Identity through Imagery: The Palestinian Case

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Identity through Imagery: The Palestinian Case

Rebecka Naim Farraj

Abstract

In 1948, Palestinians were dispersed after Al-Nakba in different regions around the world. Their status as being refugees, diasporas, or even citizens has become dependent to the country they reached, the hostland, after their exile. However, Palestinians have created transnational networks, disregarding the fact that their homeland was lost. These networks have helped in maintaining their collective identity. Based on the relation between the semiotics, constructivism, and transnationalism, this paper problematizes the status of Palestinians. It shows how images, more specifically posters, have played an important role in reflecting the identity of Palestinians. As for the framework of the comparative study, the countries to be taken into account are: Palestine, Lebanon, and the United States.

Keywords: Palestinian Identity, Constructivism, Semiotics, Diaspora, Transnationalism, Poster.
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Chapter One

Introduction

We are the leaves of tree
The words of a shattered time
We are the moon light sonata
We are the other river bank that lies between the voice and the stone
We are what we produced in the land that was ours
We are what’s left of us in exile
We are the plants of broken vase
We are what we are but who are we?
(Al-Udhari, 1986, p. 130)

“Who are we?”… “Who are they”… “What makes who we are?” These are questions that are often asked by all humans since ancient times. In life, a person would start to discover who he/she is by discovering the environment around them. We identify our self by looking around and making linkages between “us” and “the other” as well as linking what is real and what is imagery. The concept of representation thus becomes an essential process by which culture is formed, identified, and exchanged. In the above poem, Mahmud Darwish1, like many others, tries to identify himself as well as all the other Palestinians in exile. He tries to describe who they really are by referring to images represented by words such as “leaves”, “tree”, “moon light”, “river bank”, “stone”, “land”, “plants”, “broken vase.” Thus, the representation of the concept of identity has crossed words of language to go back to its roots of visual perception and mental representation of a shared constructed culture. In his book, “Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices”, Stuart Hall explains that the system of representation provides meaning by linking things with our concepts of things around us or the

1 Mahmud Darwish is a well-known Palestinian poet and author.
other way around, which links the concept to signs represented by language (Hall, 1997, p. 19). Representation therefore links signs, concepts, and language together to form and make a meaning.

This paper underlines the relation of images and the study of signs with identity reflection and, more specifically, to that of the Palestinian identity. Scattered throughout different regions and areas, Palestinians have tried to maintain their identity, disregarding their experience of displacement. Under which conditions have images promoted cohesion and identity in Palestinian groups? How have images been used as an instrument for linking Palestinians in order to endorse and reflect identity integration in exile?

Trying to maintain and promote their identity, Palestinians have used different kinds of images portraying their integrity within their context of dispersal. Images then became a tool for identification and presence, linking the Palestinian groups dispersed worldwide with their homeland, as well as their host country. The contextual variation of images projects the variety of conditions Palestinians live in, outside of their homeland. Based on a constructivist framework of analysis as well on Julie Petite’s definition of Palestinian transnational status, the identity reflected in the dispersal areas have held a common integral ground.

I will start by stating the importance of multidisciplinary studies in general; to later on show that the relation between the visual sensations, used by the majority of the community, and the identity is of main importance. Throughout this study, one would have a clearer vision on how the perception of visuals may convey the process of identity formation and become an advocate among Palestinians in their world dispersal. Then, I will study the formation of the Palestinian identity based on
Alexander Wendt’s constructivist theory and I will question the status of Palestinians as being Diasporas based on Julie Petite. A detailed study about the Palestinian Imagery and a main focus on posters and their importance will follow. Based on the relation between transnational studies, semiotics and constructivism, I will use Alexander’s elements of collective identity and Safran’s elements in studying the Palestinian posters produced after the Second Intifada (post 2011) in Palestine, Lebanon, and the United States. This would show how reading images across generations has become a reflection of a collective identity. At the end of the paper, I will give my conclusions, as well as mention the limitations of this research.

1.1- Overview and Need for the Study

Different kinds of representations are used nowadays, as they were years ago, to create concepts of meaning and belonging. These representations vary from the verbal, which is mainly language to iconic, which is based on visual signs and images. A lot of focus was given to what is written and what is said, neglecting what is drawn and visualized. Although images have been crucial in identity formation and world concept, researchers and social scientists tend to focus more on speeches and actions rather than images. The concept of belonging and its representation has become more and more complex with the extensive displacement, which created transnational communities. Thus, different forms for the identity emerged, relating and creating a hybrid relationship between the homeland and the hostland.

Many artists have used images in promoting the Palestinian identity. The world of imagery varies from paintings, photographs, posters, information graphics, graffiti and others; all of which have been used as a tool to foster the Palestinian case. My

2 The selection of poster is from the Palestine Poster Project: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/
main focus will be on posters published after the Second Intifada, until today, and on how they have been used publically as an identity advocate among Palestinians in their world dispersal. The Second Intifada is one of the recent Palestinian uprisings that has fluctuated and revived their identity. After the failure of the Oslo Accord, it is in the year 2000 and with the beginning of the Second Intifada that the Palestinians came together to ask for their abounded rights and to refuse all the Israeli decisions. Thus this time frame included a new recent propaganda for the Palestinian identity and concern. The images and posters that were produced were not only related to some political factions but many of them were out of a personal initiative of different social groups: artists, students, colleges, NGOs… Moreover, choosing a recent time frame is more reliable to relate to. The choice of recent techniques of poster formation to convey a last longing cause makes the study more accurate and updated.

1.2- Importance of Interdisciplinary Study

In a world where everything has become interlinked, studies on a certain specific aspect have become. Trying to understand natural and social phenomena requires an examination from different perspectives. Many disciplines have been formed in order to explain and understand the formation of the world. The increased development of knowledge nowadays has created a more complex behavior, linking one discipline to another. Thus, in order to understand the world, different scientific disciplines have merged and integrated. This crossing of boundaries between schools of thought and theories is a reaction to the needs that have emerged in redefining specific problems and reaching an appropriate solution or understanding. For some disciplines, the interdisciplinary approach is said to, not only be preferred, but needed (Jones, 2009).
Looking at the same problem from different points of view creates a better understanding and proposes better findings. This will result in a more comprehensive explanatory analysis taking into account the transformational nature of the world from a discipline to another. It also widens the horizon in understanding the complexity of society’s formation, decreasing the possibility of having errors and biased solutions (Uiterkamp & Vlek, 2007).

According to Ewa Morawska (2003), the main aim of interdisciplinary study in transnational migration is in the ability of the subject to be translated and recognized in all disciplines, thus making it reliable and accurate as an enhanced work. In this paper, I will use a joint discipline between international relations and graphic design, more specifically between identity formation and posters. Thus, I will depict interdisciplinary disciplines between international affairs and graphic design within the global evolution. This is made to emphasize that the field of international relation theories is growing to include various interests and paradigms, methods, concepts and values of preferences.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

A lot of work and studies have tackled the issue of diasporas, transnationalism, identity formation, as well as that of the study of images; however rare the link between these disciplines is. The lack of links between these disciplines creates a gap in the study of identity formation within a transnational context through semiotics.

“Diaspora” is a term that have been overused and confused with other concepts as “transnationalism”, “refugee”, “exile” and others. Many scholars have tried to define this term either using the global mode of dispersion or based on specific constituents that shape diasporas while others mix terms and consider them as one. According to Brubaker, “rather than speak of ‘a diaspora’ or ‘the diaspora’ as an entity, a bounded group, an ethno demographic or ethno cultural fact, it may be more fruitful, and certainly more precise, to speak of diasporic stances, projects, claims, idioms, practices, and so on.” (Brubaker, 2005, p. 13)

Many authors have written about the tragic event that made the Palestinians move abroad thus replacing the Jewish diaspora by a new Palestinian diaspora (Sheffer, 2006). However many few have problametized the notion of Palestinians as being diasporas. In her article, “Problematizing A Palestinian Diaspora,” Julie Peteet questions the “diasporic” notion of Palestinians regarding demographics, space, and time as well as their juridical status as refugees. She concludes that “Palestinians are conceivably diasporic by some measures and not by others; some of them may be in diaspora moments or have diasporic dimensions” (Peteet, 2007, p. 643). Moreover, Sari Hanafi, in his article “Rethinking the Palestinians Abroad as a Diaspora: The
Relationships between the Diaspora and the Palestinian Territories”, problematizes the issue of Palestinians abroad from a migration studies perspective which examines the relation with the homeland. He argues that “Palestinians abroad do not constitute a real diaspora, but rather a partially diasporized people (Hanafi, 2003, p. 158). He differentiates between 3 types of people: “diasporized people, population in transit and assimilated population” and he finally comes up with a model that explains the diasporization of the Palestinians based on their “center of gravity” and the “crystallization” of their identity (Hanafi, 2003, p. 179). Diasporas and transnational communities has also affected identity formation in creating links between the homeland, hostland as well as the new hybrid complex society that links both lands. Moreover, the formation of identity has always been an intriguing framework of study. Different disciplines such as sociology, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, political science and even art, have focused on the study of identity formation. In his book, Imagined Communities, Benedict Anderson mentions the importance of institutional, political and territorial constitution of nations, as well as the culture, and traditions that form the identity. Social constructivism theories focus mainly on the interaction of the human being and the transmission of social meaning (Ruggie, 1998). They emphasize on the formation and transformation of the identity and interests. The normative and materialistic structure of identity in shaping political action becomes the base. Constructivists accentuate the role of non-state actors and international organizations in the creation of norms and how these actors affect the latter’s development and evolution (Kauppi and Viotti, 1998, p. 217). Thus, the social nature plays a major role in creating oneself that differs from the “other”. Many images try to fill in the right complete picture of the self. Some use the image of the “other” and the role of the society in shaping who we are (Goffman,
1986). Goffman for example, emphasizes on the fact that the representation of the self resembles a performance; he states, “When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the tasks that he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be.” (Goffman, 1969, p. 28)

On the other hand, many academics and especially those of visual theory have shown interest in studying different signs and images. In her research project, “Signs of Conflict”, Zeina Maasri focused on political posters during the Lebanese Civil War. She states, “Lebanon's Civil War … materialized in the production of an equally complex plethora of political posters, with diverse iconography and conflicting significations, as well as distinct aesthetic practices.”³ The main aim of her project is to reclaim and interrogate Lebanon’s war-loaded memories through posters as historical documents, cultural artifacts and a creative endeavor. This interdisciplinary link contributes in “the development of an understanding of graphic design as a cultural practice engaged in the circulation of meanings that shape our modern social and political imageries.”⁴

Another example of main interest in cultural graphic imagery and posters is “The Palestinian Poster Project Archives.”⁵ Dan Walsh collects Palestinian Posters and has more than 3,000 ones from different sources. In his studies and collections, he distinguishes Palestinian posters from all other art genres of the 20th century revolutions. Palestinian posters continue to evolve internationally, representing

³ For more information, you can visit http://www.signsofconflict.com/About
⁴ For more information, you can visit http://www.signsofconflict.com/About
⁵ For more information, you can visit http://www.palestineposterproject.org/
Palestine politically, ideologically and historically. His initial main objective out of his collection was “to promote a better understanding of other people on the part of Americans,” but it grew to encompass a major international collection on the same topic: “Palestine”. In his article, “Statehood in Mind”, Dan Walsh states that “Free-form posters are a prime means of promoting the Palestinian cause. Their tenor, quality, and authorship may surprise you.” (Walsh, 2001, p. 71)

Material objects also carried an impact on the creation and representation of the identity. Zeynep Turan (2010) stresses in his studies on the impact of material objects in holding an identity. More specifically, he studied the case of Palestinians who lost their actual homeland and had to represent their identity through objects. These objects then became symbols of a collective identity which creates a sheltering environment with a social value. It is true that many would argue that the use of material culture becomes a mode of political consumption and propaganda to enforce political powers (Linstroth, 2002), but this doesn't undervalue the identity they carry.
Chapter Three

Methodology

Based on a comparative study approach, the role of posters is examined in the process of reflecting Palestinian identity in Palestine, Lebanon and the USA. The choice of these countries is made in order to emphasize the role between the homeland Palestine, the regional border through the selection of Lebanon and the international border represented by the United States. It is true that Palestine is not a diasporic location; however Palestinians living there have limited access to resources, rights, and national integration which defines them as living in a “limited” national homeland. Thus, the posters produced in Palestine will be examined as a control group yet having their own contextual specifications. Lebanon, on the other hand, has provided Palestinians a special undefined status that falls between diasporas and refugees. Sharing many similar features of the homeland, Lebanon has created a familiar shelter for Palestinians to relate and adapt easily to. As for the United States, a broader global context is being applied on Palestinians especially that they are considered one of the many minorities in the hostland. The United States is considered as a sample of the West. It is true that Palestinians are actively present in many other Western countries; however the choice of this state is merely based on its complexity and hybrid mix of many minority groups.

