

## Media Jihad: Interpretation of Palestinian Resistance Through Semiotic Studies

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**Abstract-** This study discusses the concept of “Media Jihad” and its role in interpreting the resistance of the Palestinian people. By examining various forms of media, such as social media posts, news articles, and visual images, this research aims to reveal the forms of Palestinian resistance through semiotic analysis. Through the lens of semiotics, the study explores how media representations shape public perceptions and contribute to the narrative of the Palestinian struggle. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method. The data collected includes sentences, images, hashtags, and symbols from social media posts, news articles, and visual images. The data collection method used is non-participatory observation, where the researcher observes and records sentences, images, hashtags, and symbols in these various media and then correlates them with their context based on semiotic theory. Additionally, the researcher conducts interviews with community leaders and experts in interpretation to gain deeper perspectives. After collecting the data, the researcher processes it through reduction, classification, verification, and tabulation based on its type, then performs interpretation and concludes the findings. The research results show that the resistance of the Palestinian people manifests in the following forms, namely 1) expressions of condemnation of Israel; 2) visual images such as pamphlets, flags, cartoons, and documentary films; 3) supportive, struggle, and condemnation hashtags; and 4) symbols like watermelons, kufiya or smagh, and keys. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of media in conflict zones and the importance of semiotics in interpreting resistance movements.

**Keywords:** Media Jihad, Semiotic Analysis, Symbols of Resistance

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Israel-Palestine conflict has been the focus of international attention for the past few decades, bringing to light various complex political, social, and cultural aspects (Zaher, 2009); (Baidoun, 2014); (Assaiqeli, 2021); & (Laelasari, 2023). In this context, the media plays a crucial role not only in reporting the conflict but also in voicing the resistance and aspirations of the Palestinian people (Zaher, 2009); (Baidoun, 2014); (Halewa, 2020); & (Laelasari, 2023). An intriguing aspect to investigate is how images and

symbols in Palestinian media can be interpreted through a semiotic approach. This study aims to investigate the use of symbols and visual imagery by Palestinian media to communicate their resistance against the Israeli occupation. Through a semiotic approach, this research will analyze the meanings embedded in graffiti, posters, images, and other visual media used in the context of Palestinian resistance (Assaiqeli, 2021).

This study aims to understand how symbols in Palestinian media not only convey messages of

resistance but also build collective identity and influence public perception, both within and outside Palestine (Halewa, 2020) & (Al-masri & Al-houbi, 2024). Through a critical semiotic approach, this research will also explore how these symbols are understood and interpreted differently by various audiences around the world. By delving into the semiotic interpretation of media jihad in the context of Palestinian resistance, this study hopes to provide new insights into the role of media in strengthening international solidarity, preserving cultural identity, and constructing resistance narratives in this complex conflict (Al-masri & Al-houbi, 2024).

This research is highly relevant given the importance of media as a tool for communicating not only information but also values, aspirations, and resistance within the context of the long and complex Israel-Palestine conflict. Media, including graffiti, posters, images, and social media, play a central role in responding to and reflecting the political and social dynamics on the ground (Nurhayati et al., 2021). The semiotic approach is chosen as the theoretical framework for this study because it provides a robust analytical tool for uncovering the hidden meanings in visual symbols (Al-masri & Al-houbi, 2024). Semiotic theory views media as a complex system of signs, where both verbal and visual signs not only depict the world objectively but also shape meaning through social conventions, cultural contexts, and subjective interpretations (Nurhayati et al., 2021) & (Lasino et al., 2023).

