The Rainbow Flag as Part of the 'Apartheid Wall' Assemblage: Materiality, (In)Visibility and Resistance

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Abstract

This paper explores the case of a mural, 'Through the Spectrum,' painted with the colors of the rainbow flag in 2015 by the Palestinian visual artist Khaled Jarrar on a section of the 'Apartheid Wall' separating Israel from the Palestinian territories. Through attending to the materiality of the assemblage of the Wall, with the mural of the rainbow flag as one element, the paper investigates the production of resistance. The paper demonstrates how the resistance against the visual politics of Israeli occupation also involves and becomes intertwined with the politics of visibility practiced by the globalized LGBTIQ community. Moreover, it also focuses on how this resistance, through its materiality, in some ways challenges the visual field of occupation. It is argued that the materiality of the Wall, in conjunction with the mural, human actors, and discourses, makes possible and contributes to producing one expression of the Palestinian resistance of sumūd, steadfastness.

Introduction

On June 29, 2015, the Palestinian visual artist Khaled Jarrar painted a section of the 425-mile-long West Bank Barrier separating Israel from the Palestinian territories, the so-called Apartheid Wall[2], with the colors of the rainbow flag. The mural was titled 'Through the Spectrum.' Four hours later, the mural was whitewashed by persons who self-identified

1. In this text I use the name given by the Palestinians, the Apartheid Wall or the Wall of Racial Separation, jidar al- fasl al- cunsuri, and not the more neutral name given by the Israelis, the Wall of Separation.

as part of the Palestinian community (Vartanian 2015; Guardian 2015). This incident immediately stirred a debate in the Palestinian community, in Israel and the pro-Israeli community as well as internationally, bringing issues of LGBTIQ[3] rights and visibility in Palestine, the Israeli occupation, and the politics of 'pinkwashing'[4] into focus.

As the main symbol for the globalized LGBTIQ community, the rainbow flag is today used in the global North as well as the South and 'appears as a challenge to oppressive heterosexual gender and sexual norms, and as a symbol for sexual possibilities, freedom and rights' (Laskar, Mulinari, and Johansson 2016, 192). However, as a cultural artefact, the rainbow flag is continuously interpreted and reinterpreted, mobilized, and used in multiple ways within a variety of contexts. When, as in this case, the flag is 'plugged into' a political field such as that of the Israeli/Palestine conflict, it can also bring about rather unpredictable effects.

As posited in an earlier article (Laskar et al. 2016), the case of 'Through the Spectrum' may serve as an example of how the rainbow flag is being mobilized and appropriated for other purposes than to promote equal rights for LGBTIQ people, both by the power (such as the Israeli state), as well as by actors located within or outside the hegemonic center (such as Jarrar). In this article, however, the focus has shifted from solely directing attention toward the symbolic aspects of the flag and the mural to including its 'thing power,' that is, 'the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle' (Bennett 2010, 6). Moreover, the mural is analyzed as incorporated and gathered into different assemblages such as the Apartheid Wall (Farinacci 2017), as well as queer assemblages (Puar 2007). It is suggested that the mural produces its effects through operating in conjunction not only with human actors but also with other elements, particularly with the Apartheid Wall on which it is painted. The main question this paper poses is: How does the materiality of the Wall, in conjunction with the mural, human actors,

2. The acronym LGBTIQ refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer.

3. That is, as a means of defending the Israeli state against potential criticism of its treatment of Palestinians (Puar and Mikdashi, 2012).

and discourses, make possible and contribute to shaping and producing certain practices of resistance?

Hence, the text is an attempt to respond to a call made by scholars within the field of resistance studies, not only to attend to language and discourse in the study of power and resistance but also to include the role of materiality (Törnberg 2013; Baaz and Lilja 2017; Von Bush 2017; Johansson, Martinsson, and Lilja 2018).[5] Attending to materiality as an active force in shaping the very conditions and forms of resistance involves rethinking the relationship between the material and the human in the practice of resistance and recognizing 'the extent to which the human being and thinghood overlap, the extent to which the us and the it slip into each other' (Bennett 2010, 6). Thus, resistance is understood here not only as a social action practiced by humans but as practices that are shaped and performed through the collaboration or intra-active processes of various types of bodies and forces, human as well as non-human ones (Barad 2007; Bennett 2010). With Barad (2003), one may speak of material-discursive practices that point toward the ways meaning is created through the intra-activity between materiality and discursiveness.

The aim of this paper is to engage with the materiality of resistance through the Apartheid Wall and the event of the painting and subsequent whitewashing (i.e., covering the mural with white paint) of the mural 'Through the Spectrum,' and, by directing the attention to materiality, also to 'contribute to our understanding of the discursive productions – and the resistance against it' (Lilja 2016, 3). The material environments, such as squares, streets, or walls, for that matter, are not only to be seen as support for political action but do also have an agentic force (see, for example, Butler 2015).

The Apartheid Wall has been described as 'a technique of strategic land appropriation that poses as an antiterrorist technology' (Brown 2010, 29). Being the main physical obstacle between Israel and Palestine, obstructing access to work, public services, and education for the Palestinians, as well as separating families (Larkin 2014, 134),

4. Materiality is considered to include a variety of types of matter, such as built environment (buildings, walls, squares), cultural artefacts (clothes, flags), nature (trees, rivers), or living bodies (of humans or animals).

the Wall is at the heart of Israeli spatial domination and the everyday reality of occupation (see Johansson and Vinthagen 2014). It is a central part of Israel's settler-colonial project, working according to the logic of necropolitical power (Mbembe 2003) and the structural violence of the occupation being implanted in the Wall (Abu Hatoum 2016).

However, at the same time, the Wall has, since the first Intifada in 1987, also functioned as a significant space for the Palestinian culture of resistance. This includes serving as the subject of a newsletter bulletin, the object of internal battles between Hamas and Fatah, and a site to be covered with murals and graffiti that portray Palestinian heritage, history, and identity (Peteet 1996; Larkin 2014). Over the years, the Wall has also become an international symbol of both occupation and resistance serving as a 'global canvas' for international artists and activists who cover it with references to both the Palestinian resistance against the occupation and transnational discourses and political struggles around the world (Gould 2014; Larkin 2014).

Street art and graffiti have, within the specific context of the Arab world, been described in terms of 'counter-spaces of resistance' (Jarbou 2017). Graffiti played a significant role during the first Intifada: first as an oppositional practice in itself challenging Israel's supremacy; second, as a significant medium for internal communication; and third, by contributing to the creation of 'counter publics' of many different and contradictory Palestinian voices (Peteet 1996; Larkin 2014). Today, both artists and viewers live in a changed political context than that of the first Intifada (Larkin 2014). For one thing, with the emergence of an 'electronic intifada,' most messages are being digitized and circulated globally on the internet, and the graffiti on the Wall alone can no longer serve as a significant medium for mobilizing communal Palestinian resistance (149). Hence, it is vital to take into consideration that even though the mural 'Through the Spectrum' was painted on the Wall as a 'global canvas,' it is to a great degree the circulation of the images of the mural on the internet and the debate it created on social media that determine its impact.

Moreover, the politics of (in)visibility play a central role in my understanding of the events connected with, and the controversy surrounding, the mural. I turn, therefore, to Hochberg's (2015) argument

that visual politics is vital in Israeli Zionist settler colonial projects; that is, who can see and whose vision is obstructed, who can be seen and who is confined to invisibility. By using the case of the mural 'Through the Spectrum,' I will show how the visual politics of Israeli occupation (and the resistance against it) also involves, and becomes intertwined with, what Stella (2012, 8) calls a 'new politics of visibility' of the globalized LGBTIQ community. The investigation of how the assemblage of the Wall, with the mural of the rainbow flag as one element, produced resistance, will thus also focus on how this resistance possibly challenges or subverts the visual field of occupation. The case further illustrates how power and resistance are to be viewed as entangled (not separated, dichotomous, or independent) (Lilja and Vinthagen 2009; Johansson and Vinthagen 2014), and, in fact, that practices of resistance might undermine certain relations of power, and simultaneously strengthen others, and/or lead to production of new technologies of power.

The article will proceed as follows: In the next section, the second one, I attend to the so-called politics of (in)visibility regarding both the Israeli occupation and LGBTIQ issues. Next, I present a short explanation of assemblage thinking, emphasizing the productivity of assemblages. Then, in the fourth section, I highlight relevant studies that have attended to materiality and resistance in relation to the Apartheid Wall. This is followed with a section on the materiality of the mural 'Through the Spectrum.' The sixth section is focused on the rainbow flag and the seventh on the white washing of the mural. Next, I discuss the limitations and complications of visibility as a practice of resistance in relation to the Israeli/Palestine conflicts and LGBTIQ issues and community. Finally, I summarize the conclusions of the article.

Politics of (In)visibility

In *Visual Occupations: Violence and Visibility in a Conflict Zone* (2015), Hochberg analyzes the tension between the visible and the invisible, focusing on the unequal distribution of 'visual rights' in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She points out how control over what is allowed to be seen is central to Israel's regime of the visual. It drives the regime to make deliberate attempts to make invisible both the Palestinian people and the extreme conditions caused by what the Palestinians refer

to as 'the catastrophe,' *Nakbha*, that is, the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the displacement of a large number of refugees (Schiocchet 2012).[6]

According to Hochberg (2015), the so-called 'visual field of the occupation' is organized around three principles: 1) concealment, 2) surveillance, and 3) witnessing. Through the principle of concealment, the Palestinians are effectively erased from the visual field of Israel (Hochberg 2015), with the Apartheid Wall playing an important role in this operation, being both 'a material and visual structure' (Abu Hatoum 2016). For the Israelis, the Wall embodies 'a national anxiety' of seeing Palestinians or being in proximity to them (Abu Hatoum 2016), while, at the same time, it hides and makes Israelis themselves unaware of the Palestinians and the occupation (Hochberg 2015). For the Palestinians, the Wall is an ever-present and nearby visual reminder of their occupied status, 'manifesting the destruction of their material and visual landscapes along with the destruction of their cities and the obliteration of their spaces' (Abu Hatoum 2016, 360).

The second principle (Hochberg 2015), surveillance, includes technologies usually connected with surveillance, such as borders, cameras, watch towers, and drones, but also the visual right that Israeli soldiers have to survey and secure the obedience of Palestinians, directing a gaze at the Palestinian body as an object of military surveillance. The third principle, however, witnessing (visual testimony), is a rather complex one. According to Hochberg it is:

> Often leveraged as a way of gaining support for the suffering of Palestinians and provoking Israeli state and military personnel to engage in an ethical relationship with Palestinians. At the same time, witnessing also forces Palestinians to continually position themselves as visibly suffering and to be willing to testify about their suffering (2015,117).

Hochberg points to the intense interest of both the global media and the local Palestinians themselves in making visible the Israeli/Palestine

5. The 1948-9 Arab-Israeli War resulted in the displacement of more than 914,000 Palestine refugees. By 2005, this population had grown to more than 4.4 million.

conflict and the Palestinian suffering for a global audience. The risk with this hypervisibility of the suffering of others is that it may become nothing but a 'spectacle of sheer voyeurism' (Hochberg 2005, 117), and does not necessarily lead to any political action or social change.

Further, in reaction to the Israeli attempt to surveil and to picture every Palestinian as a terrorist, human rights organizations and the media have in turn tended to picture the Palestinian subject as a mere victim. At the same time that Palestinians are made hypervisible as victims, they remain invisible as political actors and are thus reduced to a stereotypic image.

Even though queering the analysis of the visual field of occupation is outside the scope of this article, I want to point out that Israel's attempts to control what is seen are also deployed in relation to Palestinian queers. As Shulman (2011) states, not only does Israeli pinkwashing manipulate the hard-won gains of Israel's LGBTIQ community, it also ignores the emerging Palestinian LGBTIQ movement. The racial politics of occupation are not separated from but rather intertwined with sexuality (Ritchie 2011). For example, the checkpoint system operates according to a mechanism that controls and prevents both 'sexual deviance' and transgressions of ethnic and national borders (Hochberg 2010), and most queer Palestinians account for their experiences at checkpoints (and with Israeli police and soldiers generally) in consistently negative terms (Ritchie 2015). It is, however, fundamental to Israeli state formation that the struggles against the occupation and for LGBTIQ rights are viewed and treated as separate (Ritchie 2014).

Israeli queers are only included in the nation as long as they do not demand transformation of the relations between Israelis and Palestinians and as long as they participate in the demonization of the Palestinians (Ritchie 2014). Palestinian queers are in turn only recognized by Israel as long as they do not insist on their Palestinianness and right to national independence. Stories of victimized Palestinian queers 'seeking refuge' in gay-friendly Israel consequently serve to justify the different forms of state violence against Palestinians.

Ritchie (2014, 118) concludes that the only acceptable 'out' (read 'visible') queer Palestinian is one 'victimized by a homophobic and

backward Palestinian "culture".' I will argue that while the mural 'Through the Spectrum' is on the one hand mobilized to reiterate this narrative, on the other hand, by acknowledging the significance in painting the mural specifically on the Apartheid Wall, a potential is emerging of making Palestinian queers visible, as something other than 'suffering victims.'

In the next section, the mural is conceptualized and described as part of the Wall as an assemblage.

Assemblage Thinking

Assemblages are conceptualized as made up of complex combinations of elements, such as objects, bodies, signs/utterances, organizations, norms, events, and territories, all of which enter into relations and interactions with one another and come together for varying periods of time (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Bennett 2010; Müller 2015). Moreover, an assemblage can be defined as 'a gathering of heterogenous elements consistently drawn together as an identifiable terrain of action and debate' (Li cited in Baker and McGuirk 2017, 8).

Using the concept of assemblages can be one way to dissolve the dichotomization between materiality and the social/cultural and to try to grasp how non-humans and humans are entangled (Hodder 2014). In this text, assemblage thinking[7] is used as a methodological-analytical framework (Baker and McGuirk 2017) to understand the situation and event of 'Through the Spectrum.' Drawing on Von Busch (2017), who suggests a methodology of 'unpacking' assemblages, examining how the different elements 'support, multiply, and act together as a unit' in shaping resistance (76), I explore how human actors and non-human objects act together in the production of resistance. As suggested by Baker and McGuirk (2017), the 'field' or the 'study area' of an assemblage is actually a series of interrelated sites and situations. In my exploration, the empirical materials consist of secondary sources gathered from both old and new media concerning 'Through the Spectrum,' regarding both

6. Assemblage thinking refers to 'a diverse set of research accounts that may or may not engage directly with formal theories of assemblage, such as those of Deleuze and Guattari or DeLanda' (Baker and McGuirk 2017, 427).

the painting of the mural and also the event of whitewashing, as well as the reporting after both these events. I illustrate this with voices from different audiences that have responded to the mural.

My understanding of the Apartheid Wall as an assemblage is much indebted to Farinacci's study, 'The Israeli-Palestinian Wall and the Assemblage Theory: The Case of the Weekly Rosary at the Icon of Our Lady of the Wall' (2017), which examines the effect the physical presence of the Wall has on the Palestinian Christian population who live in the Bethlehem governorate. Through extensive field work, she has explored the weekly recitations of the Rosary along the Wall near Checkpoint 300, through which the Elizabethan nuns of the Caritas Baby Hospital have been invoking Mary's help to take apart or undo the Wall. This weekly ritual, which has been going on for a decade:

> Represents both political dissent against the bordering action enacted by the Wall, as well as giving visibility to the plea of the Palestinian Christian right to live in this territory in the face of their status as an ethno-religious minority (86).

According to Farinacci (2017), the Wall as an assemblage gathers not only actants of surveillance and control but also a combination of religious practices, rituals, and materials that together have created and established a novel Christian shrine. More concretely, the assemblage consists of elements such as guns, soldiers who check IDs, cameras, watchtowers, gates, barbed wire, army vehicles, checkpoints, eight-meter-high segment slabs, interactions with religious bodies, Holy masses, Rosary beads, and a new prayer especially written to be recited at the painted icon of the Virgin Mary (Our Lady at the Wall). The human actors and non-human actants interact and interconnect in different ways with the Wall.

In line with this analysis, I view the Apartheid Wall as an assemblage gathering a multitude of elements, both architecture and the surveillance technology, as well as the practices of painting murals/graffiti and discourses against the occupation and Palestinian national independence articulated by a multitude of actors. This also includes the assembling of the bodies of Jarrar and his fellow artist painting the mural, as well as the Palestinians who performed the whitewashing, the materiality of the mural, and the whitewashing itself. Additionally, through the mural, you

may say that the Wall also becomes part of or incorporates certain parts of queer assemblages: queer subjectivities, the rainbow flag and other emblems associated with queerness, discourses on LGBTIQ rights, Israeli homonationalism, and so on. Queerness as an assemblage is defined by Puar as 'a series of dispersed but mutually implicated and messy networks' (2007, 211). It 'deprivileges a binary opposition between queer and not-queer subjects' and, in contrast to centering these subjects as a resistant force, it 'underscores contingency and complicity with dominant functions' (211). As clarified by Engel (2011), assemblages (including queer assemblages) should thus not necessarily be considered 'counter-hegemonic constellations' but are rather the form in which movements of power relations also develop and are materialized.

One of the most fruitful aspects of assemblage thinking is how it forefronts spatial dimensions of power and politics and offers a perspective that is more processual and 'socio-material' (Müller 2015). Assemblages can actually be said to consist of and produce spatialities. They 'claim a territory' and are realized through ongoing processes of territorialization (stability), deterritorialization (transformation), and reterritorialization (Müller 2015; Baker and McGuirk 2017). As Müller (2015, 29) emphasizes the productive nature of assemblages, he posits that they 'produce new territorial organizations, new behaviors, new expressions, new actors and new realities.' While they establish new territories as they develop and hold together, they also 'constantly mutate, transform, and break up' (29).

I argue that through the event/s of 'Through the Spectrum,' an assemblage is gathered that produces a number of different effects, including practices of resistance. In the next section, various practices of resistance against/produced by the Wall are highlighted, along with their different material qualities.

The Apartheid Wall and the Materiality of Resistance

In descriptions and discussions about the barrier that separates Israel from the Palestinian territories, its material nature is often pointed out; that it is a long and serpentine physical construction of segments of concrete, watch towers, gates and fences, and that its materiality takes

on different shapes and varies depending on which territories it intersects (Gould 2014). Parts of it consist of 30-foot-high ready-made concrete segments, but the majority of its length consists of lower brick walls, gates and an electronic fence flanked by paved pathways, barbed-wire fences and long, narrow ditches (see, for example, Farinacci 2017). The surveillance technology is an integral part of the barrier. In some areas where there is an actual wall, it is often surrounded by a series of electric fences and, in others, it is also equipped with a combination of wires and cameras topped by a watchtower (seldom staffed by a guard). In some places, the barrier cuts through and has demolished cities, villages and neighborhoods; in others, it is built in a fairly open landscape.

However, lately, scholars have shown an increased theoretical interest in what the materiality of the Apartheid Wall does, as well as the materiality of the different practices of resistance against it (see, for example, Gould 2014; Farinacci 2017). Rather than rendering matter as passive and fixed (Barad 2003), material objects can be considered to possess a certain 'vibrancy' and aliveness (Bennett 2010), or, as explained by Latour from a sociological perspective, 'Objects *do* do something, they are not merely the screens or the retroprojections of our social life' (1996, 236). Matter can be said to have the capacity to change courses of events, modify actors and discourses and, actually, to 'kick back' against human will and intentions, for example by resisting attempts to manipulate them (Barad 1998, 116). Therefore, materiality needs to be investigated and its implications analyzed in their own right.

In her study, Farinacci (2017) addresses the productivity of the Wall, understood as an assemblage. She identifies five dimensions in which it can be said to exercise agency. Those are: 1) Palestinian land appropriation, 2) control and surveillance of the lives and movements of the Palestinians in general and Christians in particular, 3) community and family fragmentation and separation, 4) acts of *sumūd* or steadfastness developed by the Christians, and 5) the development of a Christian ritual landscape among its cement slabs. Without delving more deeply into the different dimensions, I want to emphasize that the assemblage of the Wall can be said to produce both power and resistance. At the same time that it produces devastating effects, such as appropriation of land and separation of family members and communities, in addition to exercising continuous

control, it also produces specific forms of resistance. Moreover, new types of bonds and relationships are created (between Israeli soldiers and nuns, between Christians and Muslims), as well as new types of activists (nuns and priests).

In investigations of the materiality of the resistance, it is also apparent that, depending on the shape the Wall is materialized in, the practices of resistance display variations. Bishara (2016) investigates how resistance against the Wall performed by youth in the Aida refugee camp differs from other Palestinian movements against the Wall. The eight-meter wall lies within approximately 15 meters of homes, and the activists have broken holes in the wall, taking significant risks of being discovered by the Israeli army. Here, the Wall not only hinders movement into Israel but has also separated the inhabitants in the camp from nearby Palestinian areas. Additionally, the Wall has led to an intensified militarization of the camp, with the Israeli army conducting regular raids, arresting and shooting at young people, and throwing tear gas at residences. The activists participating in the local resistance against the Wall express a physical sense of threat. Bishara argues that they are breaking the holes to 'perform confrontation', further stating that the particularity of this form of resistance emerges from the shattered organizing against the Wall at the national level, as well from the specific materiality and violence of the Wall in this location.

Humans and things can be said to act in cooperation to create these particular possibilities of resistance, what Hodder (2014) defines as a dependency, a 'sticky entrapment.' The bodies (activists) performing resistance are shaped by the materiality of the Wall; the entrapment, the physical separation from loved ones and from access to social services, the militarization of their living space, the threats to their lives, as well as the Wall being transformed by the embodied resistance by the activists.

In Farinacci's study (2017), a very different practice of resistance is described but, similarly to Bashar, she acknowledges the resistance as endowed with materiality. Since 2004, the Italian Elizabethan nuns of the Caritas Baby Hospital have gathered every Friday close to the vehicular entrance to and from Bethlehem to recite the Rosary and sing in front of the Our Lady of the Wall icon (painted on the Wall at the request of the nuns and itself now a site of pilgrimage and veneration). The

Caritas Baby Hospital is directly affected by the Wall due to its proximity to Checkpoint 300, which, as a major access point in the region, also represents one of the most significant places where Israeli presence is powerful, with massive security measures deployed. The recitation of the Rosary has been described by one of the nuns, Sister Anne, as 'our pacific intifada':

> This is how we have defined it in order to exhort from Mary this miracle: that the Wall might fall, that there could be peace in this land, that these children and families might live in peace and be able to move around as they please. (101)

The recitation of the Rosary begins at the checkpoint, in plain view of both the Israeli soldiers and the line of Palestinian drivers who wait to exit through the checkpoint. Not only do the beads of the rosary assist the praying Christians by materializing each Hail Mary, but they also make it possible for them to approach the checkpoint and become their particular 'weapon' in their fight against the Wall. The weekly recitation of the rosary, the singing and walking in front of the icon, creates what Farinacci calls 'a ritual landscape.' Moreover, the venue of the ritual has become relevant as 'a Christian border-disputing shrine' (97) that challenges Israeli power.

As stated above, while most of the Wall is equipped with surveillance technology aiming to prevent anyone from approaching or touching it, and it is rare that large sections of grey cement are left unprotected, nevertheless there are exceptions to the pattern (Gould 2014). These exceptions make it possible to turn the Wall into a work of art with a multitude of murals, graffiti and slogans, for example, the Wall in Bethlehem, which is covered with murals and is probably the most popular site for international visitors (Larkin 2014).

Larkin (2014) explores graffiti particularly along sections of the Wall around greater Jerusalem. He notes that the Palestinian Jerusalemites have begun using the Wall as a space for commercial advertising, both for local business and global marketing. For example, shop owners, car services and supermarkets whose properties directly face the Wall use hand-sprayed messages to advertise their prices and products. Larkin interprets this graffiti as expressions of resistance against the economic

drain that the Wall imposes on the Palestinians, an expression of *sumūd*, that is, life must go on. The graffiti contributes to actual survival. Thus, both Farinacci (2017) and Larkin (2014) define the resistance against the Wall as practices of *sumūd* or steadfastness, a kind of non-violent resistance directed at the occupation that includes both an approach of "remaining on the land" as well as "life must go on" (Johansson and Vinthagen 2015).

If physical confrontation is one way to resist the Wall in the Aida refugee camp, the weekly ritualization by the nuns is another, as graffiti and other art are yet others. In contrast to the activists in the Aida refugee camp or elsewhere, the artists do not actually try to destroy the Wall to make it 'come down' or to be able to pass through it, but instead they paint messages on it. Some of the messages address the future destruction of the Wall, such as 'All walls come down eventually' or the more humorous 'Make hummus, not walls.' Others focus on 'forms of escape': painting ladders, windows, cracks and segments of the Wall falling like dominos (Larkin 2014, 151). However, the writing and painting are not only symbolic or rhetorical practices of resistance but also have a materiality to them, being embodied spatial practices of resistance that make material marks on the Wall and have a number of material effects. As suggested by Butler (2015), when bodies gather and claim the public, they also create the public through taking hold of and 'reconfiguring' the matter of material.

The material forces of the geography of the landscape and the built environment such as the architecture of the Wall, including the surveillance apparatus and the surface, interact with the bodies of the Palestinians who resist the occupation and the Wall. The living human bodies of the artists also interact with the material means they are using to produce the mural. All these material bodies, forces and means provide the artists with 'what they have to work with or against' (Baaz and Lilja 2017). As I will demonstrate in the following sections, the marks made on the Wall, as well as the unmaking of them, that is, through painting the mural as well as the whitewashing of it, transforms both matter, human actors and discourses.

The Painting of a Mural

On the afternoon of June 29, 2015, vertical stripes of the colors of red, orange, yellow, green, black, blue and brown covered several concrete slabs of the Apartheid Wall. The eight-meter-high stripes could be spotted from far away. The mural made material marks not only on the Wall but also on the landscape.

'Through the Spectrum' was painted on a segment of the Wall close to the Qalandiya checkpoint. This location has a particular significance. The checkpoint is located by Ramallah, the largest city on the West Bank, in a zone called Area A, which is governed by the Palestinian Authority (PA). Being the main checkpoint between the West Bank and Jerusalem, Qalandiya is used by the Israeli military to control Palestinian access to East Jerusalem and Israel, and the thousands of Palestinians that travel into Jerusalem daily have to show permits to pass through the checkpoint for work, medical care, education, etc. More than any other checkpoint, Qalandiya has become an infamous symbol of the whole system of hundreds of checkpoints that have militarized Palestinian space.

The segment of the Wall near the Qalandiya checkpoint is covered with murals and graffiti, most of them against the occupation, including portraits of both the late Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat and jailed activist Marwan Barghouti. Jarrar's mural was painted close to a watchtower, between the mural of Barghouti, a slogan to 'free' him, and other political slogans. As Jarrar himself explained (Vartanian 2015), his idea of using the rainbow 'as a symbol of freedom and equality' was fed when he followed the news about the U.S. Supreme Court decision to legalize same-sex marriage in the United States, and how millions of people all over the world used the 'celebrate pride' filter provided by Facebook: 'I wanted the world to see that our struggle still exists and I felt there could be no better place to have that dialogue than on the concrete slabs of the most visible icon of our oppression.' Thus, he chose to paint the mural on the Wall because of its visibility as an 'icon of oppression.' He continued, 'My goal is to send out a message to the whole world, which is still celebrating freedom, about the oppressed people living under military occupation mainly embodied in the Qalandiya checkpoint and the Apartheid Wall'.

The choice of painting the mural on a section of the Wall by the Qalandiya checkpoint was deliberate, since both the Wall and the particular checkpoint 'embody' the military occupation. To Jarrar, the rainbow colors are the 'freedom colors,' and he uses them to remind the world of the lack of freedom of the occupied Palestinian people. Hence, the celebration of gay marriage as a celebration of 'freedom' is juxtaposed to the oppression of the Palestinians under Israel's military occupation. Through painting the mural, Jarrar mobilizes the Wall, as well as the rainbow flag, in the struggle for Palestinian nationhood.

The ambivalent role performed by the Apartheid Wall is well captured by the organizers of the exhibition, 'Three Cities Against the Wall' (New York, Tel Aviv, and Ramallah), as they posit: 'Ironically, there is also an opportunity created by the Wall: this physical barrier makes the oppression of Palestinians more visible. Artists can use the Wall as a metaphor to educate the public' (*Electric Intifada* 2005). This text highlights both the material and symbolic significance of the Wall. It is, on the one hand, a physical barrier that separates, demolishes and confines, but it also works as a symbol for the occupation. It makes the oppression 'more visible.' Jarrar uses the Wall as a 'global canvas,' not only as a 'metaphor,' but also for its materiality, which in fact makes it possible to paint the mural and 'send out a message to the whole world,' shaping the possibility for visibility as a practice of resistance. Its material qualities include its height and the slabs of concrete, creating a large and rather flat surface.

Toenjes (2015, 59) points out that for graffiti artists who aim to reach certain audiences, it is vital that they choose frames that will have 'the biggest impact on the target audience.' She suggests that this is why some Palestinian artists use English-language graffiti, and thus 'frame' the Wall in ways that will 'resonate with transnational actors.' The importance of the location of the graffiti is a dimension of what she argues are 'tactical and intentional attempts at transnationalizing the messages and images on the separation wall' (59). The choice of location refers both to the use of the Apartheid Wall rather than other city walls or buildings, and to the use of specific locations along the Wall.

Hence, it could be argued that visibility as a practice of resistance is produced and shaped by the materiality of the Wall in general, and by the

section at Qalandiya in particular. Moreover, the event assembles bodies in a specific way through the conjoining with the objects used in the act of painting, the painting in itself, as well as the material quality of the Wall. While I do not know anything of the actual performance of the mural, I assume that to paint it you need cans of paint, brushes and aids such as ladders to climb the Wall. All those materials create both possibilities and constraints (Hodder 2014, 25). Material agencies are mobilized to 'align action with the goal of activists and support of their cause,' but at the same time, to address the issues at hand, the objects and tools also need to be manipulated (Von Busch 2017, 75). The strategies of resistance, to 'show the world,' to make visible what is considered concealed or hidden by Israel, are made possible, strengthened and reinforced through the mobilization of the materiality of the Wall.

Even though graffiti and art on the Wall on the Palestinian side are not as surveilled and punished the same way as they were when the Wall was more contested as a border (Larkin 2014), Jarrar and his partner still had to relate to the surveillance technology around the site; the watch tower and the cameras, as well as the soldiers. Thus, 'Through the Spectrum,' as other graffiti and street art on the Wall, is to be considered as one way to undermine and resist surveillance, one of the principal elements of the visual regime of Israel (Hochberg 2015). However, the principle that is more at stake is that of concealment. But even though Jarrar's intention was to make visible the struggle of the Palestinian people, the mural actually elicits multiple readings of what and who is made visible. The next section will attend to the rainbow flag as part of the assemblage in focus, and how the mural also can be interpreted as part of the politics of (in)visibility practiced by the globalized LGBTIQ community.

The Rainbow Flag on the Wall

Whereas I have tried to point out the significance of the materiality of the Wall and how it works as 'an agentive force,' it is also important to attend to the materiality of the rainbow flag. As Holert (2013) states, 'indeed, the materiality, the texture of a particular flag object, is vitally important to its meaning and use.' This quality can in certain cases and situations be seen as intertwined with the symbolic quality and, in others,

more separate from it. For example, as a piece of cloth, the flag might be destroyed (burned or buried), but it might still be able to perform its symbolic function (Jarman 2007). In the case of 'Through the Spectrum,' the rainbow flag is not materialized in a piece of cloth but through the colors of the flag that are painted on the concrete slabs of the Wall. Even after it was erased, it made a difference and performed a function as a symbol.

As stated in the introduction, the rainbow flag clearly works as a vital symbol for a globalized LGBTIQ community. However, critical voices within the community have also questioned the universalizing claims associated with the flag (Laskar et al. 2016) and its connotations with Western LGBTIQ understandings of rights and obligations. It also 'plays a central role in boundary-making between the construction of Europeanness coded as progressive and its others, defined by their "lack of tolerance" towards sexual minorities, inscribing the flag within colonial and racist discourses' (194).

Drawing on this critique, Laskar, Mulinari, and Johansson (2016) identify a need for alternative readings of the rainbow flag that could make visible some of the diversity and complexity of the connotations of the flag that are produced in places, and by actors, outside the hegemonic center of the transnational queer culture. Through a de-colonial analysis of the rainbow flag as used in 'Through the Spectrum,' it is suggested that the flag is being mobilized to transgress the struggle for individual sexual rights and encompass the struggle for social justice as well. Still, when Ahmad, a Palestinian man identifying himself as 'gay,' comments on the mural, he does not mention Israel at all and does not seem to associate the mural with the Israeli occupation, oppression, or wider issues of social justice, but focuses solely on how it works as an acknowledgement of Palestinian 'gay people': 'Everyone knew what happened to the Wall. This is perfect. People in the West Bank have to acknowledge there are gay people' (Vartainen 2015).

'Everyone knew what happened to the Wall' refers to the visibility of the messages painted on the Apartheid Wall, and how the news of the rainbow flag painted on the Wall rapidly circulated on the internet. While street art addressing LGTBIQ issues is not an entire novelty in Palestine (for example, in 2014, the phrase 'Queers were here' [literally

'passed through here'] began to appear on the walls of Ramallah, mostly sprayed by hand with face stencils of two young men or women kissing) (Jarbou 2017, 137), the impact is seen as different when the rainbow flag appears on the Apartheid Wall.

Ahmad continued: 'And one of the main problems we have is that people aren't proud enough or brave enough to come out to people near them, and that is why homophobia still exists in Palestinian society' (hyperallergic.com 2015). The mural, Ahmad believes, will contribute to making 'gay people' visible, as well as work as an inspiration for gay people to 'come out,' an act that he seems to assume is motivated by pride or bravery. Thus, he articulates a dominant discourse of the globalized LGBTIQ community in which visibility is a significant tactic and goal of resistance (Stella 2012). Whereas the striving to get 'out of the closet, into the streets' has long been central to LGBTIQ politics in the U.S. and Europe, political strategies based on visibility and recognition have actually become even more prominent since the 1990s: 'Becoming visible represents a way of resisting social norms that naturalise heterosexual presence in public space and make homosexuality stand out as "out of place"' (Stella 2012, 8).

Pride parades, for example, are imagined as a 'collective coming out,' and 'posit visibility as a form of resistance and as a means to subvert heteronormativity' (8). As expressed by Lowder (2017), 'Pride is our time to be seen.' The rainbow flag/rainbow imagery has a central role in this practice of resistance organized around visibility.

Ahmad particularly emphasizes the impact of 'coming out' as gay through the visibility of the rainbow flag on the Wall. The rainbow flag imagery, as painted on the Apartheid Wall as a global 'canvas,' works as a recognition of 'gay people.' They are being seen. Now, according to Ahmad, the inhabitants of the West Bank have to 'acknowledge' that 'gay people' exist. The mural of the flag is thus being mobilized to empower and promote recognition and, in some sense, inclusion in Palestinian society.

A different voice is that of Rana Abu Diab, a 19-year-old Palestinian student from Jerusalem (Vartainen 2015), who encountered the mural on Facebook the same day it was painted. She tells the reporter how she

associates the work with 'courage,' sees it as challenging, and considers it a 'cultural shock' for Palestinian society. The student is further cited as saying, 'it was the first time I shared a pro-gay post on my wall and I saw some of my friends doing that as well,' and she continues:

> I am a supporter of gay marriage, so it wasn't irritating to me in any sense, especially that I know that this issue is a field for conflict between us and Israel … It was good for Palestine to be part of this global conversation. (Vartainen 2015)

The student relates to how Israel accuses Palestine of being homophobic, and she seems to view the mural as a Palestinian response in a 'global conversation' about LGBTIQ rights. Thus, the mural (the material aspect as well as the symbolic), contributes to changes in the transnational as well as the local discourses on LGBTIQ rights, for example, that 'pro-gay' posts became part of the everyday conversation on Facebook among local Palestinians.

Moreover, both Ahmad's and Rana's statements illustrate how it also contributes to the creation of affective attachments to the globalized LGBTIQ community. In this sense, the materiality of the flag as painted on the Apartheid Wall brings about transformations of bodies and affects.

Now I will shift the focus to another of the significant events that were gathered into the assemblage of the mural and the Wall: the whitewashing of the mural, performed by a group of men who self-identified as Palestinian.

The Whitewashing

Four hours after the mural was painted, on the evening of June 29, a number of men gathered to cover the whole of it with white paint. While the act of painting the mural was done in secret, the whitewashing was more of a public act, documented and posted on the Facebook page of the journalist, Fadi Arouri, who initiated the whitewashing, a photo that then circulated on the internet. In the photo, one man is seen standing on a ladder using a long extending pole to apply the white paint, while the other six men stand on the ground. The photo was commented on by Arouri with a message in Arabic that roughly translates as, 'Removing the filth, in full swing' (Vartainen 2015).

Later, Arouri explained his actions on several media outlets. While international media represented the whitewashing as an expression of homophobia and the refusal to promote gay rights, Arouri emphasized that the main objection to the mural was not the colors of the rainbow flag in itself, but that it was placed on the Apartheid Wall:

> We believe the colors of the rainbow are a sign of solidarity with the victory of the gay community in America. (…) The apartheid wall is a testament to Israeli racism. All that is painted on it should reflect the struggle of the Palestinian people' Al-Ghoul 2015).

He continued, 'my friends and I believe that drawing the rainbow flag means we have neglected our rights and our demands to end the occupation and break the wall.' It is not primarily about what the color combination symbolizes, but that it does not belong on the Wall, that it is painted at this place, on this particular surface, during the occupation, that makes it necessary to destroy it. Arouri also stated, 'My personal conviction does not reflect my rejection of homosexuals. I reject this sign of solidarity in an inappropriate place and time. Our national rights and freedoms are more worthy of attention' (Al-Ghoul 2015).

Whether or not the whitewashing was motivated by homophobia, and whatever the intentions of the acts were, it is notable that the LGBTIQ community in Palestine is not mentioned, and how the Palestinian Authority treats its LGBTIQ citizens does not seem to be considered significant within the larger debate over the Israeli occupation (Luongo n.d). Moreover, the erasure of the mural and the white paint replacing the colors of the rainbow flag can be said to have a performative power to separate LGBTIQ rights from the issue of Palestinian nationhood, and to create a division between 'the Palestinian people' and 'homosexuals.'

The attempt to unmake the mark the mural of the rainbow flag had made on the Wall is a material practice that produces a number of effects. The Wall itself is being affected as well as the landscape. Instead of the colors of the rainbow being visible from afar, there was now a large area showing only white paint. It is probable that certain emotions were evoked and circulated among the men who performed the whitewashing, primarily anger over the mural and a sense of togetherness in covering it. These emotions contribute to the creation of the 'we' that Aurori speaks

of in the citations. Regarding the effects on discourses, as I will show in the next section, the event of whitewashing was, for example, used by the Israeli press to portray Palestinians as homophobic.

However, I believe it is important also to connect the whitewashing and the arguments by Arouri with the criticism directed at the use of the Wall as a 'global' or transnational canvas, arguing that Western artists and activists further colonize Palestinian space, both in a physical and discursive sense (Larkin 2014; Gould 2014). From this point of view, Gould (2014), for example, questions the claim that the art and graffiti currently covering the Apartheid Wall are expressions of resistance. While the art and graffiti could be defined during and for some years after the first Intifada as 'globalized testimonies,' representing 'a voice for those who felt voiceless in the international arena' (Peteet 1996, 145), the situation is now different. Most of the graffiti covering the Wall today is in English (as well as Spanish), and there are also many references to European history, for example, the Berlin Wall or the Warsaw Ghetto. Since much of the art and graffiti are produced in relation to the perceived expectations of a globalized public sphere, Gould (2014) argues that they do not necessarily represent 'the infra-politics of the dispossessed':

> While such graffiti attest to the interconnectedness of a world in the age of the world picture, they also call into question the tendency to incorporate the insignia into a homogenous narrative of local resistance. Collectively, these images show how European history is redeemed and avenged on Palestinian territory, often without the knowledge, consent, or participation of local actors (5).

Larkin (2014, 51) points out that while the English graffiti articulates and evokes human rights discourses and international slogans for peace, as Nelson Mandela's 'Only free men can negotiate,' the scripts in Arabic 'localize' the struggle by using Arabic proverbs and citations from Palestinian poets and political leaders.

Some of the artists coming from outside Palestine have, in fact, encountered negative reactions from the Palestinian community, such as British graffiti artist Banksy. When he painted murals on the Wall during a tour of the West Bank, he was accused of 'aestheticizing' the suffering of the Palestinian people. As one Palestinian man said, 'We

don't want beautiful. We hate this wall. Go home' (Gould 2014, 6). The 'beautification' of the Wall might, in fact, be seen as a legitimization of it (Larkin 2014, 144), or, as Larkin comments regarding some of the resistance against the art on the Wall, 'Artistic paintings of cracks, fissures, doors, and windows that offer glimpses into alternative worlds (real or imaginary) cannot subvert the wall's concrete reality'(143).

Drawing on this critique, the whitewashing of 'Through the spectrum' can be interpreted as part of an ongoing conflict around how the Wall should be used, if it is to be perceived and treated as an open, global canvas or not, and what is defined as resistance against the occupation and what is not. The Wall has become a highly contested space among Palestinians themselves, around and on which the politics of (in)visibility are played out: what and who has the right to be seen and what and who should be concealed. Part of this struggle is to cover and erase graffiti or paintings that are considered offensive or not to have been painted in the right place or at the right time, as illustrated by this remark from a Palestinian youth:

> Someone bricked up the window Banksy painted on the wall. Maybe they didn't like his work, or the idea of a beautiful landscape. For me, the issue is not about rejecting the view but whether it's the right time to imagine it (Larkin 2014, 144).

The whitewashing event could be seen as part of practices of resistance against the further colonization of Palestinian physical and discursive space, with Jarrar's mural of the rainbow flag perceived as another one of the messages drawing on transnational discourses, addressing an international community, hereby diminishing the Palestinian experience of, and struggle against, the occupation. As a matter of fact, the erasure of the mural had been proceeded by a rumor that Jarrar had painted over a mural of Arafat, something that caused anger among some Palestinians (and turned out to be untrue). Thus, the 'inappropriate place' mentioned by Arouri in the citation above could refer to the painting of the mural on the Wall altogether, but also to the precise section where it was painted.

Yet, the act of erasing the mark of the colors of the rainbow flag that the mural had made on the Wall was also a mobilization of the Wall and the mural to keep apart the issues of race and sexuality, and

contributed to creating boundaries and divisions between the movement for national independence and the LGTBIQ movement. It could further contribute to rendering the Palestinian queer invisible. This would, in effect, reinforce the structural violence of the Wall and the visual regime of Israel. Or are there alternative interpretations? I will return to this question. In any case, the assemblage of the Apartheid Wall as gathering both the painting of the mural and the whitewashing as events being connected, undoubtedly produces both resistance and power.

In this final section, I would like to point out some limitations with, as well as possibilities for, visibility as a resistance practice, both in relation to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and to LGBTIQ issues.

Israeli Politics of Pinkwashing and the Limits and Challenges of Visibility as Resistance

The day after the whitewashing of the mural, a central news piece on it was published by the *Associated Press*, a piece that later circulated in various publications and media, such as The Guardian and the Israeli paper *Haaretz* (Associated Press 2015a; Daraghmeh and Deitch 2015). The voices of several Palestinians who were condemning the mural and who had been part of the whitewashing of it are presented: 'Muhammad, who only gave his first name for fear of repercussions, said he helped whitewash the flag because "we cannot promote gay rights"' (Associated Press 2015a; Associated Press 2015b). The text continues:

> Gay Palestinians tend to be secretive about their social lives and some have crossed into Israel to live safely. (…) Israel, meanwhile, has emerged as one of the world's most gay-friendly travel destinations, in sharp contrast to the rest of the Middle East where gay people are often persecuted and even killed (…). (Associated Press 2015a; Associated Press 2015b).

Further, Jarrar was cited in *Haaretz* as stating that the whitewashing 'reflects the absence of tolerance, [sic] and freedoms in the Palestinian society' (Daraghmeh and Deitch 2015).

Several of the international and Israeli media outlets that reported on the mural and the whitewashing of it created a picture of a homophobic

Palestine juxtaposed to a gay- friendly Israel. Key words used to describe lives for gays in Palestine included 'secretive,' while gay lives in Israel were linked to 'safety.' Thus, Jarrar's work was used to reiterate the dichotomization of the primitive/Arab/Middle East and the modern/Jew/West fundamental to the Israeli national narrative (Boger 2008), at the same time consequently reproducing the discursive silence regarding Palestine's rights to nationhood and national rights (McMahon 2010). The rainbow flag (as well as the suffering Palestinian queer) are in this context being mobilized to create divisions and boundaries between Palestine and Israel, and being incorporated into the assemblage of Israeli homonationalism (Carson 2013; Puar 2015).

Following the media reports on both the painting and the whitewashing of the mural, Jarrar himself wrote in *The Electric Intifada* (Jarrar 2015) that his intentions were 'hijacked and manipulated' by the international press and that his work had been used in the Israeli pinkwashing. As a result, he felt the need to explain his work 'in his own words,' emphasizing the rainbow flag as a symbol of freedom, linking it to the Palestinian struggle for national independence. In a later interview, Jarrar more explicitly linked the struggle for gay rights and the struggle against the occupation and defined the U.S. refusal to 'do justice to the Palestinian cause' at the same time that they 'make a decision allowing gay marriage' as a 'double standard on rights and freedoms' (Al-Ghoul 2015).

As noted by Laskar, Johansson and Mulinari (2016), when Jarrar explicitly explains that his intention is to expand the rainbow flag to include other freedoms and rights than that of sexuality, he is condemned and even accused of using the flag to spread hatred and anti-Semitism. In this context, these accusations are to be seen as a tool in the dominant discourses on Israeli and Palestinian conflict to silence opposition and delegitimize criticism of Israel (Hallward 2013), and also as part of the strategy of pinkwashing.

The way the mural 'Through the Spectrum' was read and the rainbow flag mobilized by the Israeli media also reiterates the narrative of the Palestinian queer victimized by Palestinian homophobic culture, serving as an illustration of how queer Palestinians are not recognized by Israel in any other sense than as suffering victims (Ritchie 2014). In this way, the occupation and the struggle for national independence are

concealed, and what could be seen as a queered version of the principle of witnessing (Hochberg 2015) is played out.

Earlier it was pointed out how the Palestinian, self-identified gay man Ahmad interprets the visibility of the rainbow imagery on the Wall in terms of 'coming out' in contrast to the invisibility in the 'closet.' Ritchie (2011, 42), however, rejects what he calls 'the normalizing project of visibility' and argues that, 'The politics of recognition and visibility that dominate Israeli (and Western) queer activism privilege a particular vision of the state (as the ultimate source of queer liberation).' The Israeli state, on the other hand, is a violent state through which necropolitics conditions the lives and deaths of queer Palestinians. Thus, Ritchie (2011; 2014) posits that, for Palestinian queer activists, the metaphor of 'the checkpoint' is more productive to use than 'the closet'. By focusing on the checkpoint, the racist violence of the Israeli state is highlighted, rather than a presumed intolerant Palestinian 'culture.' The checkpoints are then seen as 'expressions of sovereign power' and create a queer Palestinian 'suffering' that, according to differs radically from Western and Israeli narratives. The metaphor of the checkpoint, by highlighting rather than evading the violence of the state, more effectively captures the particulars of this 'suffering'.

In the same way that the literal checkpoint system regulates the movement of Palestinian bodies in Israel-Palestine, queer Israeli space is organized around a set of literal and figurative checkpoints that regulate the movement of queer Palestinians (Ritchie 2011; 2014). Even if Palestinian queers try to take parts of queer spaces in 'gay-friendly' Israel, the entrances of bars and clubs function as yet another type of 'checkpoint,' in which Palestinianness is a cause for being denied entry.

Similar to Ritchie, Wagner (2013) argues that LGBTIQ visibility and the politics of occupation are inseparable, and relates visibility to mobility by speaking of an 'Israeli visibility-mobility regime.' He explores the opportunities and limitations of various forms of resistance in the Israeli/Palestinian queer and national contexts and focuses on which forms of visibility can be asserted while moving about and which can be not. For example, the World Pride events that were planned to take place in Jerusalem in 2005 were postponed to 2006 due to Israel's so-called 'disengagement' from Gaza. Since an Israeli Air Force attack on Gaza

that killed 19 Palestinians and created a 'national security alert' in fear of Palestinian retaliation, the organizers had to replace the local Pride parade in Jerusalem 2006 with a heavily guarded stationary event in a confined stadium.

While Jarrar's intention was to mobilize the rainbow flag painted on the Apartheid Wall to 'remind the world' of the oppressed Palestinian people, the mural could 'remind the world' of how the occupation has an impact on Palestinian queers as well. The Apartheid Wall embodies not only a general structural violence against the Palestinians but also the specific visibility-mobility regime Wagner (2013) speaks of, a regime that affects queer Palestinians. The obstruction of free movement limits the possibilities for Palestinian queers to participate in various social contexts and hinders them from becoming visible and recognized in certain ways, for example, as racialized Palestinian queers struggling for both LGBTIQ rights and national independence. The mural and some of the events and debates in relation to it could be considered a contribution to 'the decolonization of the Palestinian queer,' an aim that has been articulated by the Palestinian organization AlQaws for Sexual & Gender Diversity in Palestinian Society (Alsaafin 2013).

Conclusions

This article has used the case of the mural 'Through the Spectrum' to move away from the sole focus on symbolic and discursive aspects of resistance to explore it in combination with materiality. I have engaged with the materiality of resistance through the Apartheid Wall and the event of the painting and whitewashing of the mural. The mural has been explored as an element gathered into and made part of the Apartheid Wall as assemblage (Farinacci 2017), as well as queer assemblages (Puar 2007). Throughout the text, I have tried to 'unpack' and explore the different elements of the assemblages: the Wall, the mural, the rainbow flag, and how the different elements support and act together in forming resistance (Von Bush 2017, 76).

The text has particularly focused on the politics of (in)visibility and the production of visibility as a practice of resistance. It has demonstrated how visibility, as a form of resistance practiced against the principle of concealment (as part of the visual regime of Israel), and the strategy

of visibility practiced by the globalized LGBTIQ community, become intertwined.

While acknowledging the Apartheid Wall as being at the heart of Israeli spatial domination and the everyday reality of occupation, it has also been highlighted as a space created through and for Palestinian resistance. Its height, width and surface serve well as a medium for communication and, thus, enhance and strengthen visibility as a strategy of resistance. However, the resistance is not only supported by the materiality as with any other wall but, since it embodies the violence of the occupation, is shaped and oriented in a particular way. To draw on Butler (2015), the fact that Palestinian bodies come together at the Wall and perform concerted actions using the actual physical barrier that confines and imprisons them in itself signifies persistence and resistance.

It has further been argued that the mural, through operating in conjunction not only with human actors but also with various objects within the assemblages, makes possible and contributes to shaping certain types and strategies of resistance. The materiality of the Wall and the particular shape this materiality takes in certain territories and in certain segments of the Wall create both possibilities and limitations. That Jarrar painted his mural on a segment of the Wall close to the Qalandiya checkpoint has particular significance.

In addition, 'Through the Spectrum,' as a practice of painting graffiti and art on the Wall, might be understood as part of the specific Palestinian non-violent resistance of sumūd, of steadfastness. The very practice that Palestinian bodies in alignment with material means makes a mark on the Apartheid Wall and claims it as a space, is yet another way to materialize the politics of 'remaining on the land' and 'existence is resistance'.

Departing from Ritchie's critique of the LGBTIQ politics of visibility as 'normalizing', this text argues that the mural of the rainbow flag, as painted on the Wall and associated with national independence, creates possibilities to make visible the particular violence against queer Palestinians carried out by the Israeli State. In this way, it challenges not only the principle of concealment but also the principle of witnessing. Even though the mural was erased, the images of the mural had already

circulated on the internet, and, in the international media, the flag is still able to perform its symbolic function (Holert 2013). In fact, one could argue that the whitewashing of the mural and the absence of the rainbow imagery that it created have produced the kind of 'visible invisibility' that Hochberg (2015, 41) speaks of, 'a visibility that calls attention to itself as such.'

The mural in conjunction with the Wall displays how things can, in fact, be said to shape social interaction, to connect people as well as connecting people and things (Bennett 2010; Hodder 2014). Both the mural – the combination of colors and its significance as well as its materiality – and the Wall, its size and how it is placed, are performative; they do something in relation to the locals/Palestinians, as well as others. They transform the Wall as a space, at the same time as they transform the relations between the actors involving themselves in the events. They bind some groups together and divide others, for example as shown in the different positions taken within the Palestinian community. The Apartheid Wall as an assemblage, in concert with the mural, in fact, creates a territory in which the issues of Palestinian nationhood and sexual rights become visible as intertwined, contesting both Israeli politics of occupation as well as some forces within the Palestinian community.

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