foreigners and thus do not clearly reflect the intra-action of the Palestinians with the Wall. Since these stories in the 'Wall Museum' are the stories of Palestinian women and the AEI is a Palestinian organisation, the museum could have the potential to have a different and more positive influence on materialisation of the Wall than the graffiti in place.

The theoretical concepts discussed in this chapter will provide the opportunity to analyse the affect that moved to the women to share their stories and which influences the affect that is (re)created in these acts of sharing have, as represented by the materialisation of the Wall and the existence of sumud. This will show the possible potential of sumud and the ways in which it influences the process of subjectification of Palestinians, which will be discussed in the analysis chapters. It will also be investigated if sumud, via the 'Wall Museum', creates an alternative frame of reference and how this all influences the materialisation of the Wall and the intra-action taking place. Firstly, in the next chapter, I will discuss the methodology used while collecting and analysing the data discussed in this thesis.

Chapter 3

Methodology

"The best way to understand what Sumud means to Palestinians is to listen to their stories."
(V. Teeffelen: 2011, p. 35)

In this chapter the methodology will be discussed which has been used to analyse if sumud is a force that changes the subjectivity of the women of the Sumud Story House and the materialisation of the Wall through the act of sharing stories. I will firstly provide a brief overview of what feminist methodology entails and in which ways it has influenced my research. There will be a special focus on the concept of objectivity and on my location as a researcher. Secondly, I will discuss the research setting and explain the methods I used to collect the data. Finally, it will discussed which methods I used while analysing the data collected.

In this thesis I will answer the following research question:

Does sumud entail an intra-action that influences the process of subjectivity of the women of the Sumud Story House and the materialisation of the Wall through the act of sharing stories?

This research question will be answered by a focusing on the following sub questions:

1. Which stories are shared in the 'Wall Museum'?
2. Why do the interviewees share their stories via the 'Wall Museum'?
3. What does sumud mean for the interviewees and how is it related to resistance?
4. How do the interviewees identify the relationship between sharing stories, sumud and resistance?
5. Does the intra-action of sharing of stories via the 'Wall Museum' change the materialisation of the Wall?

The questions posed in this thesis were inspired and influenced by my personal experiences while staying in Bethlehem for three months, going to weekly meetings at the SSH, spending quality time with the women who participate in the SSH, going through checkpoints, talking to other Palestinians about sumud and the Wall and reading about sumud and Palestinian resistance. To shed light on the potential of sumud as an intra-action that changes the materialisation of the Wall and the process of subjectification of the women involved, it was

first investigated what sumud means for the women interviewed and how it relates to the concepts ‘resistance’ and ‘compliance’ in the focus group discussions. In the one-on-one interviews that took place after the group discussions, the focus shifted to the ‘Wall Museum’ and why the women shared their stories via the ‘Wall Museum’, how they related the sharing of stories to sumud and in which ways this sharing of stories changed the materialisation of the Wall. The choice has been made not to analyse the content of the stories shared, but to focus on the motivations for sharing stories and the relationship of the women with the Wall. This choice was mostly motivated by the limited space available in this thesis. I believe that by adding a content analysis of the stories, the necessary depth of the analysis presented would have been lost. Some aspects of the stories shared, the entities mobilized by the women, will be discussed in the thesis, but a thorough analysis will not be provided.

Feminist Methodology

The research executed has been influenced by feminist methodology. Feminist methodology provides the opportunity to shed light on the experiences of the people who are often not heard. By paying attention to these experiences, light can be shed on exclusionary structures present in Israel/Palestine and on the possibilities of sumud as a force that can change the relationship of the women of the AEI with the Wall. For me, feminist methodology has also been a large influence in realizing that feeling personally connected to a research does not mean the research executed will not be ‘objective’ and will thus represent ‘bad science’. Feminist methodology creates room for a researcher who is emotionally involved in the question discussed as it “is committed to social change, and … committed to challenge thinking about researcher subjectivity and the relationship between the researcher and the researched” (Reinharz cited in Pillow and Mayo: 2007, p. 158).

Within feminist methodology there is a specific focus on the narratives of the people who are not ‘on top’ within the society researched as these narratives will provide insight into exclusionary structures present in that society. The experiences of oppressed people can provide a powerful lens through which a society can be analysed (Brooks: 2007). This does not mean that within feminist methodology it is believed that these experience of the people at the bottom of society will necessarily provide a ‘true insight’. Sandra Harding argues that all scientific knowledge is socially situated and that while no position will automatically provide ‘true insights’, the experiences of the people at the bottom of society can produce less partial

and distorted, and thus 'truer' accounts. This is called 'strong objectivity'. Because these people are not only aware of their own lives but also of the lives of the dominant group, the experiences shared by these oppressed people can shed light not only on their lives but also on larger societal processes. Strong objectivity also comes from their position at the bottom of society because it is believed oppressed people do not wish to retain the status quo, which is something that is assumed of the dominant class. Due to this wish, oppressed people are more likely to "question the prevailing interpretation of reality" (Brooks: 2007, p. 67).

This objectivity is not bound up with neutrality, as is the case with the mainstream conception of objectivity. Harding argues that knowledge becomes more objective when it is more closely associated with the particular: "The ideal of value-neutral objectivity, so Harding provokingly argues, is actually quite 'weak'" (Prins: 1997, p. 69). As no knowledge can be produced in a value-neutral manner, the claim that knowledge is value-neutral is misleading and the goal is inherently unreachable. By acknowledging the limits of the knowledge produced and how it is bound to a particular location, which influences what is observed by the researcher, objectivity can be reached.

This preference given to the 'view from below' has later been critically discussed by other feminists. Donna Haraway, for example, argues in favour of *Situated Knowledges*, as a response to Harding's strong objectivity. One of the biggest points of criticism Haraway formulated was the seemingly uncritical preference given to the view from below by Harding. Haraway acknowledges that the view from below should be preferred by feminist researchers because "… in principle they are least likely to allow denial of the critical and interpretive core of all knowledge" (Haraway: 1988, p. 584). However, she warns that it creates "a serious danger of romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their positions" (Haraway: 1988, p. 584). The proposed situated knowledges has many similarities with Harding's strong objectivity, such as a disconnection from the traditional scientific view of objectivity. Haraway argues that by acknowledging the limits of the knowledge produced and how it is bound to a particular location, feminist objectivity can be reached. This is also a critique directed towards Harding's strong objectivity. Haraway argues that the assumption that 'we' (feminist researchers) can see from below is a dangerous assumption to make as it is too much based on the idea that the identities of 'the oppressed' are stable. Who sees from below is often unclear and dependent upon the view and position of the researcher. There is no single feminist position to see from and to be able to see from below we, as researchers, need to critically position ourselves (Midden: 2009).

Reflexivity is needed of the researcher to critically position ourselves. Researchers should not attempt to eliminate all factors that could influence the research outcomes, such as sex, age and religion, but should acknowledge their influence. The way the researcher views and interprets the data and respondents should be made visible through a reflexive discussion (Prins: 1997). This reflexivity can be achieved through clearly locating yourself as a researcher in your research (Rich: 1984).

My own location

"Arriving at Ben Gurion airport, it became clear that I could not count on the privileged treatment I normally receive after showing my Dutch passport. After being taken away from the other travellers to a separate room, I was asked questions about why I wanted to come to Israel, how it could be possible that I was travelling alone and how much money I had in my bank account. The questions were posed in a highly unfriendly manner and left me feeling scared and intimidated." ([translated from Dutch by A.R.] (memo, recorded on 15-09-2013).

At arrival it became immediately clear, as the memo quoted here shows, that my position within the Israeli system was different from my position within the Dutch system (or any other system I have been in while abroad). As a white female who grew up in an upper-middle class intellectual family in the Dutch society, I have not consciously experienced racism, sexism or have felt held back while I was growing up because of my ethnic background, gender, lack of religious affiliation or the financial situation of my parents. I was not aware of the influence of my gender, race or class on my daily life or how these factors influenced the lives of other people in Dutch society. I have never been in a position where I needed to hide something from official institutions such as the government and the police and have always viewed these institutions as 'on my side'. In my teen years I started to become aware of less privileged people in the Netherlands and in the world, with a specific interest in Palestine since I was 16 years old. This was also the same year I met my current boyfriend, Zohair, who is a Tunisian-Dutch Muslim.[28] His experiences in the Dutch society were very different from my own and opened my eyes to exclusion, racism and Islamophobia, which at times also came from the institutions I had always considered fair and trustworthy.

[28] I add this relationship to my location because while staying in Bethlehem I was very often asked about my marital status. This was also done by the women involved in the AEI. When answering that I had a Tunisian-Dutch Muslim boyfriend/fiancée/husband (this depended on the person asking), all people responded very positively. Zohair also joined me to the AEI when he came to visit me. This all influenced the image the women had of me. One of the women expressed that she loved the fact I was in a relationship with a 'brother' of them and that this really showed I was a 'good girl'.

My position within Palestinian society was also different from my position within Dutch society, although that was less of a shock than the unwelcome start at Ben Gurion airport in Israel. During my daily life in Bethlehem it was clear I was not in a society where I was part of the majority. The fact that I stood out as different mostly had a positive effect, many people wanted to talk to me and welcomed me to Palestine. However, I was aware of the image the people I talked to possibly had of Western women travelling alone and how this could influence our intra-action. Western women are at times described as 'pro-Israeli', 'wild', 'lose', 'unreliable', 'rich' and as 'a passport' and, although I did not want this, this did influence me. It, for instance, influenced a possible friendship with a Palestinian girl of my own age, as can be seen in the following entry in my field notes:

"Met Ala' today. After waiting for over 2 hours for her to arrive, it turned out she was mostly interested in selling me bags and scarfs that her mother made. I felt uncomfortable. Besides the fact that I did not have any money to buy the products, it was very weird to sit there with falafel and indicate in a polite way that I was not going to buy anything. After this happened she did not really say anything anymore and the lunch ended soon. It is so difficult here to form relationships. What does someone want from you? Which image do they have of you? Woman alone = easy target? Western = rich? Are my own prejudices making me see this? Would I have responded this way if someone at home tried to sell me something while having lunch? Well, they wouldn't since this is not considered polite, which already indicates how my own images and stereotypes are at play. I have to be careful with this, I do not want to hinder any relationships. She has my number, let's see if she calls me after I did not buy anything."[29] ([translated from Dutch by A.R.] (memo, recorded on 04-10-2013).

As most of my contact with my interviewees was inside the AEI, money (or the assumption that I had a lot of it) did not influence our relationship directly. Other factors such as my 'race', marital status, age and religion (or rather the assumption that was made that I was a Christian by the women interviewed) did influence these relations more clearly. Examples are the fact that I was often asked if I was married, if it was normal in my country to be unmarried at my age (being 26 years old and unmarried seemed to be seen as representing a problem) and the many references made to a belief in God, going to church and being part of the same religion (the majority of the women interviewed were Christian). By making reflective notes every day about my relationships with the women and my own prejudices concerning the ways I was possibly framed and the ways I framed the women, I tried to stay aware of this. I

[29] Which she did not and we did not see each other again.

also had close relationships with some of the women involved in the AEI and talked with them about these thoughts and prejudices. A more thorough analysis of this framing of the interviewees and the researcher and in which ways this influences relationships they have and the research outcomes is outside of the scope of this research.

Interdisciplinarity

The previous section on feminist methodology and the discussion of feminist theories in the previous chapter indicates that the research discussed here does not fit 'neatly' into the discipline *social sciences*. The research could also, partly, be located into the discipline *humanities*. I learned of the existence of the feminist theories en methodology discussed here while studying Gender and Ethnicity at the Utrecht University, which is a study located in the field of humanities. The combination of the knowledge and tools from both fields in this thesis has not been a specifically conscious choice, but the outcome of studying both in the field of social sciences and humanities. The research questions asked, techniques used to collect data and part of the theoretical framework are influenced by social sciences, while my relationship with the topic, objectivity, the presence of my own voice in the thesis and the remainder of the theoretical framework are more likely to be located in humanities. The manner in which I decided to document the data and analysis executed, namely by intertwining the two is opposed to the more traditional documentation of data in social sciences in which the data and the analysis are clearly separated. By separating the data and the analysis section of a thesis, it is insinuated that these two are isolated sections. I would argue that there can never be 'neutral' data that has not already been analysed during the collection and documentation. Due to the combination of the insights from both fields, the research presented does not fit neatly into one or the other. It provides me with the tools to analyse qualitative interview data with a combination of terms deriving from feminist theory, anthropology and sociology. Due to this nature of the research, it could be best characterized as 'interdisciplinary'.

Research Setting

During three months, from September 2013 until December 2013, I stayed in Bethlehem, Palestine to collect the data for this thesis. During these three months, I volunteered at the Arab Educational Institute in the Sumud Story House and lived and worked very close to the

Wall. My volunteer work entailed that I was present at the group meetings, which took place three times a week. During these meetings I made notes and at times asked questions. I also chaired these group meetings during two weeks. In the meetings I chaired, I focused on the relationship of the women with the Wall and their personal freedom in everyday life.[30] As part of my volunteer work for the AEI, I also collected new stories for the 'Wall Museum' and edited these. Finally, after I have finished this thesis, I will write an evaluation report about the 'Wall Museum' for the AEI and provide recommendations.

Respondents

I have conducted three focus group discussions and interviewed 16 women who were all participants at the Sumud Story House of the AEI. These group discussions were organized during their weekly group meetings on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Besides being a participant in the group sessions, there were no extra selection criteria for these group discussions. On Tuesday there were 4 women present, on Wednesday 18 women were present and on Thursday 11 women. This difference in attendance was expected because the Wednesday group is the largest group with an average of 25 women participating. The Tuesday group and Thursday group are a lot smaller with an average of 6 and 12 women present. This large difference is influenced by multiple factors. The first is that the Wednesday group was the first group formed. The women participating in this group have been coming to the AEI and the SSH for many years and going to group is part of their weekly schedule. The second factor is that these women are also the oldest. Their children are grown up, often married and thus not their sole responsibility anymore. A large part of the women is retired and the women still working often work in the family business, which could be seen as a factor that makes it easier to arrange a morning off. The Tuesday group exists out of young mothers and is the smallest. Many of the women of this age have to work or go to school and take care of their (young) children, which means they cannot take a morning off every week. The women who do come to this group are often unable to come every week, making this the most unreliable group. The children and the family comes first, which means that if a child is sick, if there is no school or if there is a family emergency, these women do not come to group. The Thursday group is also smaller than the Wednesday group but this is mostly because it is the newest group. The age of the participants is more diverse although all

[30] The first three focus group discussions on the relationship of the women with the Wall will be part of the data analysed and was recorded. The second three focus group discussions on the personal freedom of the women was not recorded and while my observations are added to my field notes and have been used to formulate my research questions, these focus group discussions will not be coded and thoroughly analysed.

of the women in this group are older than the women in the Tuesday group. The group is reliable and most women do come every week.

The 16 women I had one-on-one interviews with were interviewed because they were participants at the Sumud Story House. The interviews did not depend on the fact if the women had a story in the 'Wall Museum'. I did not include this selection criteria because I was also interested in the women who did not have a story in the 'Museum' and wanted to know why they did not have a story and how they viewed the Wall and the 'Museum'. Of the 16 women interviewed, 9 women had a story on the Wall in the 'Wall Museum'. The 16 interviewed women were asked if they wanted to be interviewed during the group discussions. Of the women interviewed, 3 were part of the Tuesday group, 9 were part of the Wednesday group and 4 of the Thursday group.

Methods

The methods I choose to collect data were group discussions and one-on-one interviews. During these group discussions and interviews the focus was put on the experiences of the women of the SSH. By focusing on their experiences and stories shared, I moved from an epistemological analysis to an analysis focused on ontology. Due to this choice, the often unheard Palestinian narrative is given room to and the manners are analysed in which the women interviewed make sense of their daily lives under occupation.

- Group discussions

The three focus group discussions were all structured through the use of an agenda.[31] During the focus group discussions I explored with the women their experiences with the Wall, asked them which words they connected to the Wall and if they wanted to narrate these experiences by telling stories (which is the way the Sumud Story House works). At the beginning of the group discussions I introduced myself, although most of the women already knew me as I had been coming to the groups for over a month. I told the women about my research and why I wanted to talk to them about the Wall. At the end of the discussion, I asked the women present if they wanted to be interviewed by me in a one-on-one meeting. I expressed that it was no problem if they did not want to and asked the women who did want to be interviewed to come to me after the group had finished. The group discussions took around an hour. I had planned that I would divide the groups in smaller groups so they could firs talk in a smaller

[31] This agenda has been added to this thesis as appendix 2.

group and then share the stories they found the most compelling with the group. I wanted to do this to ensure all women were given time and space to tell her story, even if this was only in the smaller group. However, I only did this with the Wednesday group. The Tuesday group was too small to do this, since only four women were present. The Thursday group also started out small (with five women present) but during the first half hour five other women, who were late, arrived. I had already started talking to the five women present about their experiences and it did not feel appropriate to change the setting due to the women arriving late. I do not feel that this posed a problem as all women had the time to tell their story and an interesting group discussion about the effect of sharing a story took place. During the group discussions part of the discussion was in English and part in Arabic. In the Tuesday group one of the employees of the AEI translated. In the Wednesday group and the Thursday group one or multiple women of the group translated. The translation was done in both ways, from English to Arabic and Arabic to English.

- Interviews

The interviews conducted were semi-structured. An interview guide consisting of a topic list and possible questions has been used. [32] The interview guide ensured that I was not restricted by pre-determined questions and order but that I did have a list of topics to ensure that all important issues were discussed. These topics included if the women had a story in the 'Wall Museum', why (not), which effects they thought sharing their stories had and how this was related to sumud and resistance. The majority of the women I interviewed from the Tuesday and Thursday group did not have a story on the Wall. The AEI had asked if I wanted to ask these women during the interview to share a story that could be put on the Wall. All women interviewed of these groups wanted to do this and eight of these stories have been put on the Wall in December 2013. The majority of the interviews took place at the Sumud Story House. These interviews were in a private room, either before or after the group session taking place that day. This was done as the majority of the interviewees indicated this was the easiest way to do the interview due to their busy schedules. Of the 16 interviews, 6 took place at the women's houses. The difference in location influenced the interview. The interviews that took place at the Sumud Story House were a lot shorter, they were on average around 20 minutes while the interviews at the women's houses took around an hour. The visit to the women's homes were also an invitation into their lives. Often these interviews were accompanied by lunch, meeting the family and interesting conversations after the 'official' interview had

[32] This interview guide has been added to this thesis as appendix 3.

ended. Besides the willingness of the interviewees, the location of the interview also depended on the language the interview could be taking place in. If the interview could be done in English, which was the case with 12 of the 16 interviews, the location depended on the wish of the interviewee. If a translator was needed during the interview, the location also depended on the availability of the translator. Of the four interviews where a translator was needed, three took place at the Sumud Story House with an employee of the AEI posing as translator. One of these four interviews took place at the interviewee's house with another woman of her group present to translate.