Within this framework of study many limitations should be taken into consideration. First, there is so little literature about the relation between the three theories: constructivism, transnationalism and semiotics. There is a lack in the multidisciplinary study between international affairs and art. Thus, this paper had to
be more based on interviews and personal analysis which makes it to some extent subjective. The posters were selected from the Palestinian Poster Archive which might not include the whole framework of posters used. Moreover, the study was only limited to illustrated posters in Palestine, Lebanon and the U.S. which neglects the effect of other kinds of posters and imagery as well as in other countries. The study also doesn’t go into depth about the political and historical framework but rather gives a general overview of the contextual framework the posters were used in and the reflection they provide.
Chapter Four

Palestinian Identity

The construction of the identity, whether it is an individual or a group identity, is based on the individual and social psychology. According to Alexander Wendt, social knowledge, material resources and practices which all have an inter-subject quality, form the structure of the society. The knowledge gives meaning to all material resources which are depicted through the process of practices. Thus, according to Wendt, collective meanings constitute the structure that organizes our actions (Kauppi and Viotti, 1998).

This is why I have decided to apply Wendt’s constructivism theory to the Palestinian case, taking the posters as the material resource and how it is used in different transnational contexts. These theories agree that the world of politics is socially constructed which implies that “the fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material, and that these structures shape actors’ identities and interests, rather than just their behavior.”(Wendt, 1995, p. 71)

4.1 – Identity formation and Transnationalism

Transnational networks and communities within globalization have formed a hybrid culture that is a mix of different identities.

When talking about transnationalism, it is: “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin
and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders” (Basch et al., 1994, p. 7).

This process has challenged the traditional concepts of identity formation. With globalization, states were mixed and have crossed boundaries through transnational actors (Beck, 1999, p. 11). Trying to relate to both, the country of the origin and the country of exile, refugees or even diasporas have created a new social organization that is characterized by its complexity and multiplicity. These new social organizations have created their own space in order to sustain social networks and relations (Beck, 1999; Faist, 2000).

According to Alexander Wendt, in his book Social theory of international politics, identities and interests are considered as an outcome of interaction. They are dependent variables that create an ongoing interaction between the “Self” and the “Other” in order to sustain an identity based on social facts. Wendt states: “it is important to show how social facts are constituted by shared ideas because this may reveal new possibilities for change, but I would also emphasize that these facts might not be malleable in some historical circumstances.” (Wendt, 2000, p. 314)

Interaction plays a huge role in changing the Self thus creating a social process that affects identities’ creation and reproduction. This would result into a structural change that includes collective identity formation which will be detailed in the next section.

The evolution of identity is affected by natural and cultural selection. Wendt states that “Natural selection occurs when organisms that are relatively poorly adapted to the competition for scarce resources in an environment fail to reproduce and are replaced by the better adapted.” (Wendt, 2000, p. 321) On the other hand, cultural
selection is "the transmission of the determinants of behavior from individual to individual, and thus from generation to generation, by social learning, imitation or some other similar process." (Boyd and Richerson, 1980, p. 102)

Imitation is based on the success of a certain population that pushes the other to do the same. This creates what is called a “homogeneous population.” Unlike imitation, social learning emphasizes the fact that identities are learned and then reinforced by the Other. This creates the ability to distinguish between the self and the other and thus creating a variance in cultural forms with some similarities.

4.2 – Collective Identity

People tend to find resemblance and to accumulate into what is called a group because of the natural tendency of the human being “socialization” with multiple actors that share the same identity form that is collective identity. According to constructivists, actors work on identifying a culture and work on preserving it by defending it against any threat.

Collective identity has many limits, yet it creates a social life which remains so crucial in the life of a human being. According to the constructivist theory and more specifically to Wendt, whenever a collective identity is formed it should be formed by the “enabling or permissive cause” which is the element of self-restraint and at least one of the “active or efficient causes”: interdependence, common fate, and homogeneity. These are the four master variables of defining a collective identity.

Self-restraint is considered as a basic element of collective identity because it manages and internalizes the pluralistic community. This creates a self-binding system that controls the whole group. A collective identity needs interdependence
where the actors affect each other such as a “domino effect”. This includes a cooperative behavior and the creation of the “we” image with bonding elements when the outcome of an interaction depends on the choices of others. Moreover, they share a common fate which means that “their individual survival, fitness, or welfare depends on what happens to the group as a whole.” (Sterelny, 1995, p. 171) Last but not least, they should also have a sort of homogeneity between each other. They carry a corporate identity which helps them see each other as themselves forming a group.

Palestinians share a collective identity where they strive, disregarding the fact that they are dispersed, to overcome the fear of being engulfed by the other. They fight within their trivial resources the capacity to refuse the presence of Israel and to be under their self-control even if it was based sometimes on political factions. It is true that Palestinians have a different experience based on the territory they live in, but they share the common fate of Al-Nakba that affected them altogether. Their actions are considered interdependent and they still all share a common homogeneity: the right of return.

4.3 – Palestinians: A Diaspora?

When talking about Palestinians, one can directly refer to the year 1948. Palestinians refer to this year as Al-Nakba when the peak of the continuous Palestinian-Israel conflict leads to the exclusion of Palestinians from their territory. Despite the support that the Palestinians are getting from some of the Arab nations, the UNRWA, and other institutions, they are still facing their cause and expulsion, and destruction of their identity.

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United Nation Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees

6 United Nation Relief and Wok Agency for Palestine Refugees
Palestinians have struggled and fought to keep their identity and traditions through history. In the 1950s, many movements have emerged and started working on portraying the Palestinian identity and spreading it worldwide (Khalidi, 1997, p. 180). These movements were mainly of poor and middle class university students which took their Palestinian cause as a priority in their lives and thought it was crucial to retain it (Khalidi, 1997, p. 182).

Then, one would ask how can we define the Palestinians especially after Al-Ghurba and Al-Nakba? Why are they considered diasporas, refugees, or minorities? And why are they not? The status of Palestinians relative to their host country is problematized. Being diasporas, refugees, or transnational minorities is related to their relative host country according to their way of assimilation, occupation on the land, legal status, and types of network formed.

4.3.1 Defining: Diasporas, Refugees, Transnational Migrants.

Human mobility has been present through history; however, it has immensely increased with industrialization and globalization. The term diaspora, with its Greek origin that means dispersion, became popular at the end of the Cold War. The term has been overused and confused with other concepts such as “transnationalism”, “refugee”, “exile” and others. It has been very difficult to agree on its specific definition. Many scholars have tried to define this term either by using the global mode of dispersion or by being based on specific constituents that shape diasporas while others mix terms and consider them as one. Throughout this section I will try to show the limitation of some definitions and their relation to other concepts. I will first define the term diaspora in relation to transnational migrants. Then, I will relate diasporas to refugees showing their similarities and differences.
4.3.1.1 Diasporas and Transnational Migrants.

According to Connor, the term diaspora is too wide a term in order to encompass “that segment of a people living outside their homeland” (Connor, 1986, p. 16). With this definition, can we consider any person outside of his or her home country is part of a diaspora? According to Anderson (1998), diasporas are emigrant groups that are considered “long-distance nationalists”. These groups are involved in their homeland politics. Sheffer (1986) develops Anderson’s definition to encompass all migrants that have strong ties with their homeland. He differentiates between different kinds of diasporas ‘core’, ‘marginal’, and ‘dormant’ according to their kind of involvement. Then one would question, basing ourselves on such definition, why would one consider “dormant diasporas” as diasporas? How one would maintain this sentimental attachment?

Clifford defines diaspora as a presupposing separation, exile, apartness, and a cultural distinctiveness. He stresses on the idea of the centrality of a diaspora where “transnational connections linking diasporas need to be articulated primarily through a real/ symbolic homeland” (Clifford, 1994, p. 304). What happens then to the parallel relation to the host country and home country? What if there is no central homeland just like in the case of the Palestinians nowadays?

William Safran (1991) defines diasporas in a triadic relationship between the host land, the homeland and the international community. He distinguishes diasporas from migrant communities through six criteria which include: dispersion, maintenance of a collective memory of the homeland, the myth of return, alienation in the host society, the duty of restoring the homeland and an ethno-communal
consciousness that shape their identity. What happens if one of these criteria is not present? Do we neglect the fact that a diaspora is present?

In his studies on diaspora, Tololyan doesn't really make a distinction between them and transnational communities. He relates them to the formation of nations with the plural formation of societies. Thus he emphasizes the role of the media, political activists and elites and transnational networks in the diaspora formation (Hanafi, 2003). With Rogers Brubaker (2005), the use of the term diaspora has more and more developed and expanded. He suggests that diaspora should not be looked at as a group of individuals or an identity with cultural and demographic factors, but rather as a stance or a claim. He thinks that the criteria that are agreed upon scholars in defining diaspora are: dispersion, homeland orientation, and boundary-maintenance. However, he adds and confirms that the diasporas become the project themselves.

Relating these definitions to the Palestinians case study, one would find that Brubaker’s definition clearly defines what the Palestinians might be like abroad: they are the project. They hold their cause trying to reach their goal, the right of return. There are also some aspects of the other definitions of diasporas that apply to them. Palestinians confirm Safran’s traumatic nature of the diaspora dispersal (1991) and apply it to Tololyan’s emphasis on the role of the media as well as the political activists such as the Palestinian Liberation Organizations in their mutual connection. However, is this enough to consider them diasporas abroad? What about their definition as being refugees? When are they considered diasporas and when are they refugees? Why do they differ from one country to the other?

4.3.1.2 Diasporas and Refugees

The terms diasporas and refugees are highly integrated together in literature. In his
book, *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities*, Nicholas Van Hear (1998) studied the relation between migrant communities and their transformation into diasporas through different social forms. In his article, *The Rise of Refugee Diasporas*, Van Hear stated that the development of diasporas is related to the level of support provided by refugees which is affected by the social formation. He states that “if exile persists, and people consolidate themselves in their territories of refuge, complex transnational relations develop among the various parts of the refugee diaspora—that is, among those in the home country, those in neighboring territories (the near diaspora), and those further a field (the wider diaspora).” (Van Hear, 2009, p. 181)

One should differentiate between “voluntary” and “forced migration.” The former is often referred as migrants; whereas the latter is referred as refugees. Deterritorialization is common between both; however refugees do not settle down in a fixed setting because they cling to their homeland. Kunz argues that “it is the reluctance to uproot oneself, and the absence of positive original motivations to settle elsewhere, which characterizes all refugee decisions and distinguishes the refugee from the voluntary migrants.” (Kunz, 1973, p. 130)

According to the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951, a refugee is defined as a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.” (UNHCR, 2012) Thus, refugees share the notion of fear due to different factors. The information environment affects the decision of staying or going, especially that life is so important to human beings. People tend to live in cultural
communities to form their identity and feel the “freedom.” Thus, the behavior of the governments and its interaction with the refugees and vice versa are essential in migration flows and in forming their relationships (Moore and Shellman, 2004, p. 742). This also emphasizes the relevance between migrant communities, refugees, and diasporas in forming transnational networks which affect both the host and homeland. However, one should note that the contribution of refugees in the host land and homeland is considered to be less than that of the diaspora because of their interest in their own survival first (Van Hear, 2009, p. 184). Refugees and diasporas are also similar in their interest to a corresponding political project which links their past and their future into defining their situation (Wahlbeck, 1998, p. 10). Moreover, refugees have a legal representation in the international system through international law and domestic law. This is where a distinction should be made between 
_de fact refugees_ and _de jure refugees_. The former are refugees that are highly recognized by the social aspect of a nation however they are not registered legally; whereas the latter refers to refugees that are registered and recognized by law. It is through the UN and other international organizations with the collaboration of nongovernmental organizations that refugees are recognized. This recognition can vary from being merely local, to regional, and international.

Refugees are the people themselves that suffered from forced migration carrying the notion of the fear of persecution. They are related to the condition of their dispersal, thus, they are called refugees. They carry, with diasporas, the notion of displacement and are affected by the networks formed in the homeland and host country. In addition, refugees have a legal definition by the international law and organizations which usually support their cause and gives them worldwide recognition.
4.3.2 Palestinians Abroad

The dispersal of the Palestinians was hugely marked since the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the 1967 war. These wars and the ongoing struggle with the Jewish Israeli community forced the Palestinians to experience exile and live mainly in regional countries as well as host countries around the world. War was the major reason for the Palestinian’s dispersal, but it was not the only reason. Searching for job opportunities, higher levels of education and religious persecutions have also lead the Palestinians to leave their country. The number of Palestinians became numerous and their goal of achieving the right of return to their homeland is internationally recognized. Many authors have written about the tragic event that made the Palestinians move abroad thus replacing the Jewish diaspora by a new Palestenian diaspora (Sheffer, 2006). However many few have prolametized the notion of Palestinians as being diasporas because of the difficulty in defining the status in the host country. In her article, “Problematizing A Palestinian Diaspora,” Julie Peteet questions the “diasporic” notion of Palestinians regarding demographics, space, and time as well as their juridical status as refugees. She concludes that “Palestinians are conceivably diasporic by some measures and not by others; some of them may be in diaspora moments or have diasporic dimensions.” (Peteet, 2007, p. 643) Moreover, Sari Hanafi, in his article “Rethinking the Palestinians Abroad as a Diaspora: The Relationships between the Diaspora and the Palestinian Territories,” problematizes the issue of Palestinians abroad from a migration studies perspective which examines the relation with the homeland. He argues that Palestinians abroad do not constitute a real diaspora, but rather a partially diasporized people (Hanafi, 2001, p. 158). He differentiates between 3 types of people: “diasporized people, population in transit and assimilated population” and he finally comes up with a model that explains the
diasporization of the Palestinians based on their “center of gravity” and the “crystallization” of their identity (Hanafi, 2003, p. 179). Iliya Harik in her article, *The Palestinians in the Diaspora*, states that Palestinians do not fit in Sheffer’s definition of diasporas. She argues that Palestinians are war refugees that in some cases consist of a majority of the population (Jordan case) and share cultural ties; thus, for her, Palestinians are “non-state actors” aiming to become a nation state.\(^7\) (Harik, 1986, p. 316) Other authors such as Mohammed Bamyeh, considers that Palestinians are diasporas that are represented as refugees: “Today the majority of the Palestinians still live in the Diaspora, and a majority of the Diaspora population are registered as refugees” (Bamyeh, 2007, p. 90)

On one hand, it is true that Palestinians have dispersed abroad, and have some common ideologies and experience. For it is agreed through literature that Palestinians’ had to accept their exile condition suffering from alienation and massacres. They hold on to their lost identity hoping for a better future and basing themselves on recalling the memories of their country. This nostalgia to their homeland holds Palestinians together aiming to sacrifice for the sake of returning to their homeland.\(^8\) (Gohar, 2002) On the other hand, their status differs from one region to another. Most of the Palestinians in the Middle East region share a different experience than those that crossed the seas to the U.S. and Europe. In the following section, I will examine the effect of the host land in creating the status of Palestinians. I will compare the Palestinians’ status in the Middle East to those in Europe and the US according to their way of assimilation, occupation on the land,

\(^7\) Sheffer’s definition that Iliya is defending is “a minority ethnic group of migrant origin in a host country, which maintains sentimental or material links with its land of origin”

\(^8\) All of these ideas are expressed in literature especially in poetry.
legal status, and types of networks formed. This shows the effect of the host state in redefining the Palestinian “project” abroad.

4.3.2.1 In the Middle East

After the tragic event of Al-Ghurba and Al-Nakba large numbers of Palestinians fled to neighboring Arab countries seeking protection. The reaction of those countries towards the acceptance of the Palestinians differed. Most of the Palestinians went to Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. In their exiles in these countries, Palestinians were granted some rights accordingly, but were at the same time discriminated against as being “the other.” It is true that the Palestinians in the Arab World share a similar culture with the host countries; however many problems have been established especially in the economic arena where they try through the limitations of their way of living to survive. (Hanafi, 2003, p. 163)

Regarding their way of assimilation, the Palestinian case differs within the different countries in the Middle East. In Jordan, some Palestinians have become citizens with Jordanian nationality while others are registered as refugees by UNRWA⁹ and live in camps¹⁰ just like the case of Lebanon, and Syria. One would also note that many Palestinians live in these areas but are not legally registered. In Egypt, the Palestinians experienced racism and marginalization which pushed them to become assimilated to assure their survival. (Hanafi, 2001)

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⁹ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine
¹⁰ A camp, according to UNRWA’s working definition, is a plot of land placed at the disposal of UNRWA by the host government to accommodate Palestine refugees and to set up facilities to cater to their needs. Areas not designated as such are not considered camps. However, UNRWA also maintains schools, health centers and distribution centers in areas outside camps where Palestine refugees are concentrated, such as Yarmouk near Damascus, in Syria.
According to Peteet, Palestinians in these regions (Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon) are called to be proximate exile rather than diasporic because of their close cultural resemblance, history, language, and religion with the Arabic community as well as the short spatial distance. She clearly states: “In host Arab states, they constitute a national, noncitizen group (except in Jordan) rather than an ethnic or religious minority. Instead of local integration, in Lebanon, for example, the Palestinians became the Other, exceedingly vulnerable to host populace and government hostility. Despite over fifty years of exile in Lebanon, the host state refuses refugee integration as citizens or residents with civil and political rights, and there remains an unsettling temporariness to their presence, hardly the stuff of diaspora. Paradoxically, Palestinians can be situated simultaneously as the Other (no national) and, due to linguistic and cultural similarities, not the Other.”(Peteet, 2007, p. 632)

Regarding their occupation in the host land, the camps are structured in a way to project the areas in the occupied Palestine. Each camp has names of streets and corners that create a connection between the past in the occupied homeland and the present in the host land. These areas create a physical and symbolic memory of the homeland. Moreover, Palestinians are not granted the right to work. For example Lebanon has strict policies regarding their social, economic, and civil rights. (Hanafi and Åge, 2008). The Lebanese refuse to integrate the Palestinians in the labor market arguing that they are residents and should not be integrated in the society. In addition, the demographic distribution in Lebanon plays a major role in affecting the integration of Palestinians which was used as a tool for politicians and their political goals (Knusden, 2003, p. 7). These restrictions led the Palestinians to restrict their progression to UNRWA’s provided facilities in education, health care, and employment. They ended up hence working in restricting and uninventive jobs
encouraging illegal employment and discriminatory practices.

In Jordan, Palestinians, on the contrary, have played a major role in reviving the economy through dominating the private economic sector. This created a tension in the Palestinian – Jordanian rift (Yitzhak, 2004).

Regarding their legal status, Palestinians in Jordan have become citizens whereas those in Syria, they were forced to assimilate. Hanafi defines the Palestinians in Syria “not-yet-diaspora” because they are well integrated in the Syrian society, maintaining their refugee status (Hanafi, 2003, p. 169). In Lebanon, the case is much more complex. There is no clear, legal definition that Palestinians are refugees; however they are recognized as *de facto refugees*. Based on the principle of reciprocity, the Lebanese treat the foreigners in Lebanon as the Lebanese are treated in their countries. In the case of Palestinians, there is no state; thus their rights are restricted (Hanafi and Áge, 2008). Thus the Lebanese government is not responsible for the Palestinians, but this responsibility is held to the UNRWA. These policies in Lebanon are made to keep the Palestinians inside the camps and keep them away from integration because of some foreign policy objectives (Knudsen, 2003, p. 3). As for the right of return, numerous agreements confirmed this right and have put the responsibility on Israel for the Palestinians’ current status requiring them legally to return to their homeland (Akram, 2002, p. 46). Thus one would say that Palestinians are not legally accepted. Hanafi clearly states: “The issues are, of course, filled with contradictions and dilemmas. If the Palestinians maintain a strong relationship with their homeland because of the ongoing Israeli colonial practices, it is also because their legal acceptance was not fulfilled in the majority of Arab countries that have been their ‘hosts’ (absence of civil rights in many of these countries and fragility of their refugee status there).” (Hanafi, 2003, p. 167)
Regarding the types of networks formed in the Middle East, Palestinians are mainly linked through different national and nationalistic-religious networks. These networks were developed through time with the resistance movements of Fatah, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP). They valued their autonomy and made ties with international groups in support of their cause. However, the main network between all of these groups was the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) that was established in 1964 and that was later recognized as the representative of the Palestinian people (Harik, 1986, p. 320). The PLO served for reestablishing a nationalist identity.

One would distinguish that the Palestinians’ status in the Middle East varies from country to country. Hanafi’s definition of Palestinians as being “partially diasporized” fits the Syrian case; however in Jordan, Palestinians have become citizens. In the case of Lebanon, there is a huge dilemma in considering them as refugees because the country itself doesn't recognize them as that. They can’t be considered as a pure diaspora community because of their relation to the UNRWA as well as their separation from the local community. On the other hand, going back to Brubacker’s definition of diasporas as a notion or a claim, one would consider Palestinians in Lebanon as being the claim to return; however this brings us back to the same dilemma that refugees also are a claim.

4.3.2.2 In U.S. and Europe

The Palestinians in the West share a totally different experience than those in the Arab world. As a primary comparison and analysis, the U.S. and Europe carry a totally different culture from that of the Arab world. The notion of the huge distance
plays a major role in this case. Palestinians in the West usually carry the Arab image abroad rather than their specific national identity. They have a difficulty in keeping their Arab identity and in changing the terrorist’s image that was projected to all Arabs especially after 9-11. However, just like in the Middle Eastern countries, the status of the Palestinians in the West also varies from one country to the other. Palestinians started immigrating to the West before the 1948 war thus escaping from the Ottoman’s Empire persecution and mainly seeking a better educational and economic level.

Regarding their assimilation, Palestinians in general are more integrated in their host country. For example, in France they are “more institutional and conform to the overall French system of Jacobean centralism. As shown in earlier studies, Palestinians, in common with other migrant communities, are also pressured into adopting a strategy of assimilation.” (Hanafi, 2001, p. 162) On the other hand, in the U.S., Palestinians find it much harder to assimilate because of the close ties between the Americans and Israel. The Jewish lobby’s impact in the U.S. becomes not a limitation for greater assimilation but also a door for discrimination.

Regarding their occupation on the land, the case differs according to the policies of the host country. In general, most European countries and the U.S. consider Palestinians as Arabs or Middle Eastern (Shiblak, 2005). In some cases such as in Spain, Palestinians throughout time have developed common features to integrate into the society. They became permanent residents seeking sociopolitical integration. Their time of residency in Spain trespassed that in Palestine or any other Arab country which reshaped their behavioral norms. Finally, they have established a clear “demarcation between State and civil society in the diaspora.” (Tarbush, 2005)
Regarding their legal status, international law provides protection to the Palestinians abroad being stateless citizens (Shiblak, 2005). Most countries signed the 1951 Refugee Convention or/and 1967 Refugee protocol; however they interpret them differently (Akram, 2002, p. 44). Some nations provided special law and policies for Palestinians. For example, Britain gave the opportunity until early 1960s to replace the Palestinian passport with a British passport (Shiblak, 2005).

As for the types of network formed in the west, there is a variance of types of networks that were formed in order to create linkage with a far “unreal” Palestinian state. Many supra-national networks that are associated with the PLO connect the Palestinians in the West together. These networks vary from being purely familial to religious, national networks (Hanafi, 2003, p. 165). The Palestinian community supports the Palestinian National Movement to maintain close linkages with the homeland (Mahmoud, 2005). Many transnational activities are launched in the Western host state in order to maintain their national identities. However the main connections are made through technologies benefiting from globalization (Schulz, 2005). For example, the PALESTA\textsuperscript{11} network, which was launched by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, is an internet-based project to connect the scientific Palestinian expatriates with their homeland. Its aim is to make use of the knowledge of Palestinians abroad in developing the economy of Palestine. This also informs the Palestinians abroad of all the scientific and technological achievements in Palestine, providing a way for them to contribute and initiate new projects (Hanafi, 2005).

A different kind of networks used in the West is through the use of objects in their houses trying to maintain and recollect past instances. These material objects

\textsuperscript{11} Palestinian Scientists and Technologists Abroad
reinforce and amplify their collective identity through the Palestinians strong attachment to them (Turan, 2010). Another way of networking is the use of the Arabic language. Throughout poems, newsletters, and different kinds of literature, Palestinians abroad share their sentiments of exile and detachment from the homeland. This is clearly shown through the work of poets such as Edward Said and others. In his article, *Translation and the Palestinian Diaspora*, Ibrahim Muhawi gives great importance to the role that the translational process plays in creating ties. He says “it is a translational process that transforms a physical place into a spiritual and mythical entity to which anyone can lay a claim in his or her own language.” (Muhawi, 2005, p. 117)

As a conclusion, Palestinians in America and in Europe share a different experience than those in the Arab World. Although, their conflict is ongoing which makes it more difficult for them to accommodate (Karmi, 2005), however they have managed throughout different nations to reestablish their links and contributions in their homeland. As discussed above, there is a distinction between the different Palestinian statuses in different countries. Many nations have mixed between different Middle Eastern nations mixing all their projects into one project: “Arab nationalism.” Thus, basing ourselves on Brubaker’s definition, Palestinians in the West have become a different kind of project; a project for their cause as well as for their national Arab identity.

Therefore, it would really be good to distinguish the dilemma in defining the status of Palestinians abroad. As previously discussed, it is the host country that really affects the status of the Palestinians abroad through its policies, systems, affecting the way of accommodation, legal status and network formed abroad. It is not only the term ‘diaspora’ in itself with its complexity and fluidity that has been problematic in
defining the Palestinians abroad. The case of Palestinians in itself is controversial. Some opinions consider that defining Palestinians as diasporas would deny their right of return (Shiblak, 2005). In the Middle East, Palestinians in Jordan has become citizens, in Syria they are “partially diasporized”; whereas in the case of Lebanon, their status would be more as “unrecognized diasporic refugees”. In the West, Palestinians are more likely to be considered diasporas like the case in America, Spain, Britain; however in some cases such as Sweden and Germany, Palestinians are considered political refuge. Indeed, Palestinian identities have developed differently in various host countries creating a multiple nature of identities. (Hammer, 2005, p. 220).
Chapter Five

Palestinian Imagery

No matter what the cause of the emergence of the Palestinian identity was, it is spread in many different territories with limited accessibility and has worked very hard in order to retain its identity. Of the major tools that were used for this objective, the image was one of the most successful methods in solidifying the groups’ identity and spreading it. The Palestinian semiotics has been spread widely with a range of discourses.

5.1 – Development of Palestinian Liberal Art and Poster

The historical start of the production of images in the Palestinian context goes back to the early 20th century. Only Palestinians living in the city back then had the chance to travel abroad, heading to Italy and Egypt to study liberal art. After their study, these artists would come back to draw familiar faces that they know. Theses faces didn’t carry any resemblance or link to a place or a context; it was simply about the face. Many artists such as Zulfa Al Said and Fadoul Awde were the endeavors of the Palestinian art which mainly portrayed figures of people in the neighborhood as well as important figures in the Arabic- Islamic context such as Salah Al Din Al Ayyoubi.

Thus, in the case of Italy, art became a window, a shy initiative, to make linkages between cultures giving a bear start of a transnational culture.

A prominent date that affected the whole Palestinian context was in 1948 in what is known as Al-Nakba. This was not only a perturbing political date, but it also has affected Palestinians culturally, socially, and personally which was obviously shown
in all forms of arts. Many of the artists that used to draw before Al-Nakba such as Sofia Halabi and Daoud Zalatimo disappeared and the use of paintings started reflecting the mere reality of the context they are living in which lead to a mix between paintings and posters.

The Palestinian poster started to emerge and to be gradually prominent directly after Al-Nakba and just before the start of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The impact of the Palestinian paintings on posters was directly affected by the cognitive relation of the persons (artists) with the land rather than with contextual reality of the incident. Their feelings, thoughts, involvement and especially memory were related to the land, which portrayed their attachment of what was no longer present. The memory was still stuck in the past which created a dilemma with the reality of the presence. Thus, images in paintings and posters showed people in the past, in their land emphasizing on the struggle between the past and the present.

The Palestinians were trying to find themselves either outside or inside Palestine. Within this context, representations through images (paintings) of what was embedded in the mind were clearly portrayed. The image carried symbols and became a transnational tool of what is in the mind of the author. The main characters of the paintings were persons from rural areas with specific features and facial expressions portrayed in a defined color scheme. For example, Ismail Chamout\footnote{Born in 1930, Ismail Chammout is a Palestinian artist that pursuit his education in Egypt in Liberal Art and then continued it in Rome.} took the land as a main subject in his paintings, representing the idea of his lost country. His main target was to live and revive the past while emphasizing on the place; the land, which pushes the viewer to be involved in the cause of the right to return. He used the gray color scheme in his work with faded colors to represent the
hope of the future, as well as the use of the strong rigid hand to representation determination. The title of his paintings summarized the whole meaning and intentions of his work, which moved the viewer from the denotative to a connotative layer of the message behind the image. (Blata, 2000)

Many artists that were born outside Palestine, i.e. after Al-Nakba face the problem of “what is Palestine?” because there were no exact images at that time that could portray reality. It was an era with weak communication tools in a divided time. According to Jamal Al Abtah, a Palestinian artist that was born in Damascus in 1958, it was the stories transmitted from one generation to the other that created the image of Palestine. Jamal states “My father used to tell me exactly where Mount Karmel is located and how it was divided and what were its sections and where each family used to live… he even used to specify the trees that were found there… he described to me exactly what women and men used to wear… what were the traditions and how they used to celebrate… even my aunt used to recite each night poems and traditional songs about Palestine… How am I not supposed to know about what is Palestine?” With these specific details transmitted verbally through generations, in addition to the artists’ imagination, the missing image of the lost land of Palestine was created in the mind of the author and thus portrayed in his work.

A remarkable change in the development of the image started in 1968 after Al Karameh battle\textsuperscript{13} which was crowned by political and military celebrations lead by corresponding leaders. Thus one could notice the emergence of images of army and military weapons which praise the use of weapon and victory. With this victory, the land seemed closer to the Palestinians and the emphasis on people’s faces was shown

\textsuperscript{13}It took place on March 21, 1968 in Karameh, Jordan, between the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and combined forces of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Jordanian Army.
in the images showing their readiness to return to their land. Images showed angry faces desiring to move to another place and the readiness to depart where nothing can stop them.

Moreover, posters of Martyrs started to eventually fill in all the areas and walls of the camps. These posters showed the face of the Martyrs with details about their names, place of birth, martyr date… Palestinian organizations such as Fateh contributed in printing a huge number of posters that were done by Chakik Radwan, Ismail Chammout, Mostapha Al Haddad and others. The main emphasis of these posters was on the gaze of the eyes as well as the strength of the body through muscles. At this era, art and media started to play an important role in transmitting the message. Each organization had a section where all parties distributed images and posters of events, memories, days… Mohammad Al Chaar, the president of the Palestinian Art Committee, states that each day carried an occasion that was portrayed in an image being a poster or a painting. Each image had a style but all images carried the same subject: The Palestinian Cause.

After Al-Nakba, there was an agreement on the use of specific national symbols which became at a later stage a representation of the Palestinian cultural identity. The female became the symbol of the land which dominated most of the visual representations surrounded by other icons. The use of the poster became a reflection of a specific event directed by Palestinian political parties which after all in a way or another aimed at the freedom of Palestine. The tone of the poster was thus affected by the amount of interaction between the political factions and the authors, artists. For example, the posters in Palestine projected nostalgia more than rebellion and revolution because the artists in Palestine did not have much interaction with the
protagonists in Beirut. Therefore, the posters seemed much calmer than those in Lebanon.

In the year 1982, the PLO was out of Beirut which had an impact on the use of image. There was no longer a great support from political factions in leading the production of poster and images. Thus, there was a decrease in the impact of posters in Lebanon. Each artist had a personal initiative with no support from an organization. There were no longer plans for the distribution of posters and high hopes were put on artists that left before 1982 to Western countries.

During the First Intifada, posters seemed calm in comparison to the high impact the intifada was raising. Moreover, television, cameras, radios have emerged by then and a huge emphasis was given on new communication tools rather than posters. However, posters were spread all over the countries following up the continuous development of events and carrying a reflected identity of the past within a challenging present. In the following section, I will justify the importance of the use of posters even within a challenging era of technological development.

5.2 – The use of posters

Posters are visual aids that could be used as an independent source of information or as a tool to convey a specific announcement or message. The use of posters was crucial throughout history. The main objective of the use of posters is described by the French historian Max Gallo who states that "for over two hundred years, posters have been displayed in public places all over the world. Visually striking, they have been designed to attract the attention of passers-by, making us aware of a political viewpoint, enticing us to attend specific events, or encouraging us to purchase a particular product or service." (Gallo, 2002)
In order to develop a poster, the author should take into account the audience it is referred to, the choice of the continent and its precision, and the environment or context in which it will displayed. Having all of this in mind, the message should be brief and be interactively comprehensible to the viewer. Thus the poster is considered as a discipline of knowledge transfer (Ilic and Rowe, 2013). Throughout the centuries, posters also created a powerful cultural symbol. It is through some posters that a certain icon was constantly created to identify a specific culture. (Jowett and O’Donnell, 2006)

Going back to the impact of the Palestinian posters, I have chosen to study the posters that emerged after the Second Intifada limiting myself to graphic posters. By graphic posters I mean those that are based on illustrations rather than photography where the author has a direct input in the use of image formation as well as in the layout selection. In the following chapter, I will show the relation between semiotics and constructivism. I will then study the elements of identity formation (discussed previously) as well as Safran’s elements (will be defined in the following chapter) selected posters from Lebanon, Palestine, and the United States.
Chapter Six

Proposed Solution

6.1 – Relation between Semiotics and Constructivism

The society plays a major role in constructing one's identity which is in itself decoded through image interpretation and its different stages. It enforces conformity and consensus in cohesive decision-making. Irving L. Janis calls it groupthink which he defines as a “mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members’ strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action.” (Janis, 1972, p. 9)

In addition, it is argued that all decisions in international politics are based upon the actor’s perception of the world and the role they have in it. These conceptions derive from what could be termed systemic, inter-subjective “shared understandings, expectations, and social knowledge embedded in international institutions.” (Wendt, 1994, p. 389) This shows the interrelation between both theories: constructivism as well as semiotics.

Baroni and Clibborn, in their book “The Language of Graphics” explain how graphics are used to transmit information not only through words but also through visuals. In general, the literature explains about the way signs and sign systems are transmitted which leads to the formation of specific codes. These codes are formed upon the agreement of the community and the group. They vary from representing
languages, movements, to the representation of values and culture. They can also add new connotations to the perception of everyday activities. Signs have also developed with the emergence of new culture in one hand, promoting new ideologies and thoughts. For example, in the book “Art and Visual Perception”, Rudolf Arnheim, talks about the way people creates - or looks at – visuals. It also explains the process by which visual material is organized and affected by psychological laws.

The differentiation of one group from another also goes back to different elements that consist of their corresponding collective identity. These core elements such as physical features, dress, language, culture, and traditions become culture markers of an identity. Each meaning alone is contributed to semiotics but it becomes a reflection of an identity when it is used for differentiation. Manning Nash states in his article The Core Elements of Ethnicity: “Differences in dress, from whole costumes to single items of apparel, serve as surface markers of group differences. These items of apparel best serve when visible and public, but items of dress may reinforce group boundaries even if not visible… The meaning of dress codes in ethnic boundary identification is a branch of semiotics until it is tied to the core elements of social differentiation.” (Nash, 1989, p. 10-15)

Having an identity, humans become labeled if they choose it or if it is imposed on them. They are known under the frame they live in. It differentiates “them” from the “other”. This process of self-identification has always been present. The way to identify our self from the other became a need. Our physical features, language, kinship, religion may differentiate us; however this distinction is also present in other ways. The creation of visuals, signs, images that project a specific group became a mean of distinction from the other. For example, the uniform at school identifies the students as students, whereas the white coat identifies doctors and nurses. This
creation of image creates a visual identity. It is organized and affected by psychological laws. (Arnheim, 1974)

Visual identity contributes to every detail of the visual that the brain responds to: color, form, depth, and movement. Visual identity can vary from a simple illustration in a book to a huge graffiti on a wall to an animation or even photographic representation. The effect of visual identity no matter its type has shown to be an expression of the self and the group. In his book, *The Faith of Graffiti*, Norman Mailer (1974) says: “Graffiti is the expression of a ghetto which is near to the plague, for civilization is now inimical to the ghetto. Too huge are the obstacles to any natural development of a civilized man. In the ghetto it is almost impossible to find some quiet location for your identity. No, in the environment of the slum, the courage to display yourself is your only capital, and crime is the productive process which converts such capital to the modern powers of the world, ego and money.”

Visuals are representations of realities, they project the feeling of the environment and the context one lives in. They can even demonstrate a real projection of what is going on. Every choice the designer makes in his representation projects a meaning and a message. The audience might get involved with the purpose of the author or may have a different interpretation. Each effect is dependable on the perception of the viewer. In the book “The Language of Graphics”, the authors even emphasize on the effect of the color choice in projecting an identity. They say: “Color plays a part on national level, too. In some parts of the world – most notably in those with a tropical climate – bright, almost harsh colors are part of the environment.” (Baroni and Clibborn, 1980, p. 194) They also add: “Thus for those living in these differing
environments there are different levels of perception connected with each of the everyday colors of life.” (Baroni and Clibborn, 1980, p. 194)

Thus, the study of signs becomes crucial in reflecting a collective identity. Signs become a tool of differentiation between one group and another. Some images are closely tied to a group until it becomes its representative image. Some others use the image to build in an ethnic bound or to convey an ethnic message.

First, a clause of examination will be provided on the context of the Palestinians’ life condition in the host state or in their homeland then, I will identify the main dominating subjects in the posters produced. I will limit myself to the posters that were produced after the Second Intifada because there was no major huge event that has really pushed the Palestinians to react upon after the Second Intifada. The elements that are used in these posters thus contain what makes the Palestinian image of identity and interest. Moreover I have chosen to limit also the selection of posters to that of illustration and typographic because the author has to put a personal effort in portraying the image rather than mirroring the reality through the lens of a camera.

6.2 - Palestinian Posters in Palestine

“We are living in a big jail” stated Ibrahim Boulos, a Palestinian citizen in the West Bank, when asked about their status of living.

From “Palestinian authority” to “State of Palestine”, the change in the name did not actually result in a different living condition in Palestine. The Palestinians are divided into two pieces of land: West Bank and Gaza with a hope to reunite the image of the homeland of pre 1948 that they continuously refuse to call it by the name of Israel. It is true that almost 4 million Palestinians are considered to live in Palestine divided between West Bank (around 3 million Palestinians) and Gaza
(around 1 million); however they are bound within a territory where it is hard to move from one place to another. The internal transportation is almost impossible between Gaza and West Bank. Palestinians have to cross the borders from West Bank to Jordan in order to be able to travel abroad.

The Oslo agreement in 1998 between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel has held a lot of hopes for the Palestinians. However, Israel still controls till today the borders, airspace and territorial water of Gaza. Moreover, “Apartheid”, an Israeli West Bank barrier, was constructed by Israel which is totally refused and unaccepted by the Palestinians. This has resulted in a total dependency of Palestinians on the supplies and imports from Israel. West Bank and Gaza cannot be self-sufficient and they are forced to use Israel’s production in order to provide the basic living conditions.

All of the mentioned conditions are clearly represented in the posters published in Palestine after the Second Intifada\(^\text{14}\). The main focus of posters is in the memory of specific dates such as Al-Nakba, Land day, Palestinian Prisoner’s Day, martyrs and others. Many posters also focus on women and women’s day which questions the importance of the role Palestinian women play in the formation of the society.

Surrounded by Israel blockade and being forced to adapt to this environment, many posters became a tool to express dissatisfaction and to emphasize on the Palestinian identity, rights, lack of freedom, and justice. Posters thus were used as a tool to ask for a revolution as a consequence of the inequality. On the other hand, they were used to criticize the role of international and local organizations. Many posters showed the support and role of the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine. Others were used in projecting the hope in the future in order to emphasize the importance

\(^{14}\) Refer to Annex A
of being involved in the formation of the local decisions through registration, voting… The fact that Palestinians in Palestine were separated between West Bank and Gaza as well as through the Israeli barrier was also projected. Not only tackling political and miserable conditions, many posters were formed to announce a cultural event or even to ask for tolerance.

6.3 – Palestinian Posters in Lebanon

The “unrecognized diasporic refugees” as the previous chapter states or the “forgotten people” as Rebecca Roberts (2010) uses in her book *Palestinians in Lebanon: Refugees Living with Long-Term Displacement* defines the status of Palestinians in Lebanon. They are not even considered as minorities in Lebanon for they occupy a remarkable percentage in the society occupied either in camps or in different gathering areas. In this section I will not go through the political and historical detailed background of the Palestinian’s stay in Lebanon, although it is really crucial. However, I will merely describe the current living conditions of Palestinians in Lebanon and thus link it to the production of posters in Lebanon.

Palestinians in Lebanon mainly rely on UNRWA’s services (United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees). These services vary from educational, social, health, and providing alimentation and basic infrastructure and maintenance of camps. UNRWA contributes in helping Palestine refugees: “(1) Acquire knowledge and skills (2) Lead long and healthy lives (3) Achieve decent standards of living and (4) Enjoy human rights to the fullest possible extent.¹⁵

However, according to Rebecca Roberts, “UNRWA has had negative effects on the social structures in the camps and on inhabitants’ psychological well-being, and is

¹⁵ UNRWA Priorities: http://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do
one of the actors responsible for the lack of effective governance in the camps’ (Roberts, 2010, p. 183). Most of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon still perceive themselves as the victims that are not capable of doing anything but accept the legal and social restrictions of the Lebanese government. Yet, with all of the restrictions, Palestinians have managed to create their own space to create a country within a country where the common language, regional culture, proximate similar geographic landscape, own governance and other factor have helped in creating this space.

Going over the posters that were published in Lebanon after the Second Intifada\textsuperscript{16}, one can classify most of the posters as those addressing the memory of Al-Nambe and that of the Apartheid wall as well as some posters published by some political groups. It is important to note, just like it was mentioned in the previous section that due to the Civil War and the fact that the PLO was out of Lebanon, there was a decrease in the presence of Palestinian activists. Therefore, the use of Palestinian symbols and posters became limited to some personal or culture initiative. These initiatives took the subjects of the support to Palestinians, the right to return, solidarity, and the land.

\section*{6.4– Palestinian Posters in the US}

As described in the previous chapter, Palestinians in the United States could be classified as diasporas. It is known that the US contains many different minorities; however the Palestinians are considered to be among the smallest groups.

Palestinians in the US tried to make an adjustment to the American society, keeping their own heritage and identity. Their stay is not considered at all smooth especially with the great impact of the Jewish Community and the latter impact on the US’ s

\textsuperscript{16} Refer to Annex B
policies and decisions. Being deeply involved in the politics of their homeland and trying to reflect their identity yet at the same striving to fit in the homeland, Palestinians could be categorized into different groups in the US. There are those who worked into creating a successful cultural, educational contribution such as Edward Said and many others in order to build an American-Palestinian community. (Ibish, 2010). There are those who still think that being American is something that is imposed to them within the context of exile. They tend to keep on reminding themselves once and foremost about their Palestinian identity stressing on the fact that they are Palestinians.

Norma Sayage\textsuperscript{17} states that "Being Palestinian changes your whole life. It means that your whole life is circled around this cause. It is circled around gaining an identity. It's circled around becoming a person to everybody else. It changes what you want to study what your daily schedule is. You wake up in the morning and you think, "What can I do today?" Being Palestinian is first and foremost with most Palestinians." (Christison, 1989, p. 19)

The difficulty in adapting into the American hostland with all the discrimination faced made the Palestinians reinforce their attachment to their identity and heritage. Disregarding the perception and the way of adaptation and reaction towards the US hostland, Palestinians remain conscious and pride themselves on their identity and have reacted to all that has been affecting their homeland.

The posters that were published in the US after the Second Intifada\textsuperscript{18} do not tackle a different approach than that of posters in Lebanon and Palestine. The main subject is

\textsuperscript{17} A San Francisco real estate agent born in the U.S. of Palestinian parents who fled Jaffa in 1948
\textsuperscript{18} Refer to Annex C
also Al-Nakba memory. The Apartheid wall has also been a main subject of interest in posters. Many posters were also made as reactions to the liberation of Gaza in specific and the freedom of the land in general from Israel’s occupation. The right of return remains a vital element in many posters as well as the importance of insurrection for a united Palestine. Posters in the US have also gathered a similar joined cause of crossing borders. Some posters included Palestinians in comparison to other minority groups in the US.
Chapter Seven

Solution Validation / Findings

Our life is surrounded with different types of visuals that shape the way we understand and communicate. The presence of these images facilitates the propaganda of ideas, innovations, information, politics, and culture (Cartwright, 2009). It creates a visual communication. This can carry out a complex message, meaning, or a simple aesthetic reflection of the integral world we live in. The deciphering of the visual world carries meaning of cultural differentiation and organization. The use of visual art had been tight to the mode of life in each person creating “signs” for some groups that differentiate them for others. Whenever one thinks of “us” and “them”, this distinction recalls the formation of ethnic groups. Interpretation is central to the critical discourse on art. Methodologies and interpretive strategies developed within the discipline of art history or borrowed from other disciplines continue to facilitate new modes for the interpretation of works of art and creation of signs.

The literature explains about the way signs and sign systems are transmitted which leads to the formation of specific codes. These codes are formed upon the agreement of the community and the group. They vary from representing languages, movements, to the representation of values and culture. They can also add new connotations to the perception of everyday activities (Arnheim, 1974). Signs have also been developed with the emergence of a new culture in one hand, promoting
new ideologies and thoughts. Poster, logos, and other forms of coding have expressed the emergence of revolutions and school of thoughts which were easily transmitted and were not subjected to change. By change I mean that these kinds of coding held connotations that were directly transmitted to the audience yet were interpreted differently from one viewer to the other. However, their constancy is that these signs held a cause and a value to a certain group which was mainly repressed from verbal expression, i.e. they were minorities. These important aspects of the study of art and signs have a great relation in the reflection of an identity. Semiotics is a process of transferring data from a place to another. The way the receiver decodes this information might create a communication dilemma; thus it provokes an ethnic conflict.

According to Roland Barthes, “The image … always has the last word”. This gives the main importance of visuals and the role they play in conveying the message. Throughout this section I will analyze posters from Palestine, Lebanon, and the US to check their connotative and denotative meaning while comparing those with a common subject to each other. I will introduce the main elements found in all posters and that have been continuously used to become a Palestinian code used across transnational borders in the process of social learning for the reflection of a collective identity. Finally, I will show how the Palestinians have been crossing generations within a lost image of the homeland and how images are read across generations.
7.1 – Palestinian Identity and Imagery

7.1.1 – The signifier and signified

Several approaches have been established to explain the way we see and explain images. Sensual and perceptual theories were established to explain the visual communication process. “The sensual theories (gestalt, constructivism, and ecological) hold that directed or mediated images are composed of light and little else. The perceptual theories (semiotic and cognitive) are concerned mainly with the meaning that humans associate with the images they see.” (Lester, 2010, p. 52) Thus the visual sensation is related to everything that attracts the attention of the eye whereas perception is the analysis of meaning of all sensual organs. The eye absorbs the images and it is the brain which classifies these visual materials into different groups. According to the constructivists’ theory, the observer is given a great importance in the selection process of the vision. This varies according to the way the image is presented: content, size, color, context… (Lester, 2010, p. 58) The assimilation of the visual into a meaning is explained with the perceptual theory. Semiotics and cognitive approaches are used in explaining how visuals are given meaning.

Semiotics is the study of sign which refers to anything that stands for something else. Signs are used to communicate messages to the viewer. “A sign is a way of modifying the world in which we live. It is part of a system of ordering reality into meaningful units which are all related through a larger system of ideas about the world.” (Baroni, 1980)

According to Ferdinand de Saussure, all signs can be divided into a “signifier” and a “signified” (Saussure, 2006). Daniel Baroni and Edward Booth Clibbornstate that
“the simplest signs have so much meaning encoded in them that a basic symbolic expression is enough to trigger an elaborate train of associations and significances” (Baroni, 1980).

The “signifier” is the direct image of the sign; whereas the “signified” refers to the meaning it is communicating. This relationship is done through encoding messages and then decoding their meaning leaving a denotative and a connotative meaning of the sign. “Denotation describes the common sense meaning of the sign. Connotation is the meaning derived by an individual receiver” (Lester, 2010, p. 64). Thus a series of codes is being established. According to Roland Barthes (1968), a “chain of associations” is established using these codes and creating symbols. Symbols are created of the metaphorical imagination of the human being. All of these are coded inside the brain. According to Carolyn Bloomer, a cultural anthropologist, “memory, projection, expectation, selectivity, habituation, salience, dissonance, culture and words” affect the visual perception (Lester, 2010, p. 69). As a conclusion, the visual communication is not a simple one. It is associated with the individual himself in selecting, encoding, decoding, and projecting the meanings that are carried with these visuals.

7.1.2 – Poster’s Connotative and Denotative meaning

7.1.2.1 Common Subject in Palestine, Lebanon, and the United States

Referring back to the selected posters published in Palestine, Lebanon, and US, the three frameworks of studies share a common main subject: Al-Nakba which to a certain extent is the main incident in the perturbation of the Palestinian identity. This is why every year on the 15th of May a tremendous amount of posters are published
in all Palestinian communities to remember this incident and at the same emphasize on the right to return. Looking at the posters published in Palestine, the main dominant color used is the black and red which signifies fear and aggressiveness. The green, black, red, and white are also used which refer to the colors of the Palestinian flag. The main elements used in Al-Nakba posters\textsuperscript{19} are the tree, the key, Palestinian “keffiyeh”, the figure of a woman, barbed wire, the dove and the original Palestinian map. Each poster also indicates the number of years that have been passed since 1948. Similarly, the posters published in the US also stress the year and uses the key and the “keffiyeh” as iconic elements. Comparing the posters of Al-Nakba between Lebanon and the US, one could notice that the same poster that was published in 2008\textsuperscript{20} was reused in 2011\textsuperscript{21} but using a different language. The poster shows the image of a key that is made out of the Palestinian villages that went through Al-Nakba. Moreover, another poster addressing Al-Nakba in the US that was published in 2008\textsuperscript{22} used a circular typography with the redundancy of the sentence “we will return” and having the lock of the key centered. The same poster\textsuperscript{23} style was used in Palestine in the year 2011 for Ramallah Municipality.

This emphasizes and stresses out the fact of how the use of images has crossed the borders from one country to another. These posters are used to reflect a homogeneous idea - the idea of the right of return - and to portray the common-fate of Palestinian in exile. Therefore they carry two characteristics of collective identity based on Wendt’s master variables of a collective identity (Wendt, 2000, p. 336).

\textsuperscript{19} Refer to Annex A, B, and C
\textsuperscript{20} Refer to Annex C Image 14
\textsuperscript{21} Refer to Annex B Image 11
\textsuperscript{22} Refer to Annex C Image 13
\textsuperscript{23} Refer to Annex A Image 9
Another main common subject used in posters is the “Apartheid”. In the US, a huge number of posters were established as a reaction to the building of the separation war. Most posters include the illustration of the wall with a call to boycott this action and an integration of the Palestinian map.\textsuperscript{24} Similarly, in Palestine, the posters in Palestine stressed on the separation that was provoked by the wall. In her poster\textsuperscript{25}, Houroub emphasized on the division between the villages by magnifying the size of the wall in comparison to the size of houses, and a girl holding a dove which resembles peach try to cross this border. In Lebanon, a poster was made for the week of resistance against the Israeli apartheid and colonialism in Beirut.\textsuperscript{26} The wall is present but faded in the background of the poster. The main element in the poster is a tree that is illustrated with sharp edge strokes. There are distorted faces that are squeezed between the branches of the tree projecting the effect of the building of this wall unto Palestinians. The call of action using posters projects the interdependent nature of the Palestinians no matter where they are dispersed. It is true that the Israel Apartheid is located between Israel and West Bank but it involved the Palestinians all over the world. Another example is the call for solidarity in posters published in Lebanon and the USA.\textsuperscript{27} In the US, during the Palestinian Olive harvest in 2009, they have used the tree as a representation of Palestine and have clearly used the word solidarity. In 2011, a poster was published showing an army holding a weapon in the background that is scratched by a pen. Under the scratch, the word “Palestine” clearly appears and at the end of the poster the word solidarity in English, French, and Spanish is shown. On the other hand, in Lebanon\textsuperscript{28}, the Palestinian flag raised in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} Refer to Annex C Image 20 - 28
\item \textsuperscript{25} Refer to Annex A Image 39
\item \textsuperscript{26} Refer to Annex B Image 12
\item \textsuperscript{27} Refer to posters Annex B Image 6 and Annex C Images 5 and 7
\item \textsuperscript{28} Refer to Annex B Image 6
\end{itemize}
the horizon occupied the center of the poster. Hands were added at the foreground trying to reach the flag. In the background, the Earth globe is made out flags representing all countries and indirectly asking for an international solidarity.

According to Alexander Wendt, self-restraint is a major variable in defining a collective identity. Palestinians have used the posters as provocative tools in calling each other for action throughout the dispersed countries.

7.1.2.2 In Palestine

In Palestine, many posters have agitated the people to hope in the future and believe in the ability of making decisions. The use of the hand had been remarkably present to convey this message of freedom and call of action.\(^{29}\) For example, some posters referred to the calling for the basic rights like the reunification of the family\(^ {30} \) and the freedom of expression\(^ {31} \). They have also criticized the absence of the interference of the United Nations\(^ {32} \) by symbolizing it as a fallen chair. The chair usually portrays positions i.e. power. They have clearly stated that it is “a sleeping organ.”

Some other posters\(^ {33} \), also published in Palestine, called the Palestinians to vote and to be part in making decisions disregarding the presence of Israel occupation. The poster included a voting box that was surrounded by the barbed wire and a hand putting a paper inside the box: the act of voting. Another poster included the icon of a pen that contains a key. The poster is inviting the citizens to register as Palestinians in the Palestinian authority linking it to the key of return and belonging.

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\(^{29}\) Refer to Annex A Images 1, 12, 15
\(^{30}\) Refer to Annex A Image 5
\(^{31}\) Refer to Annex A Image 53
\(^{32}\) Refer to Annex A Image 7
\(^{33}\) Refer to Annex A Images 47, 48, and 49
7.1.2.3 In Lebanon

As for the posters published in Lebanon, the common regional context was portrayed through the representation of the land. Many personal initiatives were made from university students, NGOs, and artists that support the Palestinian cause. For example, in the American University of Beirut, during the Israeli Apartheid Week 2010, a poster was published by Fouad Mezher and Joanna Douba. This poster portrayed the face of a man shouting “Free Palestine” and wearing a “keffiye”.

During the Palestinian Land day, a series of etching posters were done by Jamaa al-Yad organization. These posters show Palestinian workers in their land which, according to the interpretation of the organization, aim to:

“bringing attention back to this intrinsic connection between land and resistance… the worker of the land, is not just a question of supporting small farmers, or "fair trade" farming, or buying organic produce; it requires an understanding of the connection of people to place, of land rights as primary focus in the battle against globalizing capitalism. On this, Land Day, we join the peasant and family farmer not just in their resistance to capitalism and globalization, but in all efforts related to land reform, and the eventual return of land to the people's control.”

34 Fouad Mezher and JoannaDouba were at that time graphic designers graduates at AUB. Refer to Annex B Image 2
35 Refer to Annex B Images 7-8-9
36 Jamaa al-Yad is a cultural association the aim of which is the research, implementation, dissemination, and re-establishment of various cultural manifestations including but not limited to craft, design, and art, by focusing on the local, vernacular, indigenous, and popular, using methodologies and means that ideologically reflect models of collaboration, co-operation, and communality, in the belief that such works and such actions are historically shown to, and continue to be likely to, bring about beneficial social change and a betterment of the commonweal. http://www.jamaalyad.org
37 http://www.jamaalyad.org/MAIN/PRJT/PRJT_YOM-AL-ERD/
Moreover, Jamaa al-Yad had produced a poster during the Day of Return to Palestine in commemoration of martyrs. This poster shows a Palestinian wearing a keffiyeh and holding a stone a stone. There are barbered wires on the left of the poster that separate between people in the background and the main person in the middle. The organization’s interpretation of this project is that:

“On May 15, 2011, during the Day of Return to Palestine, Israeli occupation forces opened fire on unarmed civilians protesting legally within the border of Lebanon and other countries neighboring Palestine. Men, women, and children from all walks of life had come to show their determination to resist occupation peacefully and were met with sniper bullets. This poster was designed to commemorate those fallen, as well as to show the determination of those remembering them.”

In the poster about the Right to Return, there was a call for the annual meeting in Beirut. The poster was made in 2010; however it used an older poster that was published in 1936. It showed a tree that is planted in a land of “keffiyeh.” The reuse of older posters stresses the consistency of the right of return within the notion of the "passage of time".

Some political factions remained present in Lebanon even after the expulsion of the PLO after the civil war. These produced some posters that are remarkably less than the years when they were legally present in Lebanon through PLO. For example, some posters are produced from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine during the year 2009. These posters included both the star icon of the logo of the

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38 Refer to Annex B Image 5
39 http://www.jamaalyad.org/MAIN/PRJT/PRJT_MRMA-HJR/
40 Refer to Annex B Image 4
41 Refer to Annex B Image 13 and 14
Front with the texture of the keffiyeh in one poster, and on the other, it shows a road made out of the colors of the flag with the texture of the keffiyeh.

7.1.2.4 In the United States

What is interesting in the posters published in the US is the link shown between Palestinians and other minority groups in the US. Causes that shared similar historical or humanitarian context were compared and joined together in one poster. For example, in the poster published by Madame Binh Graphics Collective\textsuperscript{42}, three different ethnic groups are portrayed. In the middle is the Palestinian identified by the keffiyeh on the head. The person raises his hand as an act of revolution. To the right, is a black person and to the left is a Vietnamese depicted from the hat. In this poster, all groups have joined together in an eternal dream of revolution.\textsuperscript{43} Another example is the comparison between Mexico and Palestine. Looking at the poster\textsuperscript{44}, there is a shared land background that is colored in yellow with the names of United States and Israel on it. Two persons appear in middle, one having a textured scarf on her mouth and the other wearing a keffiyeh around his head. On the foreground, there is a map colored in red and extended to the two extremities of the poster. The poster is divided into two equal sections in the middle, separating between the two figures. One section states Mexico while the other Palestine. On the borders of the red map, there is a sentence stating that “We didn’t cross the border the border crossed us.” This poster joins the two different identities of the Mexican and

\textsuperscript{42} Refer to Annex C Image 2
\textsuperscript{43} This poster was found in a book called “Revolution as an Eternal Dream (Madame Binh Graphics Collective book by Mary pattern) which examines the political practice and visual propaganda of a now-obscure women’s poster, printmaking, and street art collective based in New York City between 1975 and 1983.
\textsuperscript{44} Refer to Annex C Image 12
Palestinian in one cause. Both perceive themselves as victims of other countries’ invasion to their land.

Many Palestinian artists that are living in Palestine have also contributed in the propaganda of their work to the United States which reflected the message and identity to the Palestinians abroad. For example, Hafez Omar, who is living in the West Bank town of Tulkarem, had many works that is published in the United States. In the poster “Bridge of return”, there is a weapon that is bridging between two borders separated by the sea. The overall tone of the poster is refreshing although the use of weapons in general creates aggressiveness. People from different generations and genders cross the “bridge” while they are holding the Palestinian flag. This poster implies that resistance is the only way for return to the Palestinians. Thus, the use of weapon is justified for its objective is the return. In the poster, Return Unifies Us, the Palestinian map is made out of people holding boards. This stresses the fact that all Palestinians no matter where they are located have one aim which is returning to their homeland. In these posters, Safran’s elements of collective identity are clearly present especially through a homogeneous Palestinian corporate identity: the right to return.

7.2 – Reading Images Across Generations

7.2.1 – Direct Intuitive Reading

Analyzing the different Palestinian Posters, according to the elements they use and the subject they portray, gives a comprehensive meaning through which how images can reflect their dispersed identity. It is true that each poster was created in a specific context and it targets a specific audience; however all posters resemble in the icons

45 Refer to Annex C Images 29-30-31
they use. These icons have created what is called the image of Palestine where each holds a specific signification and interpretation.

The use of the tree and, more specifically, of the olive and orange tree becomes the image of solidarity. “Just like the tree is attached to its land, our roots are attached to Palestine” says Dima Abou Kharroub, a Palestinian living in Lebanon. Palestine is well known to its orange tree fields, this is why it is known as the land of oranges. Moreover, the image of a woman is always used to represent Palestine. Asking about the signification of the use of the female figure as a representation of Palestine, Amin Khalil, a Palestinian graphic designer, states that woman is an important element in the Palestinian resistance. The woman plays a major role in raising the kids and teaching them about their culture and traditions. Most of the men in Palestine fought for the Palestinian cause and thus they became martyrs, exiled, or prisoners. With the absence of the father in the family, she is the one who is responsible of the family and in spreading the Palestinian culture. Palestine is thus represented as a woman.

Another important iconic element is the key. It is said that Palestinians left their country without taking anything except the key of their houses. This key became an iconic image for the return, for belonging. Palestinians nowadays still hold in their mind the image of their ancestors’ keys in the hope of returning. The barbed wire represents the barrier into getting to the Palestinian lost land. Palestine became a prison that cannot be easily and freely accessed. It is also the symbol for oppression and for the Palestinians prisoners. They also use the Palestinian whole map as an emphasis on the unity of Palestine and insisting on every part of the land. Last but not least, the “keffiyeh” is the cultural image of Palestine. It is the mark of being Palestinians.
With the constant use of these images and icons, in addition to the Palestinian flag, the national symbol of the land, Palestinians have reflected through images their collective identity. This collective identity was enforced through symbols of their self-restraint, homogeneity, interdependence, and common fate.

7.2.2 - An Identity Passing Through Generations

In order to pass this image from one generation to another, Palestinians have excessively used these symbols in all the environments they live in. Walking through a Palestinian camp or gathering in Lebanon, one could directly notice the images on all the walls of the area. The images portray the same symbols either through posters, signage or graffiti. The gaze of the eye becomes naturally a lens for the identity representation. Even the walls in the class carry these symbols.46 Students use these symbols as a decorative image in their academic work. It becomes what they are and to where they belong.

Looking at the annual fair at Siblin Training center47 2014 that shows all the work of trainees, images48 of the right to return were used as an element for decoration. These drawings were a personal initiative that the trainees took to. The right to return, Al-Nakba, and resistance are constantly shown wherever the eye looks. Thus, the whole new generation is constantly growing in a world embedded with images and talks about the Palestinian cause. A Palestinian is born with their cause, holding a responsibility to contribute in the reflection of the identity carries by the ancestors.

46 Refer to images Graffiti in the Camp: Annex D Images 7 and 8
47 UNRWA’s vocational center for Palestinian in Siblin, Lebanon
48 Refer to images Drawings in Siblin Training Center during their work exhibition on May 16 2013: Annex D Images 1-2-3
Chapter Eight

Conclusion

The case of Palestinian identity in itself is controversial. There is a dilemma in defining the status of Palestinians abroad; however images and more precisely posters have managed to create a virtual symbolic link between whole transnational communities. As previously discussed, it is the host country that really affects the status of the Palestinians abroad through its policies, systems, affecting the way of accommodation, legal status and network formed abroad. It is not only the term ‘diaspora’ in itself with its complexity and fluidity that has been problematic in defining the Palestinians abroad

For some opinions consider that defining Palestinians as diasporas would deny their right of return (Shiblak, 2005). In the Middle East, Palestinians in Jordan has become citizens, in Syria they are “partially diasporized”; whereas in the case of Lebanon, their status would be more as “unrecognized diasporic refugees”. In the West, Palestinians are more likely to be considered diasporas like the case in America, Spain, Britain; however in some cases such as Sweden and Germany, Palestinians are considered political refuge. Indeed, Palestinian identities have developed differently in various host countries creating a multiple nature of identities (Hammer, 2005, p. 220).

The excessive uses of images in the areas where Palestinians live in have helped in reflecting their identity and constructing it in the mind of all the generations. They have created specific symbols, which visualized the image of the land they have lost.
The over use of these images have created national codes for Palestinians in the hostland. Each of Palestine, Lebanon, and the United State created a different context for the Palestinians to merge with. These social, contextual differences have created an over layer on the Palestinian identity which was projected within posters. However, they always kept a common element that strengthens their interdependence, homogeneity, common fate and more specifically their self-restraint. These elements that identify a collective identity according to the constructivist Wendt are clearly present within the study of Palestinian posters. Palestinians signs such as the key, the “keffeyeh”, the land, the tree, the flag have held constancy and thus reflected their cause: the right of return. The posters that were analyzed in the three different countries reflected the homogenous idea of the right of return as well as the common fate of exile and oppression. They were also used as a proactive tool of engagement. They were an element to call for action which assured the interdependency between Palestinians worldwide. Many posters have shared the same style and were reused in different countries reflecting the same elements of fear and at the same time hope for returning to the homeland. Posters in Palestine stressed more on the hope in the future and the contribution in decision making disregarding the limitations in their homeland. In Lebanon, the representation of the land through redundant elements was prominent. These posters insisted on the importance of resistance and have reflected the involvement of Palestinians residing in Lebanon with their cause. Political factions have played a major role in disseminating these ideas through. In the United States, posters did not only reflect the identity of Palestinians using signs and codes but have also created a link between all minority groups there. The right of return, the memory of Al-Nakba, and the Apartheid has been dominant subjects in the US. A comparison within the
elements of oppression and crossing boundaries was made between Palestinians, Latin Americans, as well as Vietnamese.

The image remains an important variable in reflecting in what makes an identity. It holds both a connotative and a denotative meaning which help in transmitting the identity across transnational borders. Posters and images have really served in reflecting a solid identity and a homogenous cause for the Palestinians: the right of return. The image has served to project the empirical idealistic status of Palestinians, but do they project the real sociopolitical status of Palestinians. However, being already hosted in many countries and becoming also attached to the heritage of the hostland, the host becomes the second home. Between fragmented pieces of homeland where the image is only reflecting idealistic hopes within a much complex world mostly based on a “Machiavellian” struggle for power, the issue of Palestinian identity is questioned. The new hybrid transnational communities created a new complex form of identity where it cannot be classified as pure Palestinian. Under which conditions do really Palestinians want to return? Is identity really a question of heritage, land and return? What about the new identity formation and attachment to the hostland which became a homeland being citizens, refugees, or diasporas?
Bibliography


Ilic, D. & Rowe, N. (2014). What is the evidence that poster presentations are effective in promoting knowledge transfer? *Health Information & Libraries Journal, 30*(1), 4-12.


Annexes

10.1 – Annex A

I- Random Posters published in Palestine listed in chronological order

**Image 1**

With Our Hands
Poster by: Zan Studio
Year: 2006
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/with-our-hands

**Image 2**

A Palestinian Identity
Poster by: Rami Abu Ayash
Year: 2006
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/a-palestinian-identity
Image 3
We Have Names
Poster by: Zan Studio
Year: 2008
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/we-have-names

Image 4
The Palestinian National Initiative
Poster by: Mohamed Noon
Year: 2009
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/the-palestinian-national-initiative
Image 5

Palestinian Family Reunification

Poster by: Shihab Al Qawasmi

Year: 2010

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/palestinian-family-re-unification-a-basic-right

Image 6

Equality

Poster by: Nora Zahran

Year: 2010

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/equality
Image 7
Sleeping Member
Poster by: Waleed Idrees
Year: 2011
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/sleeping-member

Image 9
Wein A Ramallah
Poster by: Lena Sobeh
Year: 2011
Image 12
Strike = Victory
Poster by: Riyad Hamad
Year: 2012
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/strike-victory

Image 13
Thirsting for Justice
Poster by: Carolina de Lyrot
Year: 2012
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/thirsting-for-justice
**Image 14**

Our Lives we Pay for Freedom

Poster by: Zedesign

Year: 2013

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/our-lives-we-pay-for-freedom-1

**Image 15**

Freedom For Palestine

Poster by: Mohammed Hassona

Year: 2013

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/freedom-for-palestine-0
II- Posters published in Palestine about Al-Nakba listed in chronological order

Image 19
Tomorrow We Will Return
Year: 2007
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/tomorrow-we-will-return

Image 20
We Will Return
Poster by: Qutaibah Ahmend
Year: 2007
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/we-will-return
Image 21
Inevitably
Poster by: Blue Bell
Year: 2008
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/inevitably

Image 23
The Nakba at 62
Poster by: Ashraf Ghrayeb
Year: 2010
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/the-nakba-at-62
Image 24
The Nakba at 63
Poster by: Ahmed J. Shameia
Year: 2011
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/the-nakba-at-sixty-three

Image 27
From All Directions We Will Return
Poster by: Waleed Idress
Year: 2012
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/from-all-directions-we-will-return
**Image 29**

Badil Poster Contest

Poster by: Abdul Hadi Hanani

Year: 2013


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**Image 31**

Badil Poster Contest

Poster by: Bakr Al Khajekji

Year: 2013

Image 32
The Nakba at 65
Poster by: Mohammed Hassona
Year: 2012
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/the-nakba-at-65

Image 34
Badil Poster Contest
Poster by: Mohammed Al Haj
Year: 2013
**Image 35**

Badil Poster Contest

Poster by: Musa’ab Abu Sall

Year: 2013


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**Image 38**

Loss Exile and the Dream of Return

Poster by: Seveli

Year: 2013

III- Posters published in Palestine about the Israeli Apartheid listed in chronological order

**Image 39**
Stop the Apartheid Wall
Poster by: Bashar Al Horoub
Year: 2004
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/stop-the-apartheid-wall

IV- Cultural Posters published in Palestine

**Image 43**
Palestine Festival of Literature
Poster by: Muiz
Year: 2010
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/palestine-festival-of-literature-2010
V- Posters published in Palestine about Land Day

Image 44
Jerusalem Festival 2012
Year: 2012

Image 45
Palestine Your Revolution
Poster by: Hafez Omar
Year: 2012
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/palestine-your-revolution
Image 46

The Land
Poster by: Hafez Omar
Year: 2011
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/the-land-the-land

VI- Posters published in Palestine about Voting and Registration

Image 47

The Economic Policies if the Palestinian Authority
Poster by: Hafez Omar
Year: 2012
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/the-economic-policies-of-the-palestinian-authority
**Image 48**

Register that I Am Palestinian

Poster by: Waleed Idrees

Year: 2012

Reference:http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/register-that-i-am-palestinian

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**Image 49**

Despite the Occupation and the Siege

Year: 2005

VII- Poster published in Palestine about Tolerance

**Image 52**

Love, Peace, Tolerance, Freedom

Poster by: Basel Al Moqosui

Year: 2009

Reference:
http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/love-peace-tolerance-freedom

**Image 53**

Tasamuh 2011

Poster by: Assma Othman

Year: 2011

Reference:
http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/tasamutholerance-2011-othman-1
VIII- Posters published in Palestine about Prisoners

Image 54
In the Darkness of Prison
Khade Opened a Window
For Freedom

Poster by: Zan Studio
Year: 2012
Reference:
**Image 56**

To Hold Their Hand

Poster By: Zan Studio

Year: 2009

Reference: [http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/to-hold-their-hand](http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/to-hold-their-hand)

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**Image 57**

Thirst for Freedom

Poster by: Zan Studio

Year: 2008

Reference: [http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/thirst-for-freedom](http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/thirst-for-freedom)
IX- Posters published in Palestine – Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

**Image 58**

38th Anniversary of the PLFP

Year: 2007

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/the-38th-anniversary-of-the-pflp

**Image 59**

44 Years for the PLFP

Poster by: Waleed Idrees

Year: 2011

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/44-years-of-the-pflp
X- Posters Published in Palestine about Women

**Image 61**
Free All Female Political Prisoners
Poster by: Abed Altamam
Year: 2003

**Image 62**
Barhoum – Women’s Day
Poster by: Nelly Barhoum
Year: 2013
Reference: [http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/barhoum-womens-day](http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/barhoum-womens-day)
10.2 – Annex B

I- Random Posters published in Lebanon listed in chronological order

**Image 1**

Solidarity with Our Family in Palestine

Year: 2009


**Image 2**

Free Palestine

Poster by: Fouad Mezher and Joanna Douba

Year: 2010

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/free-palestine-1
**Image 3**

Drop by Drop Eroded the Rock

Poster by: The Raised Fist Collective

Year: 2010


**Image 4**

Return is an Inalienable Right

Poster by: The Raised Fist Collective

Year: 2010

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/return-is-an-inalienable-right
**Image 5**

Return is but a Stone’s Throw Away

Poster by: The Raised Fist Collective

Year: 2011

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/return-is-but-a-stones-throw-away

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**Image 6**

International Day of Solidarity

Poster by: Hind Khaled

Year: 2011

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/international-day-of-solidarity-2011
**Image 7**

From the Land - Made in Palestine

Poster by: The Raised Fist Collective

Year: 2012


**Image 8**

De La Tierra - Hecho En Palestina

Poster by: The Raised Fist Collective

Year: 2012

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/de-la-tierra-hecho-en-palestina
**Image 9**

Mina Al Ared – Sana’ Fi Falastin

Poster by: The Raised Fist Collective

Year: 2012


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**Image 10**

With Our Blood We write for Palestine

Poster by: The Raised Fist Collective

Year: 2012

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/with-our-blood-we-write-for-palestine-raised-fist-collective
II- Poster published in the Lebanon about Al-Nakba

Image 11

Al Nakba 63
Poster by: Amin Khalil
Year: 2011
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/al-nakba-63

III- Poster published in the Lebanon about the Israeli Apartheid

Image 12

Week of Resistance
Poster by: Nidal Al Khairy
Year: 2011
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/week-of-resistance
IV- Poster published in the Lebanon - Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

Image 13

New Dawn in the History of the Revolution and the People

Week of Resistance

Year: 2009


Image 14

For Jerusalem - Return - Independent State - Week of Resistance

Year: 2009

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/for-jerusalem-return-independent-state
Image 1

(My) Palestinian Friends

Poster by: Ricardo Levins Morales

Year: 2003

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/my-palestinian-friends

Image 2

Palestine – Madame Binh Graphics

Year: 2005

Image 3

Key of Return
Poster by: Christopher Cardinale
Year: 2005
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/key-of-return

Image 4

Victory to the Intifada
Poster by: Melanie Cervantes
Year: 2008
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/victory-to-the-intifada
**Image 5**

Palestinian Olive Harvest 2009

Poster by: Eric Paul Gulliver

Year: 2009

Reference:

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**Image 7**

Solidaridad- Solidarity – Solidarité

Poster by: Michael Thompson

Year: 2011

Reference:
http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/solidaridad-solidarity-solidarit%C3%A9
Image 8
Twelfth Chicago Palestine Film Festival - Official Poster
Poster by: Lena El Khatib
Year: 2013

Image 9
Boycott! - The Art of Economic Activism
Poster by: Favianna Rodrigues
Year: 2013
Image 10
Free the Land by any means Necessary
Poster by: Emory Douglas
Year: 2013

Image 11
Divest For Palestine - Vote For Justice
Year: 2013
Reference:
http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/divest-for-palestine-vote-for-justice

Image 12
We Didn't Cross the Border - The Border Crossed Us
Year: 2013
Reference:
http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/we-didnt-cross-the-border-the-border-crossed-us
XII- Posters published in the U.S. about Al-Nakba listed in chronological order

**Image 13**

We will Return- We will Return

Poster by: Vassia Alaykova

Year: 2008

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/we-will-return-we-will-return

**Image 14**

Nakba- 60 years of forced dispossession

Poster by: Ildiko Toth

Year: 2008

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/nakba-60-years-of-forced-dispossession
**Image 15**

We Will Return – The Nakba at 60

Poster by: Vassia Alaykova

Year: 2008

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/we-will-return-the-nakba-at-sixty

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**Image 16**

Nakba 60

Poster by: Jesus Barraza

Year: 2008

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/nakba-60
Image 17

The Red Sea
Poster by: Vassia Alaykova
Year: 2008
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/the-red-sea

Image 18

Parachutes Falling
Poster by: Ildiko Toth
Year: 2008
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/parachutes-falling
Image 19

Seeds of Nakba

Poster by: Rania Al-Mahdoon

Year: 2009

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/seeds-of-nakba
XIII- Posters published in the U.S. about the Israeli Apartheid listed in chronological order

**Image 20**

Uprooted

Poster by: Eric Paul Gulliver

Year: 2009

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/uprooted

**Image 21**

Apartheid Palestine

Poster by: Michael Thompson

Year: 2010

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/apartheid-palestine
Image 22

Kites and Keys Over the Occupation

Year: 2010

Reference:
http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/kites-and-keys-over-the-occupation

Image 23

False

Poster by: Carlus Latuff

Year: 2010

Reference:
http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/false
Image 24

Israel Tear Down this Wall

Poster by: Michael Thompson

Year: 2010

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/israel-tear-down-this-wall

Image 25

Apartheid IS Real

Poster by: Kyle Goen

Year: 2012

Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/apartheid-isreal
**Image 26**

Israeli Apartheid Week - 2012  
Poster by: Nidal El Khairy  
Year: 2012  

**Image 27**

Boycott Apartheid Israel  
Poster by: Chris Hutch  
Year: 2013  
XIV - Posters published in the U.S. and done by Hafez Omar

**Image 28**

Israeli Apartheid Week - 2014 - Latuff

Poster by: Carlos Latuff

Year: 2014


**Image 29**

Bridge of Return

Poster by: Hafez Omar

Year: 2014

Image 30
Return Unifies us
Poster by: Hafez Omar
Year: 2014
Reference: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/return-unifies-us

Image 31
Village of Ein Hijleh - Salt of the Earth
Poster by: Hafez Omar
Year: 2014
10.4 – Annex D

I- Drawings in Siblin Training Center during their work exhibition on May 16, 2013

Image 1

Image 2

Image 3
A poster that was hung at the entrance of Siblin in the memory of 65 years since Al-Nakba.
II- Graffiti in the Camp

Image 7

An image of a dove written on it “we are returning” and holding a Keffiyeh. The dove is painted with the Palestinian’s flag.

This picture was taken in Baddawi Camp – Tripoli on the wall of Ramleh School. February 2014.

Image 8

This picture states that “Palestine is our country”. It was drawn from the Cultural Palestinian Group on the wall of Beddawi Camp Street next to Nazareth School. April 2014.