This research also emphasizes the importance of understanding how visual symbols can influence public perception and opinion, both locally and globally. For example, graffiti and murals in Palestinian cities serve not only as forms of artistic expression but also as powerful political resistance against the daily occupation and oppression they face. By delving deeper into the use of these symbols in the context of resistance, this research is expected to provide insights into how visual media can strengthen international solidarity and mobilize global support for political and social goals. Thus, this study not only explores the semiotic dimensions of media in the context of Palestine but also makes a significant contribution to the global understanding of the relationship between media, visual culture, and politics in global conflicts affecting local and international communities.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is

one of the longest and most complex conflicts in modern history. Media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, crafting narratives, and voicing resistance against occupation (Ruslan, 2022). Palestinian media, such as graffiti, posters, images, and other visual media, are often used as means to communicate messages of resistance against Israel. This study aims to explore and analyze the interpretation of Palestinian jihad media through a semiotic approach. Semiotics is chosen as the theoretical framework because it provides deep analytical tools to understand the meanings of visual symbols and texts within a broad social and cultural context. Thus, this research will not only uncover the significance of visual symbols in conveying messages of resistance but also delve into how these symbols shape collective identity and influence public perception.

So far, there has been no specific research examining the interpretation of Palestinian resistance through a semiotic approach, although some related studies remain relevant. (Laelasari, 2023) found that Al Jazeera tends to adopt a more neutral stance in news coverage, while USA Today tends to emphasize specific ideologies, implicitly showing allegiance to one side. (Halewa, 2020) found that Hamas is adapting to trends among Palestinian youth through framing strategies in online discourse to overcome offline barriers. (Assaiqeli, 2021) discovered that visual signs can reveal more about the functions of visual and multimodal communication in preserving important national themes and their role in the struggle for national liberation. (Rivai, 2024) examined the significance of individuals feeling compelled to fight for Palestine through armed means, recalling the loss of Palestinian homes and homeland, and mobilizing revolutionary groups to engage in jihad for the liberation of Palestinian land. (Daulay et al., 2024) found that resistance emerged from a woman in response to discrimination by male partners and patriarchal culture.

In addition, there are several studies that remain relevant in the context of the meaning of Jihad. (Shaughnessy & Baines, 2009) & (Ruslan, 2022) indicate that the use of the term Jihad is often associated with anarchic, radical, and terrorist actions. Research by (Suprabowo, 2020) found that the issue of Jihad is presented differently by online Islamic media, including in the selection of events, frequency of news headlines, and emphasis on specific words, examples, and illustrations used. Furthermore,

there are relevant studies in the context of political movements by (Yudistira, R., 2023) & (Mahardhani et al., 2023), discussing the strategies of peasant labor movements and the role of Kyai in specific contexts.

Other studies also make significant contributions to building social peace in communities, including those conducted by (Hairus Salikin et al., 2021); (Sutanto et al., 2022); (Muta'alim, 2022); (Muta'alim, 2022); (Muta'allim et al., 2022); (Yudistira et al., 2022); (Muta'allim et al., 2023); (Mahardhani et al., 2023); (Ghasi Pathollah et al., 2022); & (Dumiyati et al., 2023), among others. These studies examine the roles of religion, language, culture, tolerance, religious moderation, social aspects, and mutual cooperation in promoting harmony among religious communities, addressing religious, political, linguistic, cultural, and other perspectives. Relevant studies in the fields of language, intercultural communication, and symbols include those conducted by (Muta'allim et al., 2020); (Muta'allim et al., 2021); (Muta'allim et al., 2022); (Akhmad Sofyan et al., 2022); (Muta'allim et al., 2022); (Sofyan, Badrudin, et al., 2022); (Irsyadi et al., 2022); (Sofyan, Firmansyah, et al., 2022); (Suryanti et al., 2023); (Haryono et al., 2023); (Kamil et al., 2023); (Karuru et al., 2023); (Irsyadi, 2023); (Juhadi et al., 2023); & (Merizawati et al., 2023). These studies examine the role of language in various contexts such as social strategies for enhancement, cultural and political contexts, intercultural communication, teaching, development, learning, and education.