During the interviews I noticed that some women seemed 'scripted'. With 'scripted' I mean that the women seemed to have certain 'scripts', answers, ready when asked a question. These scripts can be the outcome of being interviewed more often about the Wall in Bethlehem. If during these interviews the interviewers often took the same angle when talking about the Wall, the women get used to these questions posed. The 'scriptedness' can also be influenced by the fact that within the AEI the Wall is often discussed in the same manner. One example of this is the reference made to 'building bridges, not walls'. This sentence was used often by the women interviewed, during the personal interviews, the group sessions and informal contact. I do not mean to claim that the women did not believe in this sentence but that the formulation could be seen as a result of the repetition of this sentence within the AEI. The 'scriptedness' was also noticeable by the fact that some of the answers provided did not answer my question. An example is that the women often responded to the question concerning the effects the stories have on the Wall by providing more stories about the effect the Wall had on their lives. It seemed the women had not been asked before about the effects of the stories on the Wall.[33] Most of the time my response was to repeat the question, in a different formulation, and often I did receive an answer to the question I posed. However, this was not always the case and with one interview in particular this seemed a futile exercise. I decided to listen to the stories told, as these are also interesting data since they do provide insight in the experiences of the women with the Wall and the ways they speak about the Wall. In some interviews the 'scriptedness' was literally noticeable because the women had already prepared stories for the interview in written form and read these stories to me.

The 'scriptedness' was more apparent with the older women of the Wednesday group, which can be explained by the fact that the majority of this group has been involved with the AEI for

[33] Which is connected to the fact that the Wall in Palestine has often been researched in a one-dimensional manner with a focus on the effect the Wall has on the lives of the Palestinians, not which effect the Palestinians can have on the Wall.

over ten years. During these ten years they have been exposed to the discourse used by the AEI concerning the Wall and have been exposed to Western interviewers more often. This 'scriptedness' is not automatically a bad thing and does not make the answers provided by the women during the interviews less 'true'. It shows the language used by the women when talking about the Wall and the frame of reference they use when discussing their experiences.

Besides the interviews, I also contacted an employee and the director of the AEI via email and Facebook after I returned home from Bethlehem to ask follow-up questions. These were questions that came up during the data analysis and especially concerned practical information about the 'Wall Museum'. Examples of these questions are if the AEI had ever received a response from the IDF to their 'Wall Museum' and if the women were present during the ceremonies when the posters were put on the Wall. Both the employee of the AEI and the director answered my questions quickly and the answers provided were used during the analysis.

- Language barrier

During the group discussion I did not feel that the language difference created a barrier. The group meetings in the Sumud Story House were often bilingual as one of the goals of the Sumud Story House was to help the women participating to improve their English. The switching between English and Arabic happened often and fluidly. Some women preferred to speak in Arabic and the women present who felt comfortable enough to pose as translators, translated it to English. During the group discussions on Wednesday and Thursday multiple women posed as translators, although in both cases one woman took the lead. The other women jumped in when she was looking for words or when they felt that she did not provide a sufficient translation. Due to the fact that the women were used to switching between languages and that there was peer control concerning the translation, I felt comfortable with the translation taking place. During the group discussion on Tuesday the same employee of the AEI translated who also translated during the interviews. While he also added his own comments and intervened at times to ensure that the women understood the questions asked, I felt comfortable with him translating as he knew a lot about my research aims and made clear which comments were his and which were the comments of the women present. Of the four women present, only one did not feel comfortable enough to speak English. The other three women switched between English and Arabic but spoke mostly in English.

The language difference between myself and the interviewees during the one-on-one interviews had at times a large influence on the interviews. One factor influencing the interviews was that although the English of the interviewee was well enough for a 'casual' conversation, during the interview it became clear it was not sufficient enough to understand my questions or provide the answer she wanted to provide. At times when this happened, the interviewee asked me to rephrase the question and usually we found a way to understand each other. Some terms I could translate from English to Arabic, as I speak a little bit Arabic. However, sometimes the language barrier was too large and it became clear quite quickly that the interviewee did not understand the questions I posed. When this happened at the home of the interviewee and no one else was home, there was not that much I could do about it and I tried to rephrase as much as possible.

The misunderstanding of certain questions also proved to be very interesting data. An example is that the majority of the interviewees, also the ones who spoke English very well, did not understand what I meant with the question 'does the wall change because of the stories and graffiti portrayed on it?'. I will discuss this more at length later in this thesis, but it showed how certain ideas seemed not to be understandable. Another issue that kept coming back is that the term 'sumud' was used by the women as a name for the Sumud Story House. This meant that when I asked what sumud meant for them, they provided an answer about what the Sumud Story House meant for them. This was usually quickly clarified. The term 'the Wall' also caused some confusion. This became the most visible when I asked the women when the Wall was built in Bethlehem. Some of the women responded that they did not know, which will be analysed in the analysis chapters in connection to the intra-action with the Wall and the invasion of the space surrounding the Wall, but the women who did provide a year were not unanimous. Some of the women answered the year 2000 while others said 2008-2009. At first, I thought that they did not know, like the other women did who did not provide an answer. However, later I realized that some of the women were referring to the different stages of the building of the Wall. I asked the women what had happened during the year they were referring to. One woman who, for instance, said 2000 explained that this was the time when it became impossible for her to go to Jerusalem by car as the checkpoints became stricter. The Wall itself has been built in Bethlehem in 2004, but in the years leading up to this moment, due to the Second Intifada taking place, the checkpoints became stricter, more IDF soldiers were present in the area and the land on which the Wall would be built was confiscated. This explains some of the differences in the answers provided.

Another way in which the language barrier influenced the interview was the presence of the translator. The three interviews taking place at the Sumud Story House with the translator present were short, strict and structured. The translator (who in all three cases was the same man) asked me what I wanted to ask and kept the pace of the interview high. During the interviews I conducted alone I felt like the interview was more a conversation, when the translator was present this conversation was crippled. This translator knew my research well and at times rephrased the question when he felt like the interviewee misunderstood the question. Most of the times when he did this, I roughly understood what he was saying and felt comfortable enough that the question posed was close to the question I wanted to ask. The answer provided also showed this. The fourth interview where a translator was present took place at the interviewee's home with another woman of the SSH present to translate. This woman had a much larger influence on the interview. She gave her own answers without translating the question, spoke a lot about herself and dominated the interview.[34] While it was an interesting interview, especially because it was a conversation between three women instead of two, the majority of my topics were not thoroughly discussed. I intervened at times, as did the woman being interviewed, but in the end, after the translator tried to translate for a while, she started talking about herself again.

During the group discussions and the interviews a tape recorder was used and consent was asked for this. In some cases, especially during the group meetings, some women seemed uncomfortable about the use of a tape recorder. I explained that the data would be completely anonymous and that if they did not feel comfortable I would not turn it on. After this explanation all the women agreed to the use of the recorder.[35]

- Memos

During the research, I wrote down memos to make sure all observations were recorded. According to Boeije (:2010), there are three types of memos, observational memos, theoretical memos and methodological memos. Observational memos are also known as field notes and describe observations made in the field. These memos were the majority of my memos. Theoretical memos reflect findings that are derived from the data during analysis and theoretical insights. Methodological memos concern thoughts relevant to the methods used. During the research project, I have recorded these systematically by always carrying a writing

[34] Although I had already interviewed her earlier that week and we had discussed the same topics
[35] This lack of comfort could be explained by the fear of the Israeli secret service (Mossad) and the fear that what was said during the group discussions could at in the future be used against them or their family members.

pad with me and writing down my thoughts every time after working on the research. I mostly used these notes to remember my observations while in Bethlehem, to keep in mind methodological questions that should be discussed in the thesis and to write down theoretical ideas. The recording of these memos were also used to help in the reflexive discussion concerning my views and interpretation of the data, the respondents and the research project in general. Observational, theoretical and methodological memos are not as clearly divided in practice and I often mixed these up with personal experiences in my field notes. An example is the follow memo:

"My first interview went well. I have to keep in mind that while in the interviews with the young women there will be a double focus, stories for the AEI and my own questions, those two are very closely related and I can also use the stories (make sure this is clear for the women being interviewed!!). After the interview I took a small bus back to Manger Square, filled with school children. Hilarious! Tiny buss, way too many children. Laughed a lot and everyone wanted to say hallo to me. It was so much fun and although it was hot and I was really sweaty when I arrived at Manger square, I could not stop smiling. Love it here!" ([translated from Dutch by A.R.] (memo, recorded on 04-11-2013).

During the first month I was in Bethlehem I also wrote down one question per day. These questions were meant to get clear what I saw while I was in Bethlehem and what I did not understand. At times the questions were very short, at times they were long reflections concerning an experience I had. I kept writing down these questions until I had decided upon my (initial) research questions. After I had decided upon these questions I started with my interviews. The initial questions that came up are all part of the memos I wrote down. An example of such a question is:

"After being at the checkpoint this morning the following questions come up: how is going through the checkpoint every day connected to sumud? By being present at the checkpoint and following the instructions of the soldiers, it could be argued you are working along with the system, which normalises it. However, at the same time you are not letting the checkpoint stop you from moving around. Could it be seen as resistance that young Palestinian men sneak in front of the other Palestinians in line via the exit line? If they get caught, the soldiers get very angry, sometimes beat them and always send them back to the end of the line. Is this resistance as the young guys do not follow the rules in place? But only the young guys can do this as the opening in the exit line is very small and you have to be quick. So the older people have to stand in line. Is cutting in front of the other people a way to get to work just a bit

faster or a way to show your disrespect for the system in place? Can these two be separated? Am I romanticizing Palestinian resistance?" ([translated from Dutch by A.R] (field notes entry, recorded on 07-10-2013).

Ethics

As my research was taking place in a city under occupation and the topic of my research is one of the most visible characteristics of this occupation (the Wall) and an organisation fighting against it (the AEI), issues concerning anonymity were of importance for the interviewees. A large part of the interviewees asked me if the interviews and the group discussions could be documented anonymously. As the majority requested this, I decided to keep all the data from the interviews and the group discussions anonymous. I also decided not to provide the names attached to the stories in the 'Wall Museum'. Even though the posters are available for everyone to see and the AEI changed the names of the women who wanted this (which was the case with about 10 posters[36]), I would like to connect some of the responses in the interviews to the stories these same women shared on the Wall, which would compromise the anonymity of the interview outcomes.

All of the women have been told before the interviews and the group discussions what the focus was of my research and that if they did not want to answer a question or wanted to stop, they could. During the interviews this happened once. The interviewee had commented that the Palestinian suicide bombers in the second intifada had given Israel the excuse they had needed to build the Wall. She continued that these suicide bombers were trained by 'them' as Palestinians did not accept violence. When I asked who 'them' were, she became uncomfortable and said that I should forget that comment and that it was politics. We returned to the topic of the Wall and continued with the interview.

This anonymity is not only at stake with publications, it was also something that was important when going home through the airport in Israel. I had send all the documents with the interviews to a friend in The Netherlands and ensured that they were not on my computer, on my recorder and that the names of the women were deleted from my phone. I also typed out all of my field notes and threw the notebooks I had used out. If any of these documents

[36] The director of the AEI, Rania Murra, explained that the ten women who wanted their posters to be anonymous did this because they were afraid of Israeli repercussions. The AEI has not received a response from the Israeli government concerning the content of their 'Wall Museum'.

would have been found in my possession I would have made it difficult for myself, but would have also betrayed the trust the women had put in me when telling their stories.[37]

Analysis

Data analysis is described by Boeije as a process of segmenting and reassembling and should be alternated with data collection (:2010). Segmenting data entails that the data are broken up and separated in categories. In this way it becomes clear which topics appear in the raw data. Data are reassembled by recombining the categories that appeared during the segmentation process. A very important tool during the analysis of data is coding. Order is created through coding and the necessary categories for the process of segmentation become clear. Three steps of coding can be used during the analysis: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Boeije: 2010). During all three phases data are still collected and the analysis outcomes will be used to further focus, or broaden if needed, the interviews. 'Open coding is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data' (Boeije: 2010, p. 96). It starts during the first round of data collection and can be ended when no new codes are necessary. This means that the code scheme created when analysing the first round of data will be used when analysing a second and maybe third round of data. When no new codes are necessary, the code scheme is finished. After this phase, I had created 47 codes based on the topic list used during the interviews and the group discussions and the topics the interviewees brought up themselves. In the second phase, axial coding, categories are related to subcategories which indicated which elements of the research are the dominant ones and which elements are less important. This could be finalized when there was a clear distinction between the more important and less important codes and the contents of the categories are known. In this phase I deleted 4 codes, namely *Problems now, Political situation, The effect of sharing in general* and *Graffiti and stories on the Wall.* I deleted these codes because they were only used once or twice and the coded text could also be accurately coded by a different code that was used more often. The final step in coding is selective coding. In this step core categories were created that explained the observations described. In this final step the data was reassembled to answer the research question posed. I used ´code families´ to reassemble

[37] Not all women were scared of the Israel intelligence service but some did ask me how I would ensure their stories would stay safe when going home through Ben Gurion airport. After I explained how I would send it all home, the women felt reassured. Some of the women also warned me to be careful for my own safety. For example, one of the women knew I had an American Jewish friend who was temporarily living in Jerusalem and she told me to be careful around this friend as she could be an Israeli spy and get me into trouble.

the coding accordingly. The following families were used: Change of Wall; Effects of occupation; Stories; Sumud; Sumud, sharing and resistance; and Why Share. These families were used to structure the data and the analysis chapters. During these steps the computer programme Atlas.ti has been used to code the interviews and group discussions, create the families and structure the analysed data. Because I used Atlas.ti, I could see which larger themes came up in the interviews and discussions and quickly see where in which parts of the data the codes were present. The down-side of using a programme like Atlas.ti can be that the pieces of text that were not coded are excluded from further analysis. However, during the creation of the families, I re-read all the outcomes completely to ensure I did not exclude any section of the data too quickly in earlier phases.

In the following three chapters I will analyse the data collected. In the fourth chapter, I will focus on the Wall and the 'Wall Museum'. I will describe the feelings the women of the SSH have towards the Wall and discuss why they wanted to share their stories in the 'Wall Museum'. While doing this, I will answer the first two sub questions. In the fifth chapter, I will answer the third and the fourth sub questions by discussing what sumud means for the women involved in the SSH and how the sharing of stories is related to sumud and resistance. In the sixth chapter, I will answer the final sub question by analysing in which ways the intra-action taking place between the women and the Wall via the 'Wall Museum' influences way the Wall in Bethlehem materializes.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis I - the Act of Sharing Stories

In this chapter I will start to analyse the data collected in Bethlehem with the use of the theoretical framework discussed. Firstly, I will explain the feelings the women of the SSH have towards the Wall, provide more information on the 'Wall Museum' and give some examples of the stories shared. Secondly, I will discuss why the women shared their stories in the 'Wall Museum' and which effects they expect this act to have.

The Wall

During the group session I asked the women active in the SSH in which ways the Wall influenced their lives. The responses provided indicated the affect associated with the intra-action taking place between the women and the Wall. All the women said that they felt restricted in their movements. Bethlehem is a city that is very close to Jerusalem and in the past a trip to Jerusalem would take only 20 minutes. Due to the religious importance of Jerusalem for Christians and Muslims, the large food markets and family members living in the city, many of the women used to go to Jerusalem often. With the building of the Wall, the checkpoints and the complex system of permits, which are often not granted except during religious festivals, a trip to Jerusalem has become almost impossible for them. The women explained that this restriction in their movements resulted in a loss of jobs since some of the women or their husbands used to work in Jerusalem. The Wall also affected the economy of Bethlehem in a negative way as it has become more difficult for people coming from Jerusalem or smaller villages on the other side of the Wall to come to the city and almost all the shops and restaurants in the area near the Wall closed. Many women also told me about the large portions of land they had lost due to the Wall. An example is the following story of a woman who used to own land:

"The land was full of olive trees. I used to hire workers and collect the olives to make about 15 gallons of olive oil. I sold this oil and earned a living in this manner. But when they said that they would built the wall, I found out the Wall would be built on my land, splitting it into two pieces. I was shocked! The Israelis, when they build the wall, they uprooted all my olive

trees.[38] I lost the land, I lost the olive trees and I lost the income. And now I have to buy olive oil." (group session, 30-10-2013).

I asked the women during the group sessions to provide one word that came to mind when they thought of the Wall. The women used words like 'injustice', 'humiliation', 'suffering' and 'ugly'. During the group sessions, the interviews and my daily contact with Palestinians the Wall was most often associated with the term 'prison'. The life behind the Wall was described as living in an 'open-air prison' and in a 'ghetto'. As explained by one of the women: "The Wall, it is something ugly, something that deprives us from our liberties. We feel insecure, they feel secure. We want our freedom to go and come. They are like jailors. When they want, they give us permits and when they don't want, they leave us in prison." (group session, 31-10-2013).

The women said that due to the Wall they felt depressed, deserted and that they had lost hope for a better future. The women with young children expressed that they were worried about the future of their children and how they would have to grow up in this situation. The Wall was also described as having a negative influence on the peace process: "If we want to make peace with the Jewish people, we should know them. We know nothing of them. They should open the way to have a connection, to know each other. If they really want peace, they should be open to the Palestinians, not to cage us behind this Wall." (personal interview, 04-11-2013). The Wall was associated with terms like 'death', 'hatred', 'revenge' and 'zoo'. Many women also said that they could still not believe that the Wall was really there. One of the women explained that when it was being build, she could not believe the Wall would be permanent: "We thought it was going to be temporary and that they would open the main street again. It is the main entrance to the holy city! We did not even think that they would build a wall and block Bethlehem from Jerusalem, it was impossible." (personal interview, 08-11-2013).

As a response to these feelings connected to the Wall, some of the women said that they tried to ignore the Wall. The Wall is located on the periphery of Bethlehem, so a person who lives and works in the centre of the city can live her/his life without visibly being confronted with the Wall. However, all the women interviewed came to the SSH every week, which is located

[38] Olive trees can live and bear fruits for thousands of years and some olive trees in Palestine are said to be over 4.000 years old. It takes several years before a new tree can bear fruits. Since 1967 it is estimated around 1 million olive trees have been uprooted in the West Bank and Gaza by the Israeli government, destroying not only the local ecosystem and economy of olive oil, olives and olive soap, but also the traditional attachment of Palestinians to the land (reliefweb.int).

next to the Wall. One of the women said: “When I come out of the Sumud Story House, I don’t like it. Most of the times when I drive my car, I don’t like to look to the left side, where the Wall is. I don’t like to see it. All the time I try to ignore it because it hurts me.” (personal interview, 05-11-2013).

The responses described here show the affect that was connected to the intra-action with the Wall. Firstly, and most visibly, it can be seen that the women experienced a restriction in their mobility and a loss of income. Besides the economic influences the Wall had, the women explained they felt hurt, hopeless and depressed due to the building of the Wall. These words connected to the Wall, and other such as humiliation, suffering, zoo and prison, show how the Wall influenced the women’s process of subjectification. They feel imprisoned, insecure and humiliated due to the presence, or better said, due to the intra-action, with the Wall. This humiliating intra-action was experienced as uncomfortable and painful for the women. Due to the affect that was associated with the intra-action with the Wall, some of the women tried to ignore the Wall. However, as will be discussed at more length in the next chapters, also when the Wall is deliberately ignored, there is an intra-action taking place and the wish to ignore the Wall influences the way the Wall materialized in this intra-action. A different way of responding to the state of being that was connected to the intra-action with the Wall is sharing stories in the ‘Wall Museum’, which will be described next.

Image 9. A section of the ‘Wall Museum’ on the Wall in Bethlehem with on the other side of the Wall a large Israeli settlement. Made by Anne Kwakkenbos, October 2013.

The 'Wall Museum'

"This is a series of posters with true stories written by Palestinian women. The stories of suffering and oppression as well as 'sumud' (steadfastness or resilience), inner strength and cultural identity are here to ring out the truth of Palestinian life, which this wall tries to hide and kill." (The first poster in the 'Wall Museum', Bethlehem.)

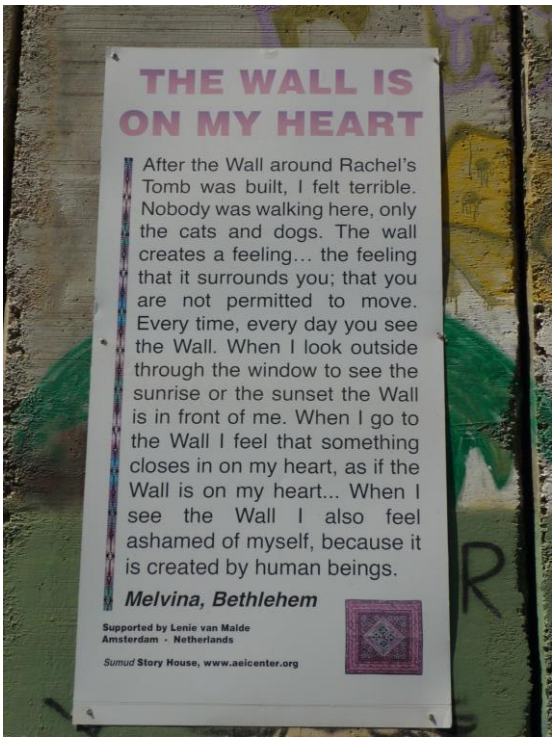

Image 10. An example of a poster in the 'Wall Museum', Bethlehem.

The 'Wall Museum' in Bethlehem exists of over a 100 posters with stories of Palestinian women and youth. In this thesis, I will focus on the 68 stories shared by women. These stories can be found in appendix 1. Image 10 is an example of a poster in the 'Wall Museum'. The inverted commas in the name 'Wall Museum' are intentional and indicate that the AEI does not want the museum to be permanent. As explained by the director in an article published about the 'Wall Museum' in the Jerusalem Quarterly: "It is in fact our hope that the 'Wall Museum' stories contribute to cracks in the Wall, to its breaking down and in fact to the collapse of all walls around us and around the Palestinian people in particular. In other words, we hope that the 'Wall Museum' by its very success will eventually destroy itself." (Murra and V. Teeffelen: 2013, p.2). In this chapter I will discuss why the women decided to share their stories via the 'Wall Museum'. To do this, I will first describe who shared these stories and what type of stories are shared in the 'Museum'.

The storytellers

The 68 stories in the 'Wall Museum' have been shared by 49 women. Nine of these 49 women have more than one story[39] and six stories are not shared by an identified narrator but are categorized as 'oral histories'. The majority of the stories is shared by women who live in Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour and Al-Walaja.[40] A small group of stories were shared by women from villages or cities further away, such as Ein Karem (which is near Jerusalem) and Ramallah. The stories are sponsored by foreign supporters of the AEI. These supporters

[39] Six women have two stories, two women have three stories and one woman has four stories.
[40] Beit Jala, Beit Sahour and Al-Walaja are villages close to Bethlehem.

receive a list of the stories that can be sponsored and they choose which story they want to sponsor. The decision of the sponsors determines which stories are shared in the 'Museum' and which are not shared.

Of the 16 women interviewed, eight had a story on the Wall at the time of the interview. These eight women had 19 stories on the Wall, with three women who had two stories and two women who had three stories. During the interviews with the other eight women, I collected possible stories to be put in the 'Museum' and in December 2013 four stories of the women interviewed were put on the Wall. Of the other four women, one had shared a story during the interview but this was not sponsored by a foreign supporter. Two of the four women had shared a story in the past which had not been put on the Wall and they did not ask me to put their stories up again for the 'Museum'. One woman said that she did not want a story in the 'Wall Museum' because she did not think it would have a positive influence on her life.[41]

The stories

The stories shared are all stories told by Palestinian women. These stories in the 'Wall Museum' are diverse, sometimes sad, sometimes hopeful but always the personal experiences of the women sharing them. The stories, as argued by the employees of the Sumud Story House (SSH), represent the daily lives of Palestinian women. The majority of the stories contain moments that can be categorized as 'sad'. An example is the story of R. from Ein Karem, depicted on the next page. She talks about the Nakba in this story, the danger her family was in during this time and the impossibility to return to their home, even if they only wanted to have a look. Other stories are more hopeful, such as the story of V. from Bethlehem, which is also depicted on the next page.

[41] This woman did not go to group meetings regularly and the interview with her was quite difficult due to our language gap. Due to this and because I did not see her again, I was unable to get a clearer picture of her attitude towards the 'Wall Museum' and the sharing of stories.

R., Ein Karem: "I was born in Ein Karem in 1934. My grandmother was also born there. Ein Karem is a very old village where Muslim and Christian people used to live together. The Zionist army came to the village in 1948 and they were shooting. We were forced to leave because it was dangerous to stay. I was 13 at the time. Once, we went back to Ein Karem to see the village. We couldn't visit our home because the Israelis were there and they prevented us. My mother wanted to see our house, our furniture, our clothes and other belongings. But the Israelis didn't let her enter, instead, they locked the door."

V., Bethlehem: "When I was 17, I bought an accordion. I wanted to let the children be happy, to change their situation a bit. During the uprising, when nobody could go out, I opened my home for the children and I played the accordion for them on the veranda. They were singing, 'the world is beautiful. Let us be happy. Let us love each other. Let us have peace here.' While there was shooting outside, at home it was safe."

All stories, such as the two examples shared here, are about violence taking place during the occupation, the two intifada's, the Nakba or connected to the Wall. While all stories spoke of these difficult circumstances of Palestinian women, 24 stories also showed a diverse set of actions that could be categorized as 'resistance'. With this I mean 'loud, headline-grabbing protests', such as the references made to young boys throwing rocks during clashes with the IDF, but also the more subtle 'infrapolitics'. Examples are the following stories:

R., Bethlehem: "During the first intifada, Israeli soldiers came to our neighbourhood looking for teenage activists. They asked for them but did not find them. They kept ringing the bell of our house but we didn't open the door. At last my mother had a clever idea to stop them ringing the bell. She put off the electricity! The soldiers became angry and started shouting. When my mother finally opened the door the soldiers were very aggressive: 'Why did you put off the electricity?' She answered quietly, 'It was an electricity cut.' One of the soldiers went to the electricity meter and kept the bell ringing in response to what my mother had done."

G., Bethlehem: "The Wall is like a sign to say: 'Go away from here'. It is intimidating. If you go from the checkpoint toward Gilo you can see the land that was taken for its construction, and the land what we can no longer access. Some of the land belonged to my grandparents. Despite everything, we must continue to resist. To continue in our daily life is a form of resistance. One example of resistance is coming every day to the Sumud Story House. The Israelis want to stop our lives by pushing us out. We can resist with any sign of life and any activity helps, because activities make people want to stay here. You can organize a concert or another cultural activity. These are ways that we can reach the world and the world can reach us."

The stories of R. and G. from Bethlehem are examples of resistance that can be seen in the stories in the 'Wall Museum'. R.'s story is an example of the more convert and indirect forms of infrapolitics. She explains how her mother stood up against the Israeli soldiers who kept ringing her doorbell by turning off the electricity. When the soldiers realized this they asked her why she turned it off and she did not tell the soldiers she had turned off the electricity because she was angry with them for ringing the bell of their house. Instead, she said there was a power cut. The soldiers must have known she was not telling the truth since they turned the electricity on again and kept the bell ringing as a form of punishment. R.'s mother did not openly challenge the soldiers but, in a more covert manner, pushed the boundaries by not complying with their commands. There was a form of punishment for her behaviour, but the punishment could have been a lot more severe if R.'s mother had crossed the boundary of accepted behaviour instead of only pushing it by stating that she had turned off the electricity because she was angry with the soldiers. G.'s story shows covert form of resistance but also more visible actions. She indicates how continuing on with daily life is experienced by her as a form of resistance. Any sign of life is characterized as a way of resisting the Israeli strategy to push the Palestinians out by making their lives as difficult as possible. This wish to keep going on with life is translated by her to the more direct and overt forms of resistance, such as organizing concerts or cultural activities by which she wants to get into contact with the world. This shows the relationship Scott identified between covert and overt resistance where the one is dependent on the existence of the other.

This section showed which type of stories are posted in the 'Wall Museum' and by whom. In the rest of the analysis the content of the stories will not be the focus of the analysis but the act of putting the stories on the Wall, and in this process the intra-action with the Wall, will be. In the next paragraph, I will discuss and analyse why the women decided to put their stories on the Wall and which effects they expected this intra-action with the Wall to have.

Act of sharing - Why share?

The intra-action between the women and the Wall, via the 'Wall Museum', was experienced by all the women as positively influencing their lives; they all indicated that they felt better after sharing their stories. The women described the positive influence of sharing stories on three levels: on an individual level, on a societal level and on an international level. In the following sections these positive influences and motivations provided by the women to share

will be discussed. This will provide insight into the affect that is associated with the intra-action with the Wall and how the state of being under occupation moved the women to share.

On an individual level:

"When I write my story and share it, it is like I take the illness out of my heart. When I tell my story, I feel more relaxed because I shared it with others and these people can feel sympathy for me. I tell you, everyone has a story. Everyone has a bad story, all the women. When I share it, I feel like I am not the only one suffering." (personal interview, 05-11-2013).

The opening quote of this section shows that the woman sharing her motivation expressed she was suffering because of the presence of the Wall. She wanted to share her story because of this affect experienced and the hope that it will be lessened due to the act of sharing. A large section of the women interviewed expressed that by sharing their stories, they felt that they could express their daily frustration and negative emotions and feel more relaxed. The act of sharing stories was often equated with expressing anger or frustration and was seen as a more suitable technique than throwing stones. The throwing of stones was described by the women as an act that had too much risk, as an activity for young boys and as an act that did not seem to positively influence the conflict. Furthermore, the sharing of stories with other women helped the women to realize they were not alone. A shared burden was often described by the women as a lighter burden.

By sharing their stories, the women explained, they felt more free: "I feel that I am not afraid. I feel free, it is our freedom to share our feelings and problems" (personal interview, 11-11-2013). This statement shows how the sharing of stories is seen as an expression of the freedom to identify as free, while the Wall was identified as an open-air prison. As was shown in the previous section of the chapter, the Wall influenced the process of subjectification of the women. The women explained they felt imprisoned, sad, humiliated and stuck in a zoo. Through the act of sharing stories and the different intra-action taking place between the Wall and the women, the subjectification of the women seemed to change. The act of sharing influenced the affect associated with the intra-action with the Wall. The women felt motivated by their feelings of imprisonment and humiliation to share their stories and due to this act of sharing, their intra-action changed. While the women described the intra-action with the Wall before the existence of the 'Wall Museum' as humiliating and as imprisoning, this seemed to have changed.

What can be seen is that the process of subjectification is not determined in a one-sided manner by the oppressor. Through intra-acting with the Wall in a different manner, namely via the 'Wall Museum', the women involved in the SSH identify themselves as free to share their stories and as free not to reproduce the fixed role of 'aggressive Arab'. Instead, they feel that they use their negative energy in a productive manner, which they compared to the unproductive manner of throwing of rocks. The sharing of stories on the Wall in Bethlehem can thus be categorized as a form of intra-action in which the context the women are living in is appropriated. The 'Wall museum' is experienced as a way in which the women are able to identify themselves as 'being free', while living in a 'prison'. The act of sharing, motivated by the state of being occupied, caused this state of being to change. In which ways the categorisation of the Wall changed due to this intra-action, and thus if the women still identify their surroundings as 'prison', will be discussed in the next chapters.

On a societal level:

"I see some people, most of the Palestinians, who do not work in politics or in resistance, they care nothing. The most important thing for them is to have work, even if this is in settlements, and to come back and bring money for their family. They forget. It will remind them that there is still a conflict that is going on between the Israelis and the Palestinians and that they need to do something about it." (personal interview, 04-11-2013).

There were three arguments for the importance of sharing stories on the Wall for the Palestinian society. The first is that by sharing stories, the community stays connected. The sharing of stories is seen as a mutual process of give and take, all the women shared hardship, personal experiences and happy anecdotes. They also listened to each other and through this process connected as a group. As was explained by one of the women: "When I share my story and the other women of the group listen or people who walk by the Wall read it, I feel respected, like my experiences matter. When I listen to the other women and hear their stories, I show them that I respect them too." (personal interview, 07-11-2013). The process of mutual give and take that takes place when stories are being shared is identified as enhancing the solidarity amongst the women and within the community as a whole.

This solidarity experienced between women of different religions is interesting. Within Palestine it can be seen there are traditionally good relations between Christian and Muslim Palestinians. I have often been told when I was in Bethlehem that Palestinians are first Palestinian and only second a member of a specific religion, and that the occupation has

unified the different religious communities. Especially in cities such as Jerusalem and Bethlehem, Christians and Muslims have lived together for many centuries, exchanged goods and shared the responsibility of the holy places inside the cities.[42] However, while the different religious communities have good relations, they live quite segregated lives. The schools are either public schools (that only Muslims attend) or Christian schools (with different schools for Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox etc.), inter-marriage is identified as taboo and friendships are often formed inside the religious community. However, inside the SSH, women of different Christian denominations and Muslim women have formed relationships across religious boundaries through sharing their hardships and happiness. These relationships can be identified as a new emergent social form which has been formed due to the external impact of the Wall, the affect associated with the intra-action with the Wall and the response of the AEI to the Wall of starting the SSH and the 'Wall Museum'. The term 'community' does not seem to fit as the social form is more liquid and instable than a community. While there is a core group of women in the Wednesday group who have been active in the AEI for many years, new(er) women who are not as regularly present are accepted in the SSH and are included in the 'trust relationships' in place. This seems to show that the social form that has been created inside the SSH is not determined by its members. The stories shared, and the associated affect, are identified as forming relations. The stories, as already said earlier, are about violence experienced, such as during the Nakba or the intifada's. Shared views such as a wish for peace and freedom and shared burdens such as the existence of the Wall and violence expressed in these stories bring the women together. These shared values and experiences or a shared need due to the presence of the Wall and the occupation seem to positively influence the social form created. However, more research would be needed to provide a more thorough analysis of this.

[42] One example of this is that the key of the Holy Sepulchre church in Jerusalem is in the hands of a Muslim family. This family opens the door every morning for Christian pilgrims and closes it again at night. One of the reasons that is provided for this choice is that the different Christian denominations could not agree which denomination should have the key as this would give this denomination more esteem. The Muslim family was identified as a neutral, and trustworthy, party (sepulchre.custodia.org).

The second argument that was provided for the importance of sharing stories was the exemplary role the stories can have for other Palestinians. One of the women said that her story could be seen as an example for other Christians in Bethlehem. The largest group of Palestinians who have left Bethlehem by migrating to Western countries are Christians.[43] O, whose story is depicted here, felt that her story showed that some Christians did decide to stay in the land and that this choice was an important choice to make. Terms such as 'the strong roots of olive trees' and the reference made to the importance of residing in Bethlehem and the Holy land are used by O. to indicate the importance of Christians to remain in Palestine, even though the circumstances are difficult.

> O., Bethlehem: "I cannot imagine myself to be away from this land. My parents are in the US and they always try to encourage and push me to join them in their freedom. As for me, I do not know if that is the kind of freedom I'm looking for! My roots are here in Bethlehem and my future is also here, in this Holy Land. Here, where the olive trees have such strong roots that no one in the world can uproot them."

The third argument was that there is a need to remember these stories within the Palestinian society. The women expressed that they though it was important for Palestinians to remember that there is a conflict going on, as the woman said in the opening quote of this section, but also to remember the history that is being erased. One of the women said that the history books give a detailed description of the time of the Ottomans, of European history and of Israeli history, but that the stories of Palestinians are forgotten. The remembrance of the stories of Palestine can be argued to be important to the survival of the Palestinian identity, as explained with the use of Tahrir Hamdi's work in the theoretical chapter of this thesis. By sharing stories about times Palestinians were under special duress, such as during the Nakba, the intifada's and the building of the Wall, the women intent to remind people there is a cause worth fighting for, as argued by the woman in the quote opening this section.

[43] The explanations that are provided for this is that Christians are more easily granted entrance into Western countries such as the USA and feel more quickly at home due to their religion and that Christians have more financial means as they have a higher income on average than Muslims in Bethlehem because the majority of the Muslims in Bethlehem are refugees.

The ‘Wall Museum’ and the sharing of stories are identified by the women as positively influencing the communal relations within Bethlehem. By crossing the religious boundaries, even if this is primarily inside the SSH,[44] it can be seen that the act of sharing stories on the Wall not only influences the intra-action taking place between the women and the Wall, but also the intra-action taking place between the women themselves. The stories shared focus on shared experiences and hopes and in this manner create a new social form inside the SSH. These stories shared inside the ‘Wall Museum’ were identified as representing a Palestinian narrative that needed to be remembered. The specific stories shared are meant to remind people they needed to fight the occupation and injustice taking place. The process of erasing the Palestinian story and the normalisation of the occupation is resisted in this manner, with the women as witness bearers. By not letting the relations between Christian Palestinians and Muslim Palestinians being determined by the occupying power, by ‘using’ the ‘Museum’ to provide an example for others and by keeping the Palestinian narrative alive, the women of the SSH are appropriating the situation they are in. Through this appropriation they have created a space in which the religious boundaries that are present within Bethlehem can be crossed and relationships are formed.

On an international level:

“The media do not tell the truth. Usually they tell the right things but they do not do this for the Palestinians. Many people come from abroad and visit Bethlehem, the city where Jesus was born. When they look at the Wall and see all the stories, maybe they will share our stories when they go back home. Maybe they will share how much the occupation hurts us. These people can tell other people in their countries and together they can put pressure on the media and their government.” (personal interview, 05-11-2013).

All the women said that one of the most important reasons for them to share their stories in the ‘Wall Museum’ was to show foreign people ‘the truth’. This ‘truth-urge’ can also be seen on the first poster of the ‘Museum’, which was depicted in image 10 in this thesis on page 58, narrated by the employees of the AEI themselves: “This is a series of posters with *true* stories written by Palestinian women. The stories (…) are here to *ring out the truth* of Palestinian life, which this wall tries to hide and kill.” [emphasis added](‘Wall Museum’, Bethlehem). The women explained that they felt that foreign, specifically Western, people often did not know about the Palestinians and the occupation that is taking place. Some of the women had recently been to Germany (a trip organized by the AEI to set up an exchange between German

[44] Although the AEI also organizes activities outside the SSH for the women, such as trips to the spa.

women and youth and Palestinian women and youth) and one of them commented that she was shocked to realize how little the German people knew about Palestine. She explained that most people she spoke to did not know where the country was or that the Palestinian people were occupied and only realized where she was from when she referred to Israel. One factor that largely influences this lack of knowledge, according to the women, is the Western and Israeli media. The Western and Israeli media are described by the women as being heavily influenced by Israeli and American politics, which are both (experienced as) very biased in their position in the conflict. The women feel Palestinians are described as 'terrorists', 'violent' or are not present in the media at all. The stories on the Wall are described as a way of sharing 'the truth', of letting their often ignored voices be heard: "It is a message to all the world. When people from the outside come and read these stories, they can tell the truth about our lives!" (group session, 29-10-2013).

The specific form of these stories, the personal stories shared by Palestinians, is described as being especially beneficial for educating foreigners. Like one of the women explained: "By writing our stories on the wall the people come and see it and see the reality of the wall. They do not just look at the concrete wall and go on to Jerusalem where they have an Israeli coffee and forget about it. The stories make them think. Even if they read one, or two or five stories, they will remember something." (group session, 30-10-2013). The director of the AEI, Rania Murra, also expressed this when I asked her why she had chosen for this specific format of using personal stories. Personal stories stick, they not only make you remember the place where you heard them or the circumstances they were about, they also make you remember the people who told you the story. By speaking about personal experiences during specifically violent times such as the Nakba, the intifada's and the building of the Wall, a face/voice is given to the experiences of Palestinians in general. The women mobilize certain entities in their stories that enhance the affect created, which indicates the agency involved in the act of sharing stories. The majority of the stories contain references to violent moments, to family, religion, resistance and sumud, as can be seen in appendix 1. This form chosen enhances the 'stickiness' of the stories. By using these stories, the Palestinian narrative is not easily forgotten, also not by foreign people. The specific form of narrative that is chosen, namely personal stories, is expected to influence the intra-action taking place between the visitors and the Wall. The state of being under occupation of the women is translated to stories that extend the affect created by the existence of the Wall to foreign people visiting Bethlehem. In this

manner, the Wall and the experiences of the women of the SSH materialize as something that 'sticks' and that is 'remembered'.

The education of foreigners was deemed especially important because the women hoped these people could positively influence their circumstances. It was expected that the people would not only be touched by the stories but that they would also try to influence their government or media. The affect created by the experience of seeing the Wall and reading the stories shared by the women in the 'Museum' was expected to move the foreigners visiting to make a change. The hope that foreigners would be moved was translated to the mobilization of a specific entity, namely the Berlin Wall. The connection between the Wall in Palestine and the Berlin Wall was often made by the women. I regularly heard the sentence, 'the Berlin wall fell down, so the Wall here will fall down too'. One of the women said that if Europeans knew what was going on here, "how it is the same as the German people suffered" (group session, 31-10-2013), that they would help the Palestinian people make the Wall fall down too.

This connection made between Berlin and Palestine, and, as mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, South Africa's apartheid and the Israeli apartheid, indicate a transnational discourse used by Palestinians, and in this case, specifically by the women of the SSH. As the quote shows, it was argued that if Europeans would see that Palestinians are suffering as much as the Germans had suffered, that these Europeans would help make the Wall fall down. The use of a specific narrative was expected to enhance the capacity of their stories to motivate the foreigners visiting. Other geographical points, in this case Berlin, were used to share a narrative and to ensure this narrative was 'sticky' and thus more easily remembered. A cosmopolitan narrative was used to rally support for a national cause. While the Wall can be seen as enclosing the Palestinians, it also connects them to people in other countries with (a history of) walls. The world of Palestinians is enclosed, but at the same time enlarged and cosmopolitanized. This cosmopolitan narrative, as theorized by Ulrich Beck (:2012) and Daniel Levy (Beck and Levy: 2013), is a world narrative in which the local and the global have an interactive relationship. This relationship could be categorized as 'intra-action' as the relationship is causal and both 'phenomena' are mutually influential. By framing the narrative of the women with the use of the insights provided by cosmopolitanism, it becomes clear that 'the local' alone is not enough to explain the (globalised) strategies used by the women involved in the SSH.

This section showed that the potential of the stories shared on the Wall to show 'the truth' was valued very highly by the women of the SSH. This truth was expressed via 'sticky' personal stories, the mobilization of specific entities and by the use of a cosmopolitanized narrative of injustice. It was believed that if only the foreign people would know this truth, than they would see the suffering of the Palestinian people and be motivated to help end the occupation and oppression. This large responsibility and power given to foreigners visiting Bethlehem suggests that the women of the SSH themselves experience a level of powerlessness. They do not see their own actions as enough to change their situation, only foreign (specifically Western) people were identified as having this ability. While the women do identify as free to share their stories and the agency can be identified that is involved in the selection of the stories shared and the entities mobilized, they seem not to identify as powerful enough to influence their situation and end the occupation in place. This shows that while the 'Wall Museum' seems to have positively influenced the process of subjectification of the women involved, 'others' are identified as the powerful and active agents in the intra-action taking place. In the next chapters I will discuss the implications of this attitude concerning the materialisation of the Wall in the intra-action of the women of the SSH with the Wall.

Conclusion

In this chapter the act of sharing stories on the Wall in Bethlehem was analysed. I first described the feelings the women attached to the Wall in Bethlehem to indicate how they view the Wall and how the Wall had affected them. What could be seen is that the Wall influenced the women's process of subjectification as they felt imprisoned and 'in a zoo'. Secondly, I discussed the 'Wall Museum', a project that is the main focus of this thesis. I showed who shared their stories in the 'Wall Museum' and what type of stories were shared. The stories all represent the experiences of Palestinian women living under occupation. Some stories are sad, some hopeful, some show daily acts of resistance, other show moments of resignation. To answer the research question posed in this thesis, I focus on the act of sharing and how this influences the intra-action between the women and the Wall. To do this, I explained in this chapter why the women decided to share their stories in the 'Wall Museum'. The reasons provided indicated in which way the 'Wall Museum' represents a creative form of appropriation. The Wall and the sharing of stories is indicated by the women to provide the freedom to actually feel free, free to share their experiences and feelings. These experiences

are in their eyes often ignored by the Israeli and Western media. Through the use of 'sticky' personal stories, the mobilization of specific entities and at times a cosmopolitanized narrative, the agency can be seen that is present in the act of sharing stories. The women experienced the 'Museum' as a space for them to let their voices be heard and to share 'the truth'. This freedom the women experienced, while they described their lives in Bethlehem as living in an open-air prison, indicates the potential this intra-action with the Wall has for their process of subjectification. The women did not let the Israeli occupier determine their roles as prisoners, as a divided society in which Christians and Muslims are opposed and as a silenced community. They used the 'Wall Museum' to share their Palestinian narrative, to show foreign (western) visitors 'the truth', and to take on the position of witness bearers. In the next chapter I will analyse how this is connected to sumud and resistance. Finally, in the sixth chapter, I will discuss in which ways this intra-action taking place between the women and the Wall influences the materialization of the Wall.

Chapter 5

Data Analysis II – Sumud, Resistance and the 'Wall Museum'

In this chapter I will describe what sumud means for the women involved in the SSH. Sumud is a difficult concept to define, as was said earlier, so I will discuss which type of behaviour is connected to having sumud (being samid) by the women and how this is related to resistance as represented by the term 'infrapolitics'. By focusing on the behaviour that is connected to sumud, instead of the symbolic meaning, I will shed light on the relationship between the act of sharing stories, infrapolitics and sumud.

Sumud

Staying on the land

"My idea is, you feel free in the place where you feel okay. If it is your country, you feel free, even if you are surrounded by a Wall. And if it is not your country, you won't feel free. I see myself as a fish, by pulling her from the sea, she will die. This happened to me. I left for the USA and I felt like I was going to die, I had to come back! Palestine is my sea." (personal interview, 06-11-2013).

When I asked the majority of the women what sumud meant for them, they referred to staying on Palestinian soil; sumud was predominately defined as staying on the land. However, when asked examples of being samid, a more diverse range of dimensions were connected to this act of 'staying on the land'. The following three stories are examples of how the women identified sumud in their own lives.

The choir leader of the SSH women's choir, who was quoted at the beginning of this paragraph, decided to stay in Bethlehem after her parents had left for the United States. She had joined them for a few months to try it, but came home again: "Even though the USA is a free country, my country is the best. When I walk in the street, everybody says 'Hi, how are you?'. That close relationship with the people, that is part of the harmony here that I love. So I am very stuck to this place, this is me." (personal interview, 06-11-2013). Sumud is connected by her to staying on the land but, for her, staying here is made possible via the building social relationships and keeping the community alive and healthy. As explained by another woman of the SSH: "Sumud means to help as much as possible in your community." (personal

interview, 08-11-2013). This explanation of sumud indicates the personal responsibility of building social relations that is connected to being samid by the interviewees which creates the situation in which staying in a land under occupation is experienced as possible.

Keeping the community alive and healthy is also connected to educating children. I asked the women in which ways they experienced sumud in their daily lives and in which way they worked towards a better future. The majority of the women with young children responded by saying that they were doing this by showing their children how to be samidin: "We teach our children to stay, how to be like us. We work, we smile, we dance, we sing. We encourage one another. In that way we show our children what it means to have sumud." (group session, 29-10-2013). When asked why this was important, one of the women responded that her father had taught her how to be samid and that she wanted to teach her children how to stay in the country, despite the increasingly difficult situation with the Wall. She asked me: "If I leave and if my children leave, for who is the land?" (group session, 29-10-2013). The young women wanted to ensure that their sumud extended to their children. The intensity found in acts such as working, smiling and dancing could be identified as 'sticking' to the young women's bodies and as transferred to their children. The affect created in this transfer and the intra-action taking place between the women and their children was expected to result in sumud.

The third example is the story of a woman who has been involved with multiple women's organisations in recent years, besides the SSH. One of these women's organisations is trying to move beyond the Wall by bringing Israeli and Palestinian women together. During one of these visits the women talked about the Wall and how it influenced the lives of the Palestinian women. One of the Israeli women said that she did not think the Wall had a large influence on the lives of the Palestinian women she had met as these were always smiling, joking and laughing. She said that they seemed so happy, which she would not expect from people living in such a difficult situation. The Palestinian woman told me she had responded to this Israeli woman by saying that: "We still have hope, we still want to live. Why be sad all the time? This does not give us anything, so we smile, and we laugh, which helps us to be steadfast." Although it may seem strange to connect joy to sumud, this was an important dimension of being samid for the women. Where suffering was always seen as inherently connected to sumud and the people who suffered the most were identified as the strongest samidin, enjoying life was mentioned by the women interviewed as being connected to sumud. This does not mean that they oppose suffering to feeling joy, but that feeling joy despite and

because of the suffering is represented in sumud. The beautiful moments in life and the joy that can be found in these moments is given meaning though the sacrifices that have been made. These emotions were not expected by the Israeli woman to be expressed by an oppressed people. However, the women of the SSH did connect joy, sumud and life under occupation. The process of subjectification of the women of the SSH was not determined by the emotions that were expected of them. Instead, they decided to remain joyful and happy and connect this decision to being samid.

Infrapolitics

What these three examples show, together with the examples provided in the first chapter of this thesis, is that sumud is more complex than only 'staying on the land'. It represents a certain way of life in which aspects like social relations, joy and keeping the Palestinian heritage alive, through education of children and the choir that sings traditional Palestinian songs, is important. This 'life style' makes the goal of staying on the land possible. It is a way of appropriating the oppressive and violent situation the women are in. The life style that is connected to being samid shows how life under occupation becomes not only possible but also enjoyable. Sumud can thus be categorized as a creative form of appropriation through which the process of subjectification of the Palestinians is not colonized by the Israeli occupier. Although the type of activities that are seen as representing sumud are diverse and at times covert such as laughing and enjoying life, all the activities work towards retaining one's humanity and moving forward to a future in which Palestinians exists in safety and security. Sumud represents the struggle to preserve a certain "Palestinian" way of living daily life, with its own rhythm and customs, its discourses and life styles. This Palestinian way of life expresses the will to preserve human dignity and to challenge forms of oppression which trample that dignity in overt and subtle ways. Not letting the occupation kill one's joy of life and not letting the occupation determine who one is, as a person and as a community, are tools in resisting Israel. The women decided that they were going to live happily, that they were going to laugh, love, create communal relations and through these processes made life under occupation possible. Because of this, they could stay, be steadfast, and resist the Israeli goal of creating a 'land without a people for a people without a land'. Due to this, sumud and its acts of resistance on an unobtrusive level can be seen as an example of infrapolitics as described by Scott (:1990). How these unobtrusive acts and sumud are connected to sharing stories will be discussed next.

Sharing stories on the Wall

Acts that represent sumud?

"The stories show that we are here and that we are samid. We put our stories on the wall to say that we want to stay here. We still stay and we want the Wall to fall." (personal interview, 05-11-2013).

One of the ways sumud was connected to sharing stories by the women was that the stories show acts of sumud and can thus be an example for other Palestinians and educate foreigners on the steadfastness and resilience of the women. By putting their stories on the Wall, the women want to send a message to the world: "That even when we are surrounded, even if a Wall is built, we still live, we are satisfied and we are still samidin." (personal interview, 05-11-2013). The act of educating foreigners by showing 'the truth' was important for the women. By showing their sumud, perseverance, courage and steadfastness, the women wanted to counter the image they believe many foreigners have of Palestinian women, namely the image of oppressed victims.[45] The women also believed that if the foreigners would see the truth, they would choose their side and fight for their cause. As is expressed by one of the women: "It means that there is somebody who can support us or be with us when there is a war coming or something. We are not alone in this, for me this is really a big issue, not being alone." (personal interview, 06-11-2013). The affect stuck to the personal stories in which examples of sumud are mobilized is expected to extend to the international readers and consequently to result in international support.

A second way in which sumud was connected to sharing stories was that the act of sharing stories enhanced the sumud of the women. The women expressed that by sharing their stories they enhanced the communal relations and the solidarity amongst the women, as was discussed in the previous chapter. The emergent social form that was created inside the SSH was identified as enhancing the sumud of the women: "When we write our stories and we share it with the other women, we feel like we are staying there together, we continue being there, we feel that our roots are there." (personal interview, 04-11-2013). The emotions experienced by the women in their daily lives motivated them to share their stories. The affect created during these moments of intra-action can not only motivate others to help end the

[45] Oppressed not only by the Israeli occupation but also by their Palestinian husbands, fathers and brothers.

occupation, but also create feelings of solidarity and community amongst the women themselves and with international readers. Some of the women also explained that by hearing the difficult stories of other women, their lives did not seem as bad as they thought they were. Because of this, they expressed they found it easier to be samid and stay: "Maybe my situation is better than others and I feel better about myself. I feel stronger. Many stories are more difficult than mine and after hearing this I find it easier to be steadfast." (personal interview, 07-11-2013). This indicates that the intra-action taking place between the women and the stories shared in the 'Wall Museum' is divers and personal. Some women relate to the difficult stories shared, such as the woman, cited on page 62, who said that by reading the stories she felt like she was not the only one suffering. However, others experienced the affect created during the intra-action in a different manner and felt strengthened because they compared their lives to the stories shared.

The connection made between the act of sharing stories and sumud shows the potential these stories have for representing a Palestinian story in a context where this story is often not heard. The women indicated that their sumud, which is shown in the personal 'sticky' stories they share, made it possible for the 'real' story about Palestine to be heard. Their stories showed 'the truth'. In this position as witness bearers, the women used the stories and the space created in the 'Wall Museum' to reclaim the 'true Palestinian narrative', which was told through examples of sumud. Secondly, the affect created in the intra-action taking place was expected to enhance the sumud the women experienced and extend it to others. This potential showed the ways in which sumud and the 'Wall Museum' can create space for the women to renegotiate their process of subjectification. By not letting themselves be categorized as victims and letting the occupier colonize their process of subjectification, staying on the land, being steadfast and retaining the 'Palestinian way of life' became possible.

Acts that represent resistance?

"The only tool for resistance I have is to express myself through narrating my stories to people who can listen to me." (personal interview, 07-11-2013).

In the previous paragraph the relationship between sharing stories and sumud already showed in which ways this could be identified as resistance. In this paragraph, I will discuss more in depth how the women identified the relationship between the act of sharing stories and resistance and if the act of sharing stories can be identified as infrapolitics.

All the women identified their act of sharing stories in the 'Wall Museum' as an act of resistance. One of the ways in which sharing stories was identified as resistance is related to the previous paragraph: through the ways it was experienced as enhancing and showing sumud. This shows how interrelated the concepts sumud and resistance were for the women of the SSH. One of the women explained it as follows: "Through the narration of stories, through the saying of words, we will increase our strength and our resilience and our steadfastness." When I asked her if she categorized this as resistance, she responded: "This is a form of resistance. We will stay and stick to what we believe in, to what we say and do. We will keep putting our stories on the Wall, which brings us together as Christians and Muslims, until the day the Wall will fall down." (personal interview, 07-11-2013). The statement made here shows how sumud and the sharing of stories made it possible for the women to stick to what they believe in, create relationships that cross religious boundaries, and, in this way, resist the colonization of their process of subjectification. The responses of the young women of the Tuesday group also indicated in which ways they identified sumud, resistance and their own subjectification as interrelated when it concerned the 'Wall Museum':

Me: "Do you see the act of sharing your stories in the 'Wall Museum' as an act of resistance?"
Woman 1: "Yes. The stories show that in spite of the presence of the wall, we still exist and live."
Woman 2: "And we laugh."
Woman 1: "And we write, communicate and love. We are samid. This is something they don't want, they want us to be dead, not to live."
Me: "How do the stories connect to this?"
Woman 1: "They show we are still alive. If you are writing, you are still alive."
(group session, 29-10-2013).

Secondly, the act of sharing stories on the Wall was also identified as resistance because it represented a way in which the women did not let the Wall and occupation keep them quiet. By putting their stories on the Wall, they could let their voices be heard. The act of sharing a story on the Wall was identified as a way to "raise our voices for all of the world to hear" (personal interview, 07-11-2013). The women explained that their stories show that they are resisting the occupation because they show the world what is happening to them. This was identified as a powerful tool "because if you throw stones, it will never give a message. A story gives a message." (group session, 29-10-2013) and if "you don't put anything on there,

it stops and nobody knows anything." (personal interview, 06-11-2013). These statements show how the sharing of stories is identified as an act of resistance because it provides room for the women to share their Palestinian narrative as witness bearers. The 'Wall Museum' creates the space for the women of the SSH on the phenomenon that is experienced as imprisoning them to let their voices be heard. While the Wall is enclosing the world of the women of the SSH, the 'Museum' provides the room to enlarge this world.

Thirdly, three of the women interviewed identified the act of putting their stories on the Wall as resistance because they used the negative Wall to create something positive. S., one of the women of the SSH, explained that by sharing her story, which is depicted below, she was defying the power of the Israeli oppressor: "To put something good on the bad Wall is a way to challenge Israel. My story shows how I learned to forgive the Israelis and to put this on the Wall is a challenge. By putting it on the Wall I show that I am better than they are because I know how to forgive. I am saying, though you built this ugly and bad Wall, I am forgiving you." (group session, 31-10-2013).

> S., Bethlehem: "During one of the intifada days, I was four months pregnant and lost my baby because of Israeli tear gas. I was terribly depressed since it was the second miscarriage I suffered. A week later I visited a medical doctor in Jerusalem. Coming out of the doctor's clinic, I saw on top of an escalator an Israeli child who was recklessly playing and about to fall down. Thoughts rushed through my mind. Should I leave him and let him die the way the Israeli soldiers let my boy die a week ago, or should I make a desperate attempt to grab him? All of a sudden, I felt an impulse that made me hurry forwards. Throwing myself in front of the boy I prevented his fall."

What S. showed is that by forgiving the Israelis and by saving the Israeli child, she did not let her negative experiences with Israelis determine her life and future relationships with others. By putting this story on the Wall, she showed the occupying power that she is using a 'different frame of reference'. One of the young women also stated that her act of putting

something on the Wall was an act of resistance because "many people don't even want to stand beside the Wall, so when I do it, this is a message. When I tell my story, which shows that I am staying here and writing down my experiences, this is resistance." (group session, 29-10-2013). The invasion of the space that the Wall occupies for creative use and how this intra-action taking place between of the women and the Wall influenced the materialisation of the Wall will be elaborated upon in the next chapter. However, what this section shows is that some of the women considered their act of sharing a story in the 'Wall Museum' as an act of resistance because they were invading the space the Wall, and via the Wall the occupying power, occupies.

What this section showed is that for the women of the SSH, sumud and resistance are intertwined concepts when it concerns the 'Wall Museum'. The act of sharing stories can be categorized as a way of appropriating the occupation and the Wall. Sharing stories in the 'Wall Museum' was identified as a way of enhancing sumud by the women of the SSH, which makes the retaining of a 'Palestinian way of life' possible. The women used the 'Wall Museum' to show their sumud and through their sumud and the sharing of stories, which is identified as representing sumud, resist the Israeli occupation. The act of putting a story on the Wall can be identified as infrapolitics as it is an indirect way of challenging the Wall, the army and the occupying power, namely Israel. The women do not directly challenge the soldiers at the checkpoints or go to weekly demonstrations in which activists confront the occupation. However, by sharing their stories on the Wall they did not let themselves be silenced or determined by the occupation. They used the Wall that is categorized by themselves as enclosing their world, to enlarge this world and frame of reference. They let their voices be heard and wanted to show the world that they are living with sumud, which made it possible for the women to resist the Israeli occupier and to stay in the land.

Conclusion

In this chapter it became clear that sumud has the potential for the women of the SSH to make life under occupation possible. Besides staying on the land, it could be seen that sumud as a 'life style' is focused on social relations, joy and keeping the Palestinian heritage alive. It can be seen as a way of appropriating the oppressive and violent situation the women are in and a way of keep moving forward. The women showed they do not let the occupation determine their process of subjectification and work towards retaining their status as 'human being'. Sumud made it possible for the women to stay in Palestine and due to this, sumud was

identified by the women as a form of resistance. These two concepts, sumud and resistance, turned out to be intertwined for the women of the SSH when it concerned the act of sharing stories in the ‘Wall Museum’ and this showed how the sharing of stories can be identified as an example of infrapolitics. The act of sharing stories in the Wall museum can be seen as an expression of sumud and be categorized as a creative form of appropriating the situation the women are living in. The sharing of stories was seen as an intra-action in which the created affect enhanced the sumud of the women. Through the sharing of ‘true’ and ‘sticky’ stories in the ‘Museum’ about Palestinians, the women want to ensure that the Palestinian narrative is kept alive and can resist the silencing of their voices. In which ways the intra-action between the women and the Wall via the ‘Wall Museum’ influenced the materialisation of the Wall in Bethlehem will be discussed next.

Chapter 6

Data Analysis III - the impact of the 'Wall Museum'

In this chapter it will be discussed how the intra-action between the women and the Wall, via the 'Wall Museum', influenced the materialisation of the Wall in Bethlehem. Firstly, I will describe if the 'Wall Museum' can be identified as a form of 'space invasion' by the women involved. Secondly, it will be discussed if for the women involved, the Wall materialized as less ugly and oppressive due to the 'Wall Museum'. Finally, I will discuss whether or not the women considered the 'Wall Museum' to be a strategy to help break down the Wall. This will indicate if the women identified sumud and the act of sharing stories as a potential form of intra-action that can positively influence the future of the Palestinians.

Intra-acting with an object

"Today I decided to walk by the Wall to really see what it is like, in real-life. When I stood by it for the first time, I thought 'so this is it.'. Standing in front of this large construction, 9 metres high, with watch towers, cameras and who-knows-what on the other side is an intimidating and interesting experience." ([translated from Dutch by A.R.] (memo, recorded on 16-09-2013).

While intra-action has been theorized in the second chapter of this thesis, and the intra-action of the women with the Wall, via the 'Wall Museum', has been discussed in the previous chapters, in this chapter I will elaborate on what it means to 'intra-act' with an object and how this object and the relationship with this object materializes in this intra-action. For me, as the quote that at the beginning of this chapter showed, the Wall at first materialized as an intimidating but also interesting materiality of the occupation in place. However, after a while I got used to the presence of the Wall and stopped feeling as intimidated, outraged or intrigued by its presence; the Wall became 'business-as-usual'. If due to the changed intra-action taking place via the 'Wall Museum' the Wall materialized differently for the women involved will be discussed in this chapter.

Space invasion?

Whether or not the women were invading the space the Wall occupies will be discussed by focusing on two areas; firstly, I will analyse if the women feel connected to the 'Wall

Museum'. It will be described whether or not the women go and visit the 'Museum' and if they know which stories are depicted on the Wall. Secondly, I will discuss if the women entered the space the Wall occupies in their daily lives or preferred to ignore it. This will provide the necessary data to analyse if the women were invading the space the Wall occupies through the intra-action taking place via the 'Wall Museum'. As was discussed in theoretical framework of this thesis, the majority of the graffiti on the Wall in Bethlehem has been created by foreign artists. Piquard (:2009) argued this was highly problematic as the foreign graffiti artists appropriated a means of non-violent action from the Palestinians. I want to analyse if the 'Wall Museum', filled with Palestinian stories, does represent a way for Palestinians to invade the space that has been taken from them by the Wall.

'The Wall Museum'

"Yes, I wrote a story down for the 'Museum', but I don't know if they put it in there or not." (personal interview, 11-11-2013).

The interviews showed that a large group of the women who had provided a story for the 'Wall Museum', did not go and visit the museum. When the stories were put on the Wall, the women did not join the ceremony taking place and some of the women did not know if their stories were put on the Wall or not. An example was one of the women who told me a story that had occurred during the second intifada. I had asked her at the beginning of the interview if she had a story on the Wall, which she said she did not to have. However, when I heard the story she told me, I recognized it as one of the stories that was in the 'Wall Museum'. When I told her this, at first she did not believe me: "Yes? Are you sure? Well, maybe they did put it on there then, I do not know." (personal interview, 07-11-2013). Some of the women did clearly state that they had read the stories posted in the 'Wall Museum' and that they had also urged the people in their surroundings to go and read them. One example is O., whose story was shared earlier on page 65. O. told me her husband came and read her story after it had been on the Wall for over a year. She was "astonished" (personal interview, 06-11-2013) he wanted to read it now, and unable to provide a reason for it, and expressed how happy she was about this because she was proud of the fact that her story was depicted in the 'Museum'.

One of the factors that influenced the fact that such a large group of women did not know about the content of the 'Wall Museum' is the way the AEI communicated to the women which stories were published in the 'Museum'. When I asked the director Rania Murra if they communicated this to the women, she responded by saying that "most of the time" they did

tell them (personal communication, 31-03-2014). However, Rania also told me that the AEI organized activities next to the 'Wall Museum', such as walks, prayers and choir performances.[46] Since these activities bring the women close to the 'Museum', there seem to be more factors that influenced the lack of awareness of the women. Another factor that influenced the lack of knowledge was that the women wished to ignore the Wall itself, as was already discussed earlier. One of the women explained why she thought many people did not come and read the 'Wall Museum': "Not that they don't want to come and see the stories, some people do read it. But they don't want to come and see the Wall. They like to read the stories we put on the Wall but when they see the Wall, it hurts all Palestinian people." (05-11-2013). This wish to ignore the Wall can be seen as connected to the fact that a large group of the women did not know when the Wall was built. While more research would be necessary to clearly identify the connection between these two aspects, it does indicate there is a wish to ignore the existence of the Wall. The fact that the women felt this wish to ignore the Wall and that they did not go and visit the 'Museum' or knew the content, indicates that they did not seem to want to enter the space the 'Museum' occupies.

Another dimension that can be seen as influencing the intra-action the women had with the 'Wall Museum' is that which stories were put on the Wall is decided upon by foreign sponsors. The AEI asked the women to share their stories. The employees wrote the stories down, edited them and then send the stories to people who had indicated earlier that they wanted to sponsor a poster. These potential sponsors were all Western. The sponsors decided which poster they wanted to pay for and the stories that did not get chosen were not published in the 'Wall Museum'. This takes away part of the agency of the women who shared their stories. They did not decide which stories were put in the 'Museum', which could be a factor that influenced the way the 'Wall Museum' and the Wall itself materialised.

What can be seen is that although some women did express they felt connected to the 'Wall Museum' and the space it occupies, the majority of the women did not experience this. The 'Museum' was identified as an important tool for the women to share their suffering and pain through the preservation of the Palestinian narrative, via which stories are created that can be used to educate internationals on the 'truth'. However, the content of the 'Museum' is decided upon by the AEI, who edited the stories and put them on the Wall, and foreign sponsors, who decided which stories were published and the majority of the women did not go and visit the 'Museum'. This indicates there seems to be a disconnection between the act of sharing stories

[46] These activities unfortunately did not take place during the months I stayed in Bethlehem.

and the actual material space the stories are published in. Because the women did not go and visit the 'Museum' and expressed the wish to ignore the existence of the Wall, the intra-action between the majority of the women and the 'Wall Museum' did not seem to include a connectedness to the 'Museum' and the Wall by the women.

Do the women enter the space?

"I use the wall to share my story, to influence people, for advertisement and for basketball!" (personal interview, 08-11-2013).

The question whether or not the 'Wall Museum' provided the opportunity for the women to invade the space the Wall takes in, cannot be given a clear-cut answer. The previous chapters indicated that the women used the 'Wall Museum'; it provided them with a possibility to share their 'sticky' personal stories in a space they had been excluded from. As was described earlier in this chapter, three of the interviewed women indicated during the interviews that they considered the act of sharing their stories on the Wall to be an act of resistance because they were *using* the negative Wall for something positive. While the rest of the women did not consider their act of sharing in this manner, it was clear the 'Wall Museum' created the space for them to express themselves and to let the 'true Palestinian narrative' be heard. However, although the women showed via these acts of sharing that they were 'using' the Wall, and thus possibly invading the space, the majority stated that they still wished to ignore its presence. One of the women who lived right next to the Wall explained it in the following way: "I try sometimes not to open the window on that side. I try to forget the Wall is there." (group session, 31-10-2013). This shows there seems to be a disconnection between the space that is felt to be created to share the stories and the actual concrete place the stories are published upon; The women did use the space created for their stories but the majority did not want to enter the space the Wall occupied.

C., whose situation with her home that is surrounded on three sides by the Wall was explained in the first chapter of this thesis, was the only woman who showed different ways in which she entered the space the Wall occupies. One example is that she invited an artist to paint on the Wall: "A famous Spanish artist came and painted wonderful paintings on the Wall here. They were in the country to paint on other locations and I had invited them to paint on *our Wall* here. Unfortunately, other people painted over these beautiful paintings. I wanted to put a gate before the paintings to protect them, but I was not allowed to do this." [emphasis added] (personal interview, 08-11-2013). C. showed how she not only invited artists to paint

on *her Wall*, but that she also wanted to protect the art on the Wall by putting up a fence. The decision to invite people to paint on the Wall shows how C. did consider the space the Wall occupies hers to enter and to paint on. Secondly, the will to put a fence up to protect it also shows that she felt she was entitled to decide what should be on the Wall and how this piece of Wall should be treated. C. also used the Wall in a creative way by putting up a sign that advertises her shop and by putting up a basketball hoop for her children to play with. The basketball hoop, which can be seen in image 11, had recently been taken down by the IDF but C. quickly put it back up, although she and her son had been arrested the first time the hoop was taken down. These actions show that C. invaded the space the Wall occupies and appropriated the Wall for her own use. Even though she was not the only entity entering the space and the control of the space was contested, the IDF took down the hoop, the Israeli government ruled a fence before the Wall as illegal and the paintings were painted over by other artists, C. did show that she invaded the space the Wall occupies and that she felt responsible for the Wall that surrounds her home.


Image 11. The basketball hoop on the Wall

However, C. was an exception. Her situation can be identified as more pressing than the situation of the other women as her home is surrounded by the Wall and she cannot ignore its existence. She is living in the space that the Wall occupies and enters the space on a daily basis. She decided to not only enter the space but also make it her own, within the boundaries of the rules set by the IDF, that she is constantly challenging. She decided to keep living in her home and made this possible by appropriating the situation she was in. Through the appropriation of the Wall, it became possible to live in a home that is surrounded on three sides. C. moved one step further and made a living out of the situation she is in by selling items in her shop related to the Wall and the occupation, turning the difficulties she is in into profit. C. made the choice to physically enter the space the Wall occupies, to invade it, and to redefine her intra-action with the Wall by appropriating this space. The majority of the other women, even those that lived a few minutes away from the Wall, choose to try to ignore the Wall. They physically do not have to move into the space to put their stories up the Wall because the employees of the AEI do this and they are often not present at these ceremonies. Connecting this to the fact that the women interviewed did not go and read the stories in the

‘Wall Museum’, indicates that while the ‘Museum’ created space for the women to ‘use’ the Wall to let their voices be heard, this did not mean the women had to invade the space the Wall takes in.

The experiences of the women indicate that there are multiple ways in which intra-action can take place. While the women used the Wall to share their stories, they did not *physical* enter the space the Wall takes in. The disturbance that can take place when space is invaded, as is the case with C., challenges the roles that have been created for the participating parties, in this case occupier and occupied, and creates room for a redefinition of these roles and the materialisation of the Wall. As the majority of the women chose not to physically enter the space the Wall occupies, but rather ignore the existence of the Wall, it seems the space has not been (physically) ‘invaded’. A disconnection can be seen between the act of sharing stories and the act of physically ‘invading the space’ and putting these stories on the concrete Wall. While the space is appropriated by the women of the SSH to share their stories in the ‘Wall Museum’, the actual concrete Wall that is used seems not to be directly involved in this appropriation. In which ways this lack of physical space invasion via the ‘Wall Museum’ influenced the materialisation of the Wall will be discussed next.

Has the materialisation of the Wall changed?

“I don’t want more paintings on the wall because you need to look at it. I don’t want to look at it. When I look and read these stories, it hurts. I don’t want the Wall to be more beautiful. The Wall is bad and this is hidden by the pretty colours.” (personal interview, 05-11-2013).

Almost all the women told me during the interviews that although they categorized the ‘Wall Museum’ as positive, this did not make the Wall less negative or less oppressive. As was already discussed in the methodology chapter, the question whether or not the Wall could become less negative was a difficult question to understand. The idea that the Wall could be less negative or even positive did not seem to be a possibility. However, after rephrasing the question, by, for instance, asking if it became less difficult to look at the Wall, the women did provide an answer. During the group sessions and the interviews I also felt that the women did not want me, or other foreigners, to get the idea that the Wall was less oppressive than they considered it to be, as can be seen in the opening quote of this paragraph. There seemed to be a fear that by categorizing the graffiti and the stories on the Wall as positive, the suffering of the Palestinian people could be trivialized. It was often repeated that the Wall was very bad

and that even though the pictures could be seen as pretty and the stories as good, this did not make the Wall less negative and oppressive.

The majority of the women said during the interviews and the group sessions that they did not like to look at the Wall; they preferred to ignore it. Ignoring the Wall is, as I stated earlier, relatively easy while living in the centre of Bethlehem without a reason to pass the checkpoint. However, the SSH is located next to the Wall and the women see the Wall every week when they come to the meetings. While they said that they did think the 'Wall Museum' was very positive, it seems this did not positively influence the materialisation of the Wall. As one of the women responded: "No, the Wall is the Wall. It is the same." (personal interview, 08-11-2013). When I asked if seeing the Wall became less difficult because of the 'Wall Museum', only three of the women said that this was indeed the case. One of the young women explained it in the following way: "Every time I see the wall, I close my eyes and I don't want to see it. So when I see these colours and pictures, I feel relieved and I have something to look at." When I asked her if the Wall changed because of this, she responded by saying: Yes, it changes the colours, it looks nicer." (group session, 29-10-2013). This explanation was given during the group session. The woman cited in the beginning of this paragraph responded to this explanation and said that while the Wall did look different, this did not change the fact that the Wall was bad and oppressive. For her, the way the Wall materialised stayed the same.

The intra-action taking place between the Wall and the women, represented by the 'Wall Museum', was categorized as positive by the women. The previous chapters showed the room that is created for the women in the 'Museum' to enhance their sumud, to resist the occupation and to share the Palestinian narrative. However, the image the majority of the women had of the Wall seems not to be positively influenced by posting their stories on the Wall. Some did say the Wall became less ugly or difficult to look at, but the majority argued that the Wall remained the same. While the intra-action taking place between the women and the Wall has changed due to the 'Museum', and this change was categorized as positive by the women involved, the way the Wall materialized appears not to be changed. For the majority of the women the Wall was still as oppressive and ugly as it was before the 'Museum' was founded. The lack of physical space invasion and connection to the actual 'Museum' could explain the fact that the Wall's materialisation did not change for the majority of the women. The women involved in the SSH used the Wall for their stories, but for the majority of the women their relationship with the concrete, 9-metre high barrier and their roles in relation to

this Wall seems not to have materialised in a different way. The relationship that has been created between the Wall and the Palestinians by the Israeli government as one of occupier-occupied, with the Wall materialised as representing the occupation, seems to have been kept intact. Due to this, it remains a question whether or not the Wall itself is actually involved in the intra-action taking place. It will be discussed next if the women believe the 'Wall Museum' will help break down the Wall and thus positively influence their future.

Will the 'Wall museum' break down the Wall?

"I want to tell you the truth, we show foreign people our stories and that is good. But for us nothing happens. For the foreigner it is good when we tell them about our situation, we can educate them, but it does not change our situation. Sharing our stories in the 'Wall Museum' will not break down the Wall." (personal interview, 08-11-2013).

The goal of the 'Wall Museum' is that its own success will eventually destroy it; the AEI intended the museum to work towards breaking down the Wall by contributing to 'cracks in the Wall'. However, the majority of the women interviewed seemed less sure about the influence the 'Wall Museum' can have on the Wall. As the quote opening this paragraph and the analysis of the 'Wall Museum' in the previous chapters showed, the women see the positive influences that the 'Wall Museum' can have on individual level, societal level and international level. In the previous paragraphs it became clear that while the women indeed categorized the 'Wall Museum' as a positive form of intra-action taking place, the Wall seemed to materialize as equally oppressive and ugly for the majority of the women. It also became clear during the interviews that the impact the women thought the 'Museum' could have on the future of the Wall itself was not as straightforward as the AEI had intended it.

When asked if they thought that the 'Wall Museum' would help break down the Wall, some of the women answered negatively. As explained by one of the young women: "For me, when we put something on the Wall, when we write something or paint something, nothing will change. Even if you shoot or throw stones, I do not think our situation will be improved." (group session, 29-10-2013). The majority of the women indicated that they did not know what would happen in the future, if the Wall would break down and if the 'Wall Museum' could work towards this. The women responded by saying things such as "maybe yes, maybe no" (group session, 29-10-2013) and "we don't know" (personal interview, 06-11-2013).

None of the women indicated that they thought that the 'Museum' would indeed contribute to breaking down the Wall.

I also asked the women during the interview what they saw for the future in general and received similar responses. Many women indicated that they hoped that there would be peace and that the Wall would be gone, but they also explained that they did not know if this would indeed happen. It seems the constant deterioration of their rights and freedom of movement during the last 65 years has left its scars. As was expressed by one of the young women: "We don't know what will happen. In 1988 they made the checkpoints and now they built the wall. We don't know what they will do next." (group session, 29-10-2013).

When the women responded that they did not know if the Wall would break down due to the 'Wall Museum' or what would happen in the future in general, they often referred to God. One of the women said the following: "We need a miracle from God to bring the wall down. I don't guess what will happen in the future, only God knows what will happen in the future. We can have hope and we hope for peace." (personal interview, 11-11-2013). These references to God are not as straightforward as they may seem. Yes, all the women interviewed identified as religious and expressed a belief in God, but the references to God also have a cultural dimension.[47] In the Arabic language, sayings such as 'Inshallah' (if God wants it) and 'Alhamdulilah' (thank God) are very grounded in daily conversations. There are multiple explanations for the use of religious language which are all interrelated. It could be that the references to religion are indeed an outcome of the high level of religiosity of the women. Connected to this, religion could be a way to deal with the excesses of violence and the powerlessness. Religion could be a survival mechanism, a 'passive' choice when all other active choices are gone. At the same time, religion could also be seen as a form of adaptation, representing the choice to make life under occupation a possibility. Finally, during the interviews it could also be a linguistic routine. A more in depth study about the use of religious language and the experiences connected to religion in such an insecure and complex situation as life under occupation in the Palestinian Territories would be necessary to give a more conclusive analysis of this phenomenon. However, when it concerns the future of the Wall and the impact the 'Wall Museum' can have, the use of references to God can be connected to the other expressions of (a lack of) trust in the power of the 'Wall Museum',

[47] While I would argue religious dimensions and cultural dimensions are inseparable, this highly contested issue needs more explanation and research which is outside of the scope of this thesis.

which seem to indicate that the women did not put a lot of faith in the 'Wall Museum' as a force that can break down the Wall.

The responses provided by the women during the interviews show the level of powerlessness they experienced as it seems to be indicated that they did not think that they could influence the future. Power is given to God, the international community, as could be seen in the emphasis that is put on educating foreigners via the sharing of 'true' stories, and on the Israeli government: "If the occupation ends or the Wall breaks down is not in our hands, it is in the hands of the Israeli authorities." (personal interview, 07-11-2013). This powerlessness that is experienced when it concerns the future is not surprising when the last 65 years are taken into consideration. During these years the Palestinians lost their land, their freedom and the power to determine their own lives despite the violent and non-violent resistance, the fighting that has taken place, the many (young) lives lost, the numerous UN resolutions and the diplomatic negotiations. The powerlessness described here can be connected to the seemingly unchanged materialisation of the Wall as oppressive. The Wall was built by the Israeli government on Palestinian land without the approval of the Palestinians. It represents the ways in which Israel is able to oppress the Palestinians and seem, even when internationally condemned, unstoppable. The Wall is part of the materiality of this oppression and the absence of justice. This materialisation seems not to have changed and the 'Wall Museum' is not identified as being able to bring down the material evidence of the occupation.

Conclusion

In the previous chapters it could be seen that the intra-acting between the women and the Wall via the 'Wall Museum' was categorized by the women as positive. The 'Wall Museum' provided the room for the women to share their stories, build social relations and educate foreigners. However, this chapter indicated that the materialisation of the Wall and the roles of the occupier/occupied seem not to have changed. While the women explained the 'Museum' gave them the tools to identify as free to share, the women argued that the Wall materialised in the same oppressive manner. This unchanged materialisation could be ascribed to the lack of *physical* space invasion taking place. While the intra-action taking place via the 'Wall Museum' was experienced as positive, and sumud and the 'Wall Museum' were identified as making a life under occupation possible, this intra-action appears not to have influenced the manner the Wall materialised.

Discussion

In this thesis the potential of sumud as executed by the women of the Sumud Story House in Bethlehem was analysed. In this chapter I will discuss some of the theoretical and methodological implications for further research.

Theoretical implications

Concerning the theoretical framework used in this thesis, I would like to discuss some reservations I have connected to the theories of James Scott and Ashis Nandy. Both theories provided me with the tools to analyse the act of sharing stories and, related to this act, the concept of sumud as a form of resistance that made it possible for the women of the SSH to use an alternative frame of reference and determine their own process of subjectification. However, as was already shortly discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, both theories are not without problems.

The largest problem in Nandy's work was his dualistic view of the relationship between the mind and body. In this thesis I showed in which manner the body is not opposed to the mind but that both are part of the same whole. The importance of including the body in this whole, as opposed to the single focus on the mind (as often shown in the emphasis put on discourse in research), could be seen in the importance of the *physical* invasion of the space the Wall occupies. The intra-action between the women and the Wall was influenced by the lack of physical space invasion, which would have remained invisible if the body was not included in the research and only the colonization of the mind was included.

Scott's work provided me with more difficulties. While the manner in which he theorised resistance deemed highly suitable for the acts connected to sumud and the sharing of stories, Scott created a rather simplified image of the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. In his work, Scott focuses on governance and an overbearing and powerful state. The two opposing parties, state versus oppressed, are portrayed as two uniform entities and as dualistic. The oppressed is opposed to the oppressor and this relationship is, in Scott's work, determined by their differences in class. Other critics, who were discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, already argued against this unified image created by Scott. There is not 'one Palestinian people' versus 'one Israel', their relationship is not determined by class and a

too simplistic image is harmful for future peace processes and the manner in which the conflict is framed. In this thesis, I focused on a specific group of Palestinians, namely the women involved in the SSH, and their intra-action with a specific materiality of the oppression, namely the Wall.

By using the theories discussed here, Scott's infrapolitics and Nandy's uncolonized mind, I experienced the danger of romanticizing the oppressed. Both theorists provided the tools to identify covert behaviour of an oppressed people that was aimed at resisting the colonization/oppression taking place. The fact that the work of Scott and Nandy are both focused on more covert forms of resistance make their theories especially useful for my thesis, but also make it easy to identify all behaviour as representing resistance. It is problematic to romanticize the behaviour of 'an oppressed people' because this makes internal differences and diversity disappear. The behaviour of the people that are categorized as oppressed is in this way simplified, as it is implied that their only motivator in life is to resist the occupation, which simplifies their identity. It also makes it impossible to make visible the acts of resistance that were intentional. All behaviour becomes unified and agency disappears, as argued by theorists such as Saba Mahmood (:2005) and Lila Abu-Lughod (:1990 and 2000). Looking at my field notes, I did experience the urge to romanticize the behaviour of Palestinians, as could be read in the field notes entry I cited on page 52 of this thesis. I tried to stay aware of this danger and focused on the type of behaviour the women themselves categorized as resistance. When researching sumud, the relationship of Palestinians with the Wall or other areas concerned with Palestinians resistance, this should be kept in mind.

Secondly, I want to emphasize the importance of the way the Wall, the body and the relationship between the Wall and the body is theorized in research concerning the Wall in Palestine. As was argued earlier, the majority of the research concerning the Wall in Palestine frames the relationship between the Wall and Palestinians in a one-sided manner. By seeing the Wall as only able to influence Palestinians, and not Palestinians as able to influence the Wall, the Wall is portrayed as too static and the Palestinians as too powerless.

The relationship between the bodily movements of the women, specifically the space invasion, the Wall and the sharing of stories proved to be complicated. The women clearly experienced the 'use' of the 'Wall Museum' as positive, but this did not seem to influence the manner in which the Wall materialised. The apparent disconnection between the Wall itself and the act of sharing stories on the Wall seemed to indicate that the women did not engage in

a direct intra-action with the Wall. The intra-action that was taking place, which was motivated by and (re)produced affect, was between the women of the SSH and the 'Wall Museum'. In which ways the Wall itself was involved in this intra-action and what the importance was of the *physical* aspect of the space invasion remains to be determined. In this thesis the materialisation of the Wall was determined by asking about the ways in which the women categorized the Wall. However, as was explained, the categorisation of the Wall also bears a political significance and the notion of the Wall as less negative seemed incomprehensible for some. Because the women still categorized the Wall as oppressive does not mean that the materialisation of the Wall has not changed due to the intra-action taking place between the women and the Wall. Even if the Wall is experienced as equally oppressive, other changes can have occurred. For future research it is important to question the manners in which the materialisation of the Wall is determined and to focus on shedding more light on the relationship between the bodily movement, sharing stories (or any other act identified as 'resistance') and the materialisation of the Wall.

Research about space invasion, the process of subjectification and the materialisation of the Wall is also needed in other areas of Palestinian society. Young Palestinians can be seen who not only invade the space the Wall occupies by using the Wall, but also by damaging it. One example is the youth from Aida Camp, a refugee camp in Bethlehem. On multiple occasions they have made holes in the Wall and set fire to the watch tower next to the entrance of the camp. Images 12 and 13 (depicted on the next page) show the Wall on fire and the hole created in March 2014.[48] In other places in Palestine this also happens frequently, as it did on the 13th of May, 2014, in Abu Dis, Jerusalem (maannews.net). As this example of Aida camp shows, other forms of physical space invasion are taking place in relation to the Wall. How these examples of direct space invasion influence the process of subjectification of the youth involved and the materialisation of the Wall, and how this compares to the more indirect space invasion of the women of the SSH, requires more research.

[48] Both pictures were retrieved from the Facebook page of Aida Camp: https://www.facebook.com/ayda24.

Image 12. The Wall on fire at Aida Camp, Bethlehem (facebook.com/ayda24).

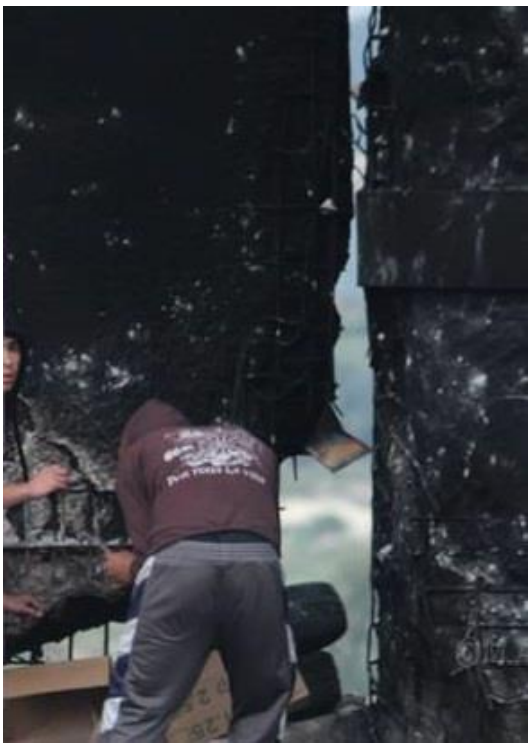

Image 13. A hole has been made in the Wall at Aida Camp, Bethlehem (facebook.com/ayda24).

Methodological implications

Concerning future research, I would like to draw attention to the importance of realizing the political significance of certain aspects of living life under occupation. The situation the Palestinians are in is a situation they want to change and, although disappointed in the past by international organisations such as the UN, the international community is expected to have a role in this change. When describing the effect the 'Wall Museum' could have on the materialisation of the Wall, the majority of the women seemed unable or unwilling to discuss the Wall in a positive manner. The question if the Wall could be anything but negative, oppressive and humiliating seemed for some too far outside of the framework used to understand. The women also seemed afraid that by categorizing the graffiti and the stories on the Wall as positive, the suffering of the Palestinian people could be trivialized. It felt at times that I, as other Western people visiting, was seen as possible agent of change who could help make the Wall fall down. Especially in the beginning it seemed some women were acting as

‘ambassadors’ who wanted to show the unjust taking place and to inspire me to help end the occupation. And although after a few weeks my position towards the occupation and the Wall was clear to them, namely that I indeed categorized it as unjust and illegal, the fact that I asked if they used the Wall or if the Wall became less ugly and oppressive, seemed not to fit in this picture. Researchers who want to analyse the, possibly positive, potential the Wall and the space the Wall occupies could have for Palestinians should keep this in mind.

Conclusion

In this master thesis I set out to answer the following research question:

Does sumud entail an intra-action that influences the process of subjectivity of the women of the Sumud Story House and the materialisation of the Wall through the act of sharing stories?

To answer the research question posed in this thesis, I collected data in Bethlehem at the Sumud Story House, one of the premises of the Arab Educational Institute. In the interviews and group sessions conducted, I explored with the women of the SSH their experiences with the Wall, why they posted a story in the 'Wall Museum' (or not), how this act related to sumud and resistance, and in which ways this influenced their relationships with the Wall.

The interviews and group sessions showed that the intra-action with the Wall, where the term intra-action refers to the mutually influential relationship between different material phenomena in which these different phenomena materialise in a unique manner, affected all the women negatively. The women experienced a loss of income and mobility, and felt sad and hurt. Due to the presence of the Wall, the women felt imprisoned and humiliated. These experiences, which were associated with the intra-action taking place with the Wall, indicate the ways in which the Wall influenced the process of subjectification of the women. The presence of the Wall and this associated affect were described by the women as uncomfortable and painful. One response to this affect was to try to ignore the Wall. Another response was to share a story in the 'Wall Museum', a project executed by the Arab Educational Institute. This 'Museum', in which 68 posters are attached to the Wall in Bethlehem with the stories of Palestinian women, was the focus of this thesis.

The stories in the museum are presented as representing the experiences of the women living under occupation, during violent times such as the Nakba and the Intifada's and after the building of the Wall. In these personal 'sticky' stories, the 'true' Palestinian story is shared. To share a story in the 'Wall Museum' was identified by the women of the SSH as an intra-action that represents sumud. Sumud was explained by them as the will to keep going forward and to retain a certain 'Palestinian life-style' while living under occupation. While discussing the 'Wall Museum' in relation to sumud and resistance, it became clear that the act of sharing stories, sumud and resistance were intertwined for the women involved. To share your story in the 'Museum' represented and enhanced sumud, which provided room for the women to (partly) take control of their own processes of subjectification and not letting it be colonized

by the occupation. The women decided that they were going to live happily, retain their humanity and make life under occupation not only possible but enjoyable. This form of resistance may be categorized as infrapolitics, a form of resistance that is covert but provides the infrastructure for more overt forms of resistance.

These 'sticky' personal stories in the 'Wall Museum', that at times were used in a cosmopolitanized framework, were seen as having effects on three levels: a personal level, the societal level and the international level. On a personal level, the women were able to use the 'Museum' to share their pain. The sharing of stories also enhanced their societal relations and created a new social form inside the SSH that transgressed religious boundaries. Finally, on an international level, the women used the 'Wall Museum' to show foreigners 'the truth' about the unjust circumstances they were living in. This opportunity that was created by the 'Wall Museum' provided the room for the women to be witness bearers, to speak of an unspeakable past that has been silenced in dominant history. By sharing their stories with the use of certain entities such as references to the Berlin Wall, the women hoped to motivate foreign visitors to start helping in the fight against the occupation. The women explained that this was the most important motivation for them to share their stories. This 'use' of the 'Museum' shows that it is a creative form of appropriating the difficult situation the women are in. Although the women identified their lives behind the Wall as lives in prison, they did not let this determine their process of subjectification and explained that the 'Museum' gave them room to identify as being free to share their stories.

However, although sumud and the sharing of stories in the 'Wall Museum' can be identified as having this potential for the women involved in the Sumud Story House, the effect that this had on the materialisation of the Wall was less clear. Firstly, I analysed whether or not the 'Wall Museum' could be identified as space invasion. The bodies that are invading space, an act in which bodies enter the spaces from which they have historically been excluded, have the ability to cause a disruption of the status quo. In these moments of disruption, the space itself can be changed. Following the argument of 'intra-action', it can be argued that when space invasion occurs, the different phenomena involved in the 'intra-action' taking place materialize in an unique manner. Space invasion was analysed in this thesis by questioning whether or not the women *physically* went to the 'Wall Museum' and whether or not they 'used' the Wall in their daily lives. For the majority of the women, both questions were answered negatively. Although the 'Wall Museum' is located in the space Palestinians have been excluded from, namely the space that the Wall occupies, the majority of the women did

not feel connected to the 'Museum' and preferred not to invade this space. While some exceptions could be seen, most of the women preferred to ignore the presence of the Wall and avoided being confronted with it as much as possible. A disconnection can be seen between the act of sharing stories and the act of physically invading the space and putting these stories on the concrete Wall. While the space is appropriated by the women of the SSH to share their stories in the 'Wall Museum', the actual concrete Wall that is used seems not to be directly involved in this intra-action.

To analyse how the intra-action between the women and the Wall, via and with the 'Wall Museum', influenced the materialisation of the Wall, I explored with the women whether they considered the Wall to be less ugly or oppressive due to the act of sharing stories. The majority of the women explained that for them, the Wall had not changed. Although they experienced the sharing of stories as very positive, the Wall materialized in an equally oppressive and ugly manner. A disconnection can to be seen between the room that has been created for/by the women in the 'Museum' and the actual space it is located in, namely on the Wall. This disconnection could be ascribed to the lack of *physical* space invasion by the women involved, although more cases in which the space was physically invaded, such as the case of the young boys from Aida camp, should be analysed to shed more light on this matter.

This disconnection between the act of sharing and the Wall could also be seen in the fact that the women did not consider themselves involved in the development of the future of the Wall. Whether or not the Wall would fall and the occupation would end was considered to be determined by other agents, such as (Western) foreigners and the Israelis. While the 'Wall Museum' was experienced as positively influencing their lives, the intra-action taking place was not categorized as powerful enough to influence the Wall or the future.

However, this does not mean that participating in the 'Wall Museum' has not positively influenced the lives of the women of the Sumud Story House. It has become clear that sumud and the 'Wall Museum' were identified as making a life under occupation, in which love, happiness and communal relations are present, possible. Sumud and the sharing of stories in the 'Wall Museum' were identified as examples of appropriating the occupation via infrapolitics, which provided the opportunity to keep the Palestinian narrative and the will not to let oneself be determined by the occupier alive. The women showed via the 'Wall Museum' and the stories they shared, the power to control their own processes of subjectification, the ways in which they kept struggling for freedom, justice and peace and how they, in this process, decided to still enjoy their lives.

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- Personal interviews and group discussions with interviewees and participants of the Sumud Story House from September until December 2013, who wished to stay anonymous.

Appendix 1

‘Wall Museum’

1. This is a series of posters with true stories written by Palestinian women. The stories of suffering and oppression as well as ‘sumud’ (steadfastness or resilience), inner strength and cultural identity are here to ring out the truth of Palestinian life, which this wall tries to hide and kill. This project is made possible through sponsorship of individual posters. You too can help expand this ‘museum’ by sponsoring a poster. For more information, please contact the nearby Sumud Story House.

2. Tank at the house

   During the days of Israeli army incursions into Bethlehem in 2002, an Israeli tank was stationed on Hindaza Hill in front of our house. All of a sudden, while I was preparing breakfast, the tank started shooting in all directions. I saw people running into their houses. A woman fainted and I rushed to her, offered her water and waited at her side until the tense situation was over. After a while, people started to come out of their houses again. Then I heard a young man had been killed while rushing for safety.
   Mary, Bethlehem.

3. The bell

   During the first intifada, Israeli soldiers came to our neighbourhood looking for teenage activists. They asked for them but did not find them. They kept ringing the bell of our house but we didn’t open the door. At last my mother had a clever idea to stop them ringing the bell. She put off the electricity! The soldiers became angry and started shouting. When my mother finally opened the door the soldiers were very aggressive. “Why did you put off the electricity?” She answered quietly, “It was an electricity cut.” One of the soldiers went to the electricity meter and kept the bill ringing in response to what my mother had done.
   Randa, Bethlehem.

4. Reaching out

   The Wall is like a sign saying: “Go away from here”. It is intimidating. If you go from the checkpoint toward Gilo you can see the land that was taken for its construction,

and the land that we can no longer access. Some of the land belonged to my grandparents. Despite everything, we must continue to resist. To continue in our daily life is a form of resistance. One example of resistance is coming every day to the Sumud Story House. The Israelis want to stop our lives by pushing us out. We can resist with any sign of life and any activity helps, because activities make people want to stay here. You can organize a concert or another cultural activity. These are ways that we can reach the world and the world can reach us.
Ghada, Bethlehem.

5. Through the drainage pipe.
   My husband used to go to Jerusalem for his work but because of checkpoints and permit problems, he was forced to travel through the Wadi Nar by-pass road to the east of Jerusalem. Frequently there were mobile checkpoints on this road. One day, my husband and his friend escaped the Israeli soldiers, who were on the look out, by crawling through an underground drainage system. In the end, they reached their workplaces safely.
   Arlene, Bethlehem.

6. Return
   When I was in Lebanon, I went to the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. We were carrying flowers to take to the collective graveyard that commemorates the massacres of Sabra and Shatila in 1982. On the way I met a woman who was in her late sixties. She asked me: "Where are you from?" "I come from Bethlehem, Palestine" I replied. She hugged me and kissed me. She even wanted to kiss my hand and she started to cry. She didn't want to leave me, and she said, "Please take me with you".
   Jizelle, a teacher from Beit Jala.

7. Tax revolt
   During the first intifada the people of Beit Sahour had quite a lot of verbal confrontations with Israeli soldiers. The people organized a tax revolt under the banner of the American civil war: "no taxation without representation." They refused to pay taxes and after some weeks, the Israeli army came to each of their houses, one by one, to confiscate household items. After their houses had been emptied some of the Beit

Sahouri women told the soliders “Please stay, you forgot something. You cannot leave without my curtains.”

Rana, Beit Sahour.

8. Heritage

   Once I was at an Arts and Heritage Exhibit in Tel Aviv. An Israeli lady approached me while was touring the exhibitions and told me, “This is our heritage”. I responded quickly, “No, this is our *Palestinian* heritage”. The Israeli woman brought a book with the title “Qawar of Jordan”, to show it was not Palestinian heritage. I looked into it. It was written by a Palestinian author living in Jordan.

   Therese, Bethlehem.

9. Worries

   Once during the second Intifada, I was at my home in Bethlehem while my husband worked at a restaurant in Beit Sahour. All of a sudden, relatives and friends started to phone me to ask about my husband. I called his phone, but he did not answer. Then, I heard the sounds of shooting. I put on the TV to see what was going on. There was breaking news that a man had been killed at my husband’s restaurant. I became very worried but there was nothing I could do. Late in the evening, to my great relief, my husband came back home safely. He explained that he and other workers had to hide behind the walls of the restaurant during the Israeli shelling.

   Ghada, Bethlehem.

10. Breaking the curfew.

    25 February, 1994, the delivery of my daughter’s baby was close. She called me to go with her to the maternity hospital in Beit Jala. It was the day that a fanatical Israeli settler killed dozens of Palestinians worshippers in the mosque in Hebron. The Israeli army imposed a strict curfew in the West Bank. I immediately left the house but at Manger Square I was stopped. The soldiers threatened to use their guns if I would not go home. Later in the night, it became rainy and cold and I saw my chance. I chose the narrow roads and reached the hospital where I saw my daughter and grandchild for some hours. I went back home trying to stay away from the solders and continued doing this each day for a week. I broke the curfew hours so as to feel the joy of our new baby.

Helen, from Bethlehem.

11. The baby and the soldiers

Israeli soldiers were beating up a man in a crowded street. From all sides peoples rushed to the scene. Suddenly a woman with a baby came forward to the man and shouted: “Why is it always you who makes problems and goes to demonstrations! I am fed up! Take this baby of yours! I don’t want to see you ever again.” She laid the baby in the hands of the man, and ran away. The soldiers left the scene in confusion. When quiet came, the man returned the baby to the woman. They had never seen each other before.

A story from Nablus during the first Intifada (the late 1980s).

12. Rescue

During one of the intifada days, I, a young Palestinian woman, was four months pregnant and lost my baby because of Israeli tear gas. I was terribly depressed since it was the second miscarriage I suffered. A week later I visited a medical doctor in Jerusalem for a check up. Coming out of the doctor’s clinic, I saw, nearby, on top of an escalator an Israeli child who was recklessly playing and about to fall down. Thoughts rushed through my mind. Should I leave him and let him die the way the Israeli soldiers let my boy die a week ago, or should I make a desperate attempt to grab him? All of a sudden, I felt an impulse that made me hurry forwards. Throwing myself in front of the boy I prevented his fall.

Sylvana, Bethlehem.

13. Stand-off

I went to the checkpoint with my children after getting Easter permit at the parish. As always, our rings and jewellery had to be put in the basked to go through the metal detector. My nine-year old daughter took off her bracelet. She went in and out of the metal detector several times, each time taking off something new but the machine kept beeping. Then the female soldier asked her to take off her pants, right there, in public. Would you allow your daughter to take her pants off like that, with everyone around? I told the soldier, “Why can’t you take her somewhere private to search her?” She asked me to go back to Bethlehem. I told her, “You have nothing to do here, go back yourself to Tel Aviv.”

Mary M. from Bethlehem.

14. House demolition.

One day I went to the village of Al-Walajeh, west of Bethlehem, accompanied by students from France. We went there to visit families whose houses had been demolished by Israeli soldiers. As we approached the small house, I saw a large heap of stones nearby that had once been a family home. The mother and the father welcomed us and the students started asking questions. The house looked to familiar.. and then I discovered that the mother was one of my students whom I taught at Bethlehem Secondary School for girls. Oh poor Siham! She told us that her house had been demolished twice in one year. But it was built again by ICAHD.*

*ICAHD: Israeli Committee Against House Demolition.

Jala, Beit Sahour.

15. I am a dying woman.

All my life was in Jerusalem! I was there daily: I worked there at a school as a volunteer and all my friends lived there. I used to belong to the Anglican Church in Jerusalem and was a volunteer there. I arranged the flowers and was active with the other women. I rented a flat but I was not allowed to stay because I did not have a Jerusalem ID card. Now I cannot go to Jerusalem; the Wall separates me from my church, from my life. We are imprisoned here in Bethlehem. All my relationships with Jerusalem are dead. I am a dying woman.

Antoinette, Bethlehem.

16. The wall is on my heart

After the Wall around Rachel's Tomb was built, I felt terrible. Nobody was walking here, only the cats and dogs. The wall creates a feeling… the feeling that it surrounds you; that you are not permitted to move. Every time, every day you see the Wall. When I look outside through the window to see the sunrise or the sunset the Wall is in front of me. When I go to the Wall I feel that something closes in on my heart, as if the Wall is on my heart… When I see the Wall I also feel ashamed of myself, because it is created by human beings.

Melvina, Bethlehem.

17. Fear

During an Israeli military incursion into Bethlehem, in 2002, I was alone at home with my son Fuad. I was pregnant with my second son George. All of a sudden I heard noises at the main gate where Israeli soldiers wanted to come in to search the place. I was frightened and about to faint. The soldiers screamed and slammed the doors of the rooms. One of them looked gentle and brought a glass of water for me. The others went into the room where my son was sleeping covered with a blanket. A soldiers took away the cover, thinking he was one of the wanted youths, and my son woke up frightened and crying. I calmed him. When the soldiers discovered there was nothing in the house they left. Fuad still wakes up at night in fear.

Rana, from Bethlehem.

18. Ein Karem.

I was born in Ein Karem in 1934. My grandmother was also born there. Ein Karem is a very old village where Muslim and Christian people used to live together. The Zionist army came to the village in 1948 and they were shooting. We were forced to leave because it was dangerous to stay. I was 13 at the time. Once, we went back to Ein Karem to see the village. We couldn't visit our home because the Israelis were there and they prevented us. My mother wanted to see our house, our furniture, our clothes and other belongings. But the Israelis didn't let her enter, instead, they locked the door.

Rose, Ein Karem.

19. Stuck

You drive next to the Wall (near Qalandia) but there are also buildings bordering the other side of the road. They built the Wall in the middle of the street and you're stuck between it and the buildings in a narrow channel, like cattle. You know what happens with cattle: The cattle are lined up and the machine takes them one by one while they can't move, like in a cage. The same happens to us. You cannot run away. You cannot backtrack. You cannot go left or right. You are stuck between the Wall and the other buildings. You're in a line and whatever happens, you cannot act on your own or control your own destiny. This happens all the time.

Maha, Ramallah.

20. Music

The Wall next to my house divides people. Music brings people together. I am a music teacher, and I know that music is a language which all people can enjoy. Music gives my pupils joy and life. Among my pupils have been my niece and nephew. My nephew has become an excellent pianist. Once I made music for a national song when I taught at a school in Beit Sahour. The occupation forbade the song… Imagine!
Rana, Beit Jala.

21. Diabetes

I have a son who was born with diabetes. Initially I took him four times a day to Caritas hospital in Bethlehem, sometimes walking there in the rain. I refused to give him the shots myself because I couldn't bear seeing him injected and at the time I was pregnant and often felt depressed and tired. So I even walked with him during times of curfew. However, after a while I took a decision that I had to be strong in order to support him. Since that day I started giving him the shots myself and kept encouraging him. He is now twelve years old, in the seventh grade, an excellent student in his class and wants to study medicine.
Sandra, Bethlehem.

22. I am steadfast

I am a town councillor and I work hard inside my house: cooking, doing my daily tasks at home, taking care of my husband and children while at the same time working to earn a living. I also try to volunteer and participate in public activities. My friends and family strengthen my sumud (steadfastness) and encourage me, as a woman, to work in the fields of peace-building, Christian-Muslim living together, and interreligious and intercultural communication skills.
Fayza, from Doha, south of Bethlehem.

23. On the ground

I am an Ukrainian woman married to a Palestinian man. During one of the last incursions of the second intifada, Israeli soldiers gathered all members of my family in the house and ordered them to lie on the floor. At the time I was pregnant, but they forced me to lie on the floor too, along with my children. We had to stay on the floor

for four hours while the soldiers were watching TV in our house. At one point, one of the soldiers started to laugh and throw sweets at us while we laid there.
Irina, living in Bethlehem.

24. Flight

In 1948 we went from Ramleh to Ramallah in our cars. All the family shared a house that we rented. After staying there for two weeks, we heard the bad news that Israel had defeated the Arabs and had enlarged its territories, including Ramleh. Jordan took the West Bank of the river Jordan and Egypt the Gaza Strip. We were not allowed to go back to our own houses and lands. The few days that we decided to spend in Ramallah turned out to be sixteen whole years. Although we had lost everything, we were lucky to be alive. Some people left without clothes, food or money. They had to walk for about two days to reach a safer place. Some of them, especially women and children, died during their journey as a result of tiredness and sickness.
Oral history interview by Joanne from Beit Sahour.

25. Laundry

It was during the second intifada, or uprising, when the conflict was hot. One day in 2002, while it was curfew, I was putting up my laundry on our balcony. Suddenly, the soldier opened a small window and put out his gun. I tried to communicate with him to ask what was going on but he refused to speak. I was obliged to go inside but I observed him from my bedroom window until he went inside his tower. So then I returned doing my laundry again. Unfortunately, the soldier again climbed out of the window and I moved quickly inside. This happened no less than ten times and in the end I really drove him crazy and made him loudly screaming inside his watchtower.
Carol A. from Bethlehem.

26. My knees shaking.

The soldiers would come and beat at the door with their guns. I had to go down. It was always me. If my husband had gone, they might have shot him. It was too tense. I went down the stairs with my knees shaking and let them in. Upstairs my children would be crying, “Now is the time for shooting.”
Carol A. from Bethlehem.

27. A lost baby.

In 1948, the massacres started with Deir Yassin. At the time I lived with my husband and my baby boy in Jaffa. My husband was a doctor. I was with my little son at home when the clashes started. I was afraid, so I stayed looking out of the window to see if my husband came back. He didn't, and I became desperate. I went to my neighbours and left my son there. When the clashes stopped I went to take my little baby but couldn't find him. The Israelis had brought him away while taking over the Palestinian houses for occupation by Israeli families. After a week I found my baby with an Israeli family. I came over to the family to work for them as a servant in order to be with my baby. With some boys and girls I planned to kidnap my baby. First I did not succeed. At last I took him with me. I was beside myself with happiness after I had my son back.

Oral history interview by Maria from Bethlehem.

28. Sexual harassment

At checkpoints we as women are more vulnerable than men. When I reach the checkpoint I am worried. Girls are verbally abused and sexually harassed. It depends on the group of soldiers at the checkpoint. I work overtime and at night they sometimes let me pass home and sometimes not. They humiliate me. Because of all this you reach a kind of turning point after which you feel too depressed to leave home. This is the main issue for me. You feel obliged even not to come to work as you might be hurt by the abusive words of the soldiers. Our traditions do not accept this kind of behaviour.

Maysa, from Doha.

29. Giving back

I am a Palestinian, Muslim woman. My family and I always believed in Muslims and Christians living together. In 1949, the Christian Abu Doh family decided to leave Bethlehem for Chile. They approached my father, asking him to live in their house and look after their shops in downtown Bethlehem in exchange for payment. My father agreed. My family continued to live in this Christian family house until 1970. Then they were able to build a new house for themselves. No one from the family in Chile came to claim their house. According to our Palestinian traditions, my father could have kept the property because the owners were absent and nobody knew about them.

My father, however, managed to trace some distant relatives abroad and absolutely insisted in giving them the house and shop.
Huda, from Bethlehem.

30. Roots

I cannot imagine myself to be away from this land. My parents are in the US and they always try to encourage and push me to join them in their freedom. As for me, I do not know if that is the kind of freedom I'm looking for! My roots are here in Bethlehem… and my future is also here, in this Holy Land. I have my Palestinian ID, my relatives, my house and my land. Here, where the olive trees have such strong roots that no one in the world can uproot them.
Odette, from Bethlehem.

31. Olive harvest

Because of the Wall the Israelis confiscated our land full of olive trees. We cannot cultivate it anymore nor build upon it. In the past we used to harvest the olives with all the family together, young and old. Schools were closed for a couple of days and everyone was on holiday. All the family went to the land and put down blankets under the trees. During the picking we sang traditional songs. We left a part of the olives for oil and salads, and the rest we kept. But now we are buying instead of selling oil. In fact, we can barely buy oil because of the economic situation.
Aida, from Bethlehem.

32. Donkey into prison

Today I live with my family in Al-Walaja village. It isn't really our village. We named it after our original village that we had to leave behind (in 1948, during the Nakba). We can still see our village on the hillside across from us, but we aren't allowed to go there. My son Taha was taken to prison when he was thirteen. When he was in prison, he built a miniature replica of the Al Aqsa Mosque. He dreams of praying there one day, though the Israelis won't give Palestinian men a permit to pray there till they are over fifty. My son Mustafa is a farmer. This winter he was carrying firewood home to us. The Israeli soldiers stopped him and made him stand out in the rain till nightfall. They took his donkey and told him they were taking his donkey to prison.
Hind, Al-Walajeh village

33. Blindfolded

During a curfew in the first intifada the Israeli military came to our quarter and ordered all men to leave their houses and get into the army jeeps. I ran out quickly and told the men's wives. We at least wanted to bid them farewell before they went to jail. From a distance, they started shouting and waving at their men who were in the jeeps but the men did not respond. After hours of interrogation and humiliation at the Israeli military camp, our husbands came back. We asked them, "Why didn't you wave back to us when the Israelis took you?" They answered, "We did not see you because the soldiers blindfolded us."

Um Nidal, Beit Sahour.

34. We lost below zero

The wall affected our economic situation in a terrible manner. As we say in Arabic, 'we lost below zero.' My brother and his wife had a drugstore and a store in Bethlehem for different kinds of products. They had 23 people working for them; 23 families lived from their business. But because the stores are close to the Wall, and people do not like to come there, there are no employees anymore.

Melvina, Bethlehem.

35. Imagine that I die

In night, in 2008, I heard an ambulance. We turned on the local TV where the death of five freedom fighters was announced. They were killed in the centre of Bethlehem. Among them was our neighbour, in his early forties. The next day, following the Palestinian tradition, I went to offer condolences to his wife and children. His wife was in shock but after she had composed herself, she told me about her late husband. To be able to immediately hear any sound of intruders he used to sleep in the living room. Once he told the children, "imagine that I die. Kiss me, and I bid you farewell." Afterwards he asked the children to take good care of themselves and their mother. Upon hearing this, I felt conflicting feelings: sadness, but also dignity and strength.

Nathalie, from Bethlehem.

36. Ahmad and Mitri

During the first intifada, when my father was in the garden, a boy came running in shouting that the soldiers were chasing him. My father embraced him as if he was his son. The soldiers arrived and ordered the boy to come to them. My father shouted, "This is my son" and started to wave the stick that he carried because he did not see very well. The officer asked my father the boy's name and my father answered "Ahmad". Then he asked my father his name and he told him, "Mitri" (a Christian name). The officer became angry. "The boy is Ahmad and you are Mitri. How can that be?" My father quickly told him that he had adopted the boy and baptized him when he was a baby. The officer told him, "OK, don't be afraid, but don't let him throw stones again." Ahmad embraced my father and my father offered him a glass of tea.
Georgette, from Bethlehem.

37. Premature birth

One night during the second intifada, in 2002, when I was six months pregnant, the Israeli military bombed the Palestinian military headquarters of Bethlehem. The massive explosion made me very afraid and I started to go into labour. I was quickly taken to hospital where the doctor gave me drugs to delay my baby's birth. Unfortunately, the birth pains increased the next day, and I gave birth to a premature baby. For three months he was kept in the incubator. Afterwards I did everything I could for him to grow up well. My son is now in high school and he is very smart.
Marianne, from Bethlehem

38. Would we return?

One night in 1948 I woke up by the loud voice of my father arguing with my blind grandfather trying to convince him to leave our village near Bethlehem while my grandfather refused. At that moment my mother was packing our clothes and some food: then we had to wake up, hold our mattresses and follow my father who was carrying my grandfather on his shoulder because he refused to leave the village. My father thought it was necessary for our safety. We walked till we reached a small house at the far end of the city of Bethlehem. My father said that it was the house he had rented to us to live temporarily. We entered without any single word although we were inquiring: Why did we leave our large house with the lovely garden around it? Would we stay in Bethlehem forever? Or would we return to our dear village?
Oral history interview by Nadine from Bethlehem.

39. Ramadan evening

One day during Ramadan, we sat around the table waiting to start the prayer in which we ask God to accept our fasting. We were eager to eat the delicious food that was prepared. The bell rang and a group of armed soldiers entered. They started wrecking our furniture and showed no respect to the sanctity of the month. We were made to move out of our house. Only our disabled brother stayed behind. When they had finished inside, they brought my brother out in front of them, like a human shield. They sad, "If you allow your children to throw stones at us, we will demolish your house." They even hit my brother when he did not cooperate because of his disability. I shouted at them, "Leave him, he's sick". Afterwards we felt cold and hungry but couldn't eat anything.

Um Ahmed, from Bethlehem.

40. Trapped

During the second intifada, it happened once that I was on my way to my mother-in-law. Suddenly I heard shooting and shelling around me. I saw Israeli soldiers firing at Palestinian fighters in Beit Jala. My heart started to pound. I was trapped between the two fighting sides. One Palestinian fighter saw me and pulled me away to a narrow road. Other fighters held my hands but I did not hear any of their comforting words because of the heavy shelling which continued for what felt like an eternity. Afterwards, I didn't know how I reached home. I had a nervous breakdown. I continued to hear the sounds of shooting and shelling, and had terrible nightmares for more than six days. After I went back to work, ten young visited me and asked about my health. They turned out to be the fighters who had saved me and protected me.

Ellen, from Beit Jala.

41. Sodium

During the first intifada, at the end of the 1980s, while I was in front of my house in the Anatra quarter of Bethlehem, I heard school children screaming. They had inhaled tear gas thrown at them by the soldiers. I went back to my house quickly and prepared a bucket of water with sodium carbonate. I hurried out to help them. The soldiers were after them, shooting tear gas canisters and even live bullets. Some of the children fainted. Although a soldier yelled at me, I handed the clothes soaked in the sodium

water to the fainting boys to help them coping with the tear gas. Some soldiers tried to grab the clothes from the boys but they did not succeed and at last they had to retreat.
Ellen, Bethlehem.

42. Cracks in the wall

One morning, while my father and I were drinking our coffee, the Israeli military came into our village with bulldozers and digging machines. They wanted to build a road to prepare for the Wall. They started with blowing up rocks. The explosions felt like earthquakes. From that day on I warned all the people that these explosions could cause cracks in the walls of our houses. As soon as the army came into the village, I told my neighbours to open the windows and leave their homes. After our protests, the army promised not to use dynamite, but after one and a half weeks they continued, even before morning prayers. Later on, they uprooted our olive trees and I started to take part in demonstrations and advocacy campaigns.
Nadia, from Al-Walajeh.

43. The tanks and the child

During the first intifada my brother, Mustafa, came back from his preschool. He was running and crying because four Israeli tanks were slowly moving behind him. My mother hurried to lift him up in her arms, asking him, “My child, what is wrong with you?” My brother answered angrily, “Look, the Israeli tanks are behind me.” While he cried, soldiers stepped down from a tank, approached my mother, and came into our house. They asked, “What is the boy saying?” My mother answered, “He is afraid of you and your tanks.” The soldiers started to laugh. They didn’t care at all about my mother’s or Mustafa’s feelings. In fact, they looked proud of their terrorizing behaviour.
Nadia, from Al-Walajeh.

44. On the run

In late 2000, our house in Beit Jala was shelled by the Israeli army and we were forced to move to the first floor. A day later, a rocket went into our washing machine. Amidst the flames we ran into the street but luckily the fire was extinguished quickly. The following day we went back only to hear more shelling so we decided to move to my daughter’s house. While staying there my son Milad was injured by a shelling. We

took him to the hospital with the shooting and shelling still going on around us. The receptionist called for doctors but there was no response. Then the local TV and radio stations appealed for doctors to come. One doctor, Bashir Marzouka, happened to be listening to the radio and hurried to the hospital. He immediately performed an eight-hour operation and managed to save my son's life.

Laila, from Beit Jala.

45. New house old stones

Um Mohammed lived in a small room in Al-Walajeh village. Her childhood as a refugee, and her lack of privacy, meant that she always dreamt of building a house. Her husband said, "that is too expensive". Um Mohammad replied, "we can bring stones from the ruins of our house that was demolished in 1948." Her husband replied, "but our grandchildren will go back there on day and they should remember our house and our suffering". She said, "that's true but we will not take all the stones." After a while, her husband agreed even though he knew it would be dangerous. Despite the Israeli patrols, the two succeeded in carrying stones on the back of their donkey to build their new house. Later on, Um Muhammad used to sit in her home proudly telling her children the story of their house. She also kept asking them to defend their right of return.

Um Ahmed, from Bethlehem.

46. Under the boots

In the summer vacation, my eldest son used to help his uncle in his shop. One day, Palestinian youths organized a demonstration, expressing their anger by shouting and singing. My son took part in this. The soldiers started to fire tear gas at them. The Palestinians youths reacted by throwing stones and then ran away. My son went to hide in his uncle's shop but Israeli soldiers followed him and dragged him out. They beat him all over his body while they kept their boots on his head. His uncle tried to get him free but was threatened himself. My sister-in-law, who used to have an American passport, tried to talk him free but was told, "You are American. You shouldn't be here. Leave the country for your safety." At last, my son was released.

Rana, from Bethlehem.

47. I caught his hand

During the June war in 1967, when I was a child, we lived in a simple shelter, a cave for sheep. My parents divided the cave into two parts: one for the animals and the other for our family. My family thought about leaving for Jordan as we were all afraid of the Israeli army. Some of the family appealed to my father to leave the cave but I was worried about him and about us. So many terrible things could happen as we tried to escape to Jordan. One day he decided he wanted to leave. He was at the doorstep and was about to put on his shoes but I hid one of them among the remains of an animal. I also caught his hand and held it tightly. In the end, he managed to stay steadfast in our house. He did not become a refugee for a second time.
Maysara, from Bethlehem.

48. Accordion

When I was 17, I bought an accordion. I wanted to let the children be happy, to change their situation a bit. During the uprising, when nobody could go out, I opened my home for the children and I played the accordion for them on the veranda. They were singing, "the world is beautiful. Let us be happy. Let us love each other. Let us have peace here." While there was shooting outside, at home it was safe.
Vera, from Bethlehem.

49. Homeward bound

My grandmother, Mahbuba, used to walk secretly to old Al-Walajeh. Her house was evacuated during the Nakba (disaster) in 1948, and our family was not allowed to return. But she kept visiting the old house and the nearby fields to bring us some food. One day, during her secret travels, an Israeli soldier shot at her and she was injured in her neck. She continued to walk back while bleeding, and managed to reach our house. She told my family that she felt something warm flowing down her shoulder. We took her to the hospital where she was treated. Afterwards, she kept the memory of her home alive and dreamt that she would return, at least once, before she died.'
Nadia, from Al-Walajeh.

50. The boy

A the beginning of the second intifada, in 2000, a boy from Aida camp visited my husband's shop near Rachel's tomb to buy a sandwich. It was just after the Friday prayer. At that moment some youths gathered in the area to throw stones at the Israeli

army in the military tower near the wall. The soldiers started to fire live bullets at them. We heard a 13 year old boy was shot in the head and had died. A curfew was imposed so that my husband and his older mother were trapped in the shop. My husband used a carton for his mother to sleep on, but no sleep was made possible as the soldiers made too much noise. After the curfew was lifted, my husband heard that the child who was killed was the one who had bought the sandwich.
Rana, from Bethlehem.

51. Banging my head

Once during the first intifada, at the end of the 1980s, some young boys from the neighbourhood were throwing stones. Among them were my two sons who suddenly ran into the house. From the window I saw the soldiers approaching so I quickly send my sons through an inside door to my father-in-law. When the soldiers knocked on the gate I told them that I had not seen anyone. They did not believe me and banged my head against the wall. I felt terrible. All I wanted was to protect the boys.
Farida Muslah, Beit Jala

52. Proof

Once I had an appointment at Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem for a scan of our fourteen-year old son. I went with him to the Bethlehem checkpoint and showed my permit and his birth certificate as proof that he was under sixteen. However, a soldier claimed that my son was older and that the birth certificate was false. When I tried to convince him he started to shout at us and another soldier heard us. That one began to interrogate me in Arabic and eventually he allowed us to pass. When we reached the next gate, still another soldier stopped us. Luckily, the solder who gave me the previous OK stood nearby. At last, my son and I could go to the hospital.
Sahar, from Bethlehem.

53. Deaf and mute

Once during the first intifada the Israeli army imposed a strict curfew on my hometown, Beit Sahour. People were forbidden to go out – even for prayers in the mosque or the church. My mother was very pious and she insisted that she would not miss any Friday prayers in the mosque. She used to say, “I fear nobody except God.” At four-thirty in the morning she decided to go downtown to the mosque. After

walking for about one kilometre she saw an Israeli jeep and a border policeman calling to here, “Where are you going?” She continued walking slowly. The policeman stepped out and approached her. She made gestures that she was deaf and mute. The jeep continued to follow her until she finished her morning prayers and reached home.
Um Mohammed, Beit Sahour.

54. Hug

During the first intifada Israeli tanks stood in front of our house. Our young men had to pass here to reach their work places in Jerusalem. The soldiers used to stop and delay them. They were sometimes made to stand for hours facing the wall of our house. One day, the soldiers stopped two young men. We couldn’t hear the talk but the soldiers started to beat them. Suddenly, a woman in the street came out shouting and screaming. We heard her say that the young men were her children. She hugged them and asked the soldiers what they wanted. She saved the young men whom she actually did not know.
Melvina, from Bethlehem.

55. Hiding in the storage.

Once, near the start of the second intifada, Israeli soldiers were running after young stone throwers. Out of fear of being arrested and beaten the teenagers were hiding in the houses. The soldiers thought that somebody had thrown stones from our house so they entered it by force. My children were very frightened. One of them hid in the storage room in the kitchen. The soldiers came in shouting and started to damage the furniture. One of them was about to throw a teargas canister in the direction of the cupboard where my son was hiding but my mother managed to stop him. The soldiers did not know how to respond and left.
Farha, from Bethlehem.

56. Baking bread

In the Jalazon refugee camp, north of Ramallah during a curfew the Israeli military severed the supply of gas and electricity. The women made a communal fire to bake bread, which was kept burning with old shoes and rags when the wood had run out. When the soldiers came to put the fire out and throw away the dough, the women resisted, shouting, “Go tell your leaders no matter what you do, no matter what kind of

restrictions you impose on us, we will not allow our children to starve. We will find a way to bake bread, and all your efforts to destroy our spirits are not going to succeed. What God has created, no one can destroy!"

From: Jean Zaru, "Occupied with Nonviolence: A Palestinian Woman Speaks."

57. Furious settler

Once, at the end of the 1980s, I was watching the news. Suddenly my husband, holding our baby boy of 10 months in his arms, rushed in through the front door and slammed it. A rifle crashed through the front door window and shattered the glass I jumped over the glass and opened the door. A furious settler stood before me and shouted that my son had thrown a stone at his car window. I told him that my son could not have done it. He threatened to come back and kill whoever had done it and as he left he shot our water tank on the roof. The next day he came back. With my heart pounding, I brought my elder son to the door. I knew he was innocent. After looking at him, the settler left.

Jala, from Beit Sahour.

58. No compensation

Once my family and I went out to stop the Israeli bulldozers which were in my village to build the Wall. I shouted in the soldiers' faces, "Go away, this is my home." The soldier told me, "we will give you compensation." "All the money in the world will not compensate me for the loss of my house," I said. A soldier tried to provoke me by arresting my brother. I grabbed and held my brother but the soldier pushed me and I fell on the ground. He started to beat me and my brother too. He even threw teargas at us. I tried to stand up to fight but fainted. An ambulance took me to the hospital.

Nadia, 38 years, Al-Walajeh

59. Give us back our freedom

In 1948, many clashes and shootings happened. The situation got worse and there was no work. People started to leave their houses. They told us to go to Nablus just for six days. It has been 50 years now. We lived in Rafidia (in Nablus) for six months, then left for Jericho. We slept in a tent where we had a small room. We were with five boys, six girls and my father, mother, grandmother and my aunt. There was no difference between rich and poor; all were in the same situation. After that we went to

Bethlehem. My children got married and they live happily now. It is true that I have property here and my work is good but I'm still a refugee. I still feel tired, even now. We still keep the documents to show that we are refugees.

Oral history interview by Rana from Bethlehem.

60. Talking back

During a day in the first Intifada, I went to buy bread. It was raining heavily. Suddenly I got a call to come home quickly as Israeli soldiers had entered the gate. Back home I saw several soldiers pointing their guns at the children in our house. I started to shout at the soldiers, "Go out of my house immediately! Why did you enter my house without permission?" They said, "We want to take the boy because he tried to stop us coming in the gate." I asked them, "Where is your officer?" And raising my voice I continued, "I will go with you wherever you go. Why do you take the children of Palestine from inside their houses when they don't do anything?" After a while they started to listen and left the boy.

Antoinette, from Beit Jala.

61. Arts at home

I am a teacher in Bethlehem and live close to the Church of Nativity. During the time of the Bethlehem invasion in 2002, the Israeli army imposed a curfew for forty days. Soldiers took over the house. Seven of my family were locked in one room, including my sick grandmother and two children. The home became a prison. In order to keep the children's minds away from the soldiers and the shooting, I got them to draw on the walls and encouraged them to sing songs, assuring them that the soldiers would leave soon and that this was their home no matter what.

Samia, from Bethlehem.

62. Don't know why

I live near the wall. There were always young boys throwing stones at it and at the Israeli soldiers. One day a young boy, about twelve years old, went into a shop near the wall and bought something small. When he left the shop, a soldier shot him. I don't know why, maybe because they thought the small package from the shop was a stone and he would throw it. From that time on, Palestinian policemen are always

present at this section of the wall, to ensure that no Palestinian boys have to die again in this way.

Ellen, from Beit Jala

63. A wall in my country!

When I grew up, without the wall, life was very different. We were free, we could move around, go to Jerusalem and visit family and friends. I feel miserable when I see the wall. It is a wall in my own country! I always worry about my children, how growing up in this situation will affect them. I think it will be very difficult for them. When we drive by the Wall, they ask me, "Mum, did you see that new painting? Did you see that new picture on the wall? Who painted it? What does it mean?" I think all the graffiti means the same, that living here in Bethlehem with the wall is very difficult and that everybody has a difficult story.

Abeer, from Bethlehem

64. Walking after surgery

My son needed an operation on his throat. This had to take place at the hospital in Jerusalem. I spent many hours trying to get the right papers and permit so that we could go to Jerusalem, even though my son was very sick and needed the operation as soon as possible. On the way back, we were with my brother-in-law who is allowed to pass through the checkpoint in his car. This would be a lot more comfortable for my son than walking. However, the soldiers refused to let us stay in the car and I had to walk through the checkpoint with my son, who had just had major surgery. My husband was not even allowed to walk through and had to drive all the way round to Beit Jala to enter Bethlehem from that side.

Mona, from Bethlehem

65. Love

My son fell in love with a girl from Jerusalem. It was difficult for him to visit her because he needed a permit but she was able to come and visit him here in Bethlehem. He could not get permission to visit her even when she became ill. After four years she died. She put in her will that she wanted my son to carry her coffin at the funeral. He tried to get a permit to do this but this was denied. He decided to go to Jerusalem without a permit. The Israeli soldiers caught him, beat him badly and put him in prison

for thirty days. He missed the funeral. He had a nervous breakdown and was ill for two years.

Ellen, from Beit Jala

66. Too late

In January 2002 my son was in his house and was shot by an Israeli soldier. He was still alive but was bleeding heavily and needed medical help as soon as possible. It was two hours before the ambulance was allowed to reach his house. They took him to hospital in Beit Jala. His injuries were very serious and he was losing a lot of blood so the doctors said he had to go to hospital in Jerusalem and have major surgery. In order to go to Jerusalem he needed a permit and this was only given after three hours. Only my son was allowed to go to Jerusalem; my husband and I could not go with him. Unfortunately, the permission came too late. On his way to the hospital in Jerusalem he died in the ambulance, without his family present.

Umm Mounir, from Al-Walajeh

67. Why the wall?

When the wall was built, my children asked me: Why did they build this wall? I answered that the Israelis built the wall because they thought they needed it. At the AEI [the Arab Educational Institute in Bethlehem] they once asked the children to make a drawing of what they thought about the wall. My little George drew the wall with a ladder, so as to climb over it. Children do not understand why the wall is here, they are too young. What to tell them?

Rawan, from Bethlehem

68. Come back tomorrow

In 2006, my father became sick and his doctors advised him to go to the hospital in Jerusalem because they have more advanced medical care there. He received a permit from the Israelis and went to Jerusalem. After being in hospital in Jerusalem for two days, he started to ask for me. I tried to get a permit but each time I went to the office, the officers told me, "Come back tomorrow." I have a sister in Holland and she was able to visit my father while he was in hospital. I live so much closer to the hospital than her but I was unable to visit him. In the end, my father died before I was able to get the permit to visit him.

Nadia, from Bethlehem

69. One day it will fall

I really don't like to look at the wall. My young son recently asked me when we walked by the wall what a specific graffiti painting meant. It was a picture of a dove with an olive branch. I told him that it represented peace and that we, as a Palestinian people, hope we will have peace in the future. But in fact, I don't want my children to look at the pictures and the colours on the wall and to ask me what they mean. What can you say? Most of the time I try to ignore the wall. I know it is there but one day it will fall. We still have hope and as long as we have hope, everything is possible.
Mira, from Bethlehem

Appendix 2

Agenda Group Discussions

- Welcome
    - Explanation of the morning
- The Wall
    - What does it mean to you?
    - Remember when it was build
        - Where were you?
        - What did you think/do
    - Discuss this in groups
        - Come up with five points
    - Group discussion
- Stories on the Wall
    - Why share?
    - Which effects are expected?
- Personal interviews
    - Explain what this means
    - Make appointments

Appendix 3

Topic List Interviews

- The Wall
    - when was it build?
    - how does it influence your life?
    - how do you feel about it?

- Story on the Wall
    - yes:
        - which one?
        - why?
        - what effect does this have?
            - for yourself
            - for others
                - internationals
                - Palestinians

    - no:
        - why not?
        - do you want it?
            If yes, which one?
        - what effect do you expect this to have?
            - for yourself
            - for others
                - internationals
                - Palestinians

- Graffiti on Wall

- how do you feel about this?
- what effect do you think this have?

- Sharing of stories connected to sumud and resistance
    - how are these concepts connected?

- Does the Wall change because of graffiti and stories?

- Future
    - what do you see?
    - how do you work towards that?

Appendix 4

Coding Scheme

	Code	# times the code was used
1	AEI	5
2	Checkpoint	5
3	Connection resistance and sumud	11
4	Connection sharing stories and resistance	21
5	Connection sharing stories and sumud	20
6	Content shared story	27
7	Does Wall change by stories and graffiti	22
8	Educating foreigners	24
9	Effect graffiti and stories on wall	27
10	Effect occupation	24
11	Effect putting stories on Wall	48
12	Effect sharing for self	28
13	Effect Wall	53
14	Example Sumud	23
15	Fear Israel	4
16	Feeling connected to Wall	25
17	Future	10
18	Gender	2
19	Good old times	10
20	Hope for future	19
21	International media	11
22	International support	33
23	Intifada's	7
24	Meaning sumud	8
25	Not read Wall Museum	12
26	Ownership	4
27	Problems before Wall	13
28	Religion	20

29	Resistance	2
30	SSH	12
31	SSH ipv Sumud	8
32	Start Wall Museum	1
33	Stories on Wall are message for Israel	1
34	Story on the Wall	22
35	Translator present	7
36	Use wall	1
37	Want story on Wall	5
38	What do self to make wall fall	6
39	What happened when building wall	7
40	When was the wall built	11
41	Why share in group	3
42	Why share on wall	34
43	Why stay	12