So far, there has been no specific research examining the interpretation of Palestinian resistance using a semiotic approach. This study introduces a novel approach to understanding Palestinian resistance through jihad media, employing a semiotic theoretical framework as its primary foundation. The innovation of this research lies in two main aspects. Firstly, it utilizes semiotic theory to analyze visual symbols and texts within Palestinian jihad media. Semiotic approach not only identifies the meanings embedded in these symbols but also reveals how these symbols function as representations of resistance against occupation. In the context of the complex Israel-Palestine conflict, semiotic analysis provides deep insights into how these symbols shape collective identity and influence both local and international public opinion.

Secondly, this research focuses on visual media such as graffiti, posters, and murals as forms of resistance expression. Beyond mere tools for disseminating information or propaganda, these visual media reflect the dynamics of conflict and aspirations for Palestinian independence. Thus, this study not only contributes to understanding the role of visual media in shaping strong resistance narratives but also in advocating for Palestinian rights on the global stage. It is expected to make a significant contribution to academic literature, particularly in semiotics, media and conflict, and identity and political resistance studies. The findings of this research also have broad practical implications, especially in developing more effective communication strategies to support pro-Palestinian political movements with a basis in deep and informed knowledge. Therefore, the researchers are keen to explore the interpretation of Palestinian resistance using a semiotic approach.

Based on the above research, the researcher formulates the problem, which is how the semiotic perspective can interpret forms of resistance among Palestinian society. To address this problem formulation, a semiotic study is required. Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and how meaning is constructed and communicated (Movahed & Niknejat, 2019); (Mursida, 2021); (Rivai, 2024); & (Sawitri et al., 2024). In this theory, a semiotic approach is used to analyze visual, textual, and symbolic elements used in the representation of jihad in media. Semiotic analysis helps reveal how the meaning of jihad is shaped and conveyed by the media through the use of forms of expression, visual images, variations of hashtags, and symbols. This research adopts the semiotic theory developed by C.S. Pierce, which emphasizes the sign, object, and interpretant and acknowledges the subjective aspects in the process of interpretation.

## **II. METHODS**

This study is a qualitative descriptive research that uses sentences, images, hashtags, and symbols as primary data. The data sources are derived from social media posts, news articles, and visual images. The data collection method employed is participant observation. The researcher observes sentences, images, hashtags, and symbols disseminated in social media posts, news articles, and visual images, and correlates them with their contexts based on semiotic theory. Additionally, the study involves

interviews with community leaders and several experts in the field of interpretation related to social media posts, news articles, and visual images circulated on social media. The interview technique used is unstructured and note-taking. After data collection, the researcher performs data reduction, classification, verification, and tabulation based on data types. The collected data is reduced to filter important information contained in the sentences, images, hashtags, and symbols analyzed. Subsequently, the researcher classifies the data by type and verifies it by consulting community leaders and experts in the field of interpretation to ensure accuracy and relevance of its contextual meanings. The data is then tabulated by coding it in tables according to its types. Finally, the researcher interprets and summarizes the findings from the data analysis conducted.

**III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**  
**RESULT**

The research findings indicate that Palestinian society adopts four forms of resistance, namely expression, visual imagery, hashtag variations, and symbols. Expression of resistance is manifested in hashtags like #WorldStandsWithPalestineFlag and #IsraelStopPlayingVictim. Visual imagery of resistance includes graffiti, murals, documentary videos, national flags, posters, pamphlets, as well as cartoons and caricatures. Resistance through hashtags utilizes #FreePalestine, #FreePalestineLand, #FreedomMovementForAlQuds, #PalestinianLivesMatter, and others. Meanwhile, symbols of resistance and Palestinian national identity include watermelon, Kufiya or Smagh, and the Key.

**Table 1.1: Media Jihad and Forms of Palestinian Community Resistance**

Data Code	Media Jihad	Forms of Resistance	The significance of Jihad
(EPSR01)	Expression	#WorldStandsWithPalestine	Global solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle for independence and justice.
		#IsraelStopPlayingVictim Always sholat where are you are	Strong criticism of Israel that affects public perception, portraying them as victims.
(VRIP02)	Visual imagery	Graffiti and murals	Images of walls symbolizing occupation and separation are often depicted with cracks or open doors, symbolizing hope for freedom.
		Conflict photography	Showing courage and resistance against Israel.
		Posters and pamphlets	Posters are used as tools to disseminate messages of resistance and mobilize communities.
		Cartoons and caricatures	Cartoons depicting Israeli soldiers as aggressors or oppressors, and illustrations that empathetically depict the hardships of life under occupation in a clear and understandable manner, are highly effective in conveying messages of resistance.
		National flags and symbols	Reflecting the strength, history, identity, and profound struggle within the hearts of the Palestinian people
		Videos and documentary films	Rekaman video dan film dokumenter memainkan peran penting dalam menyebarkan pesan perlawanan kepada audiens internasional
(JtH03)	Hashtags	#FreePalestine	Digital symbols of the global solidarity movement supporting the freedom and rights of the Palestinian people
		#FreePalestineLand	In symbolizing liberation for Palestine

		#FreedomMovementForAlQuds	The movement to liberate Jerusalem from Israeli control and ensure fair access for all religious communities
		#PalestinianLivesMatter	This hashtag is used to emphasize that the lives of the Palestinian people are equally valuable and should be fought for
		#Karachiuniversity	This hashtag helps build an online community for students, alumni, and staff of the University of Karachi, as well as raises awareness about issues related to Palestine
		#UnitedStatesofIsrael	Many hashtags are used to criticize the United States' policies deemed too supportive of Israel
		#ColumbiaUniversity	This hashtag highlights America's excessive support for Israel, sparking discussions and debates about the relationship between the two countries
		#GazaGenocide	Reflecting the perceived injustice felt by many worldwide regarding what is viewed as acts of genocide against the Palestinian population
(SRNIP04)	Symbols	Watermelon	Symbolizing struggle, national identity, and solidarity with the Palestinian people
		Kufiya or Shemagh	A strong symbol of national identity, representing the spirit of resistance and resilience of the Palestinian people against colonization and oppression
		Key	Symbolizing the 'Right of Return' for millions of Palestinian refugees expelled during the 1948 Nakba, when the state of Israel was established

**DISCUSSION  
EXPRESSIONS OF PALESTINIAN  
SOCIETY'S RESISTANCE (EPSR01)**

In this regard, there is an expression of support from the account holder @Mxllan for the Palestinian people, stating:

#WorldStandsWithPalestineFlag of Palestinian Territories #IsraelStopPlayingVictim Always sholat where are you are. (Sumber: <https://nasional.sindonews.com/read/430090/15/kecam-serangan-israel-tagar-worldstandwithpalestine-menggema-di-twitter-1621310736>).

In today's interconnected world of social media, tweets from the @Mxllan account depict a stirring narrative within the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Through the use of hashtags like #WorldStandsWithPalestine and the Palestinian flag emoji, the tweet expresses deep global solidarity with the Palestinian

people's struggle for freedom and justice. However, the tweet goes beyond mere expressions of solidarity. By using the hashtag #IsraelStopPlayingVictim, @Mxllan explores a critical perspective on narratives that often portray Israel as a victim in the conflict. This reflects the complexity and inequality in public interpretations of this intricate conflict. Beyond political aspects, the tweet integrates a profound religious dimension with the phrase "Always sholat where are you are", highlighting the importance of maintaining religious identity amidst the pressures of prolonged conflict. This serves not only as a reminder of religious values but also as a statement that conflict should not disrupt or erase fundamental religious practices. Therefore, the narrative in this tweet leverages social media as a platform to voice complex views on politics, global solidarity, and religious values in the sensitive global context of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

## VISUAL RESISTANCE IN PALESTINE (VRIP02)

Visual imagery wields profound influence in conveying messages and stirring emotions. In Palestine, a variety of visual forms serve as instruments of resistance, articulating the plight and aspirations of Palestinians under occupation. These images not only embody symbols of defiance but also play a pivotal role in shaping identity and fostering solidarity among Palestinians and the global community. This discussion explores visual expressions such as graffiti and murals, documentaries and films, national flags and symbols, posters and pamphlets, as well as cartoons and caricatures.

### 1. Graffiti and Murals

Graffiti and murals are among the most prominent forms of visual expression in Palestine. Walls in cities like the West Bank and Gaza are often adorned with images rich in symbolic meaning. For instance, the key motif frequently appears as a symbol of the right of return for Palestinian refugees. Wall paintings symbolize occupation and separation, often depicted with cracks or open doors to signify hope for freedom. Portraits of resistance figures are also prevalent, depicting revered leaders or martyrs, serving as inspirations for the community.

### 2. Conflict Photography

Conflict photographs serve as powerful tools in documenting and communicating the realities of life under occupation. For example, photographs of demonstrations often depict Palestinian civilians protesting in the face of Israeli armed forces. Images of Palestinian children throwing stones as a symbol of resistance or studying under threat are particularly poignant. Documentation of the violence experienced by civilians, including pictures of destroyed homes and injured victims, circulates widely, highlighting the harsh realities of the situation.

**Figure 2.1: Acts of Solidarity in Support of Palestine**



### 3. Posters and Pamphlets

Posters and pamphlets are frequently utilized as tools to disseminate messages of resistance and mobilize communities. Posters featuring Palestinian martyrs often include words of praise for their courage, while protest action pamphlets provide information about protest activities and other forms of resistance aimed at mobilizing mass participation.

**Figure 2.2: Call to Action for Defending Palestine**



### 4. Political Cartoons and Caricatures

Political cartoons and caricatures are often used in newspapers and social media to critique occupation and highlight the suffering of the Palestinian people. Caricatures depicting Israeli soldiers as aggressors or oppressors, along with cartoons illustrating the hardships of life under occupation in a simple yet profound manner, are highly effective in conveying messages of resistance.

### 5. The Palestinian Flag

The Palestinian flag is a deeply profound and powerful symbol, reflecting the history, identity, and profound struggle in the hearts of the Palestinian people. In addition to the Palestinian flag, national symbols like the keffiyeh scarf are also frequently used in various visual forms to express identity and national pride. The Palestinian flag is always prominent in protest actions, often hoisted high to signify the spirit of resistance. The keffiyeh scarf, symbolizing resistance and national identity, is also commonly seen in protest photos.

**Figure 2.3: Significance of the Palestinian Flag Symbol**



The Palestinian flag consists of four distinct colors arranged in a characteristic pattern,

holding deep significance for those pursuing freedom and justice. The color black symbolizes a dark past and periods of oppression experienced by the Palestinian people, while also portraying strength and resilience in facing trials. White represents hope and peace, symbolizing aspirations for a better and peaceful future. Green signifies fertile land and rich agricultural life in Palestine, holding significant value in Islam for many Palestinian residents. Red reflects the spirit of struggle, courage, and honor for the martyrs who have fallen defending their homeland. The flag's structure, featuring three horizontal stripes of black, white, and green with a red triangle on the left, not only symbolizes the unity of these elements but also follows the tradition of the Pan-Arab Flag, asserting solidarity with other Arab nations. More than just a national emblem, the Palestinian flag serves as a reminder of ongoing struggles, a testament to the determination to fight for fair rights and the freedoms they have long sought. It stands as a symbol of pride and national identity, continually inspiring the Palestinian people in their pursuit of true independence.

#### 6. Video and Documentary Films

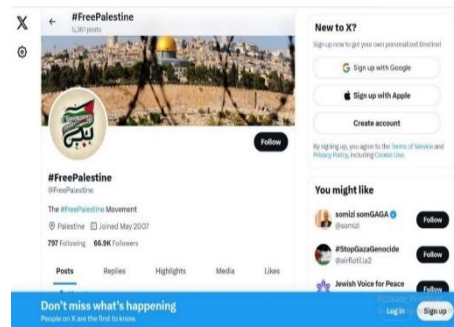
Video recordings and documentary films play a crucial role in disseminating messages of resistance to international audiences. Social media uploads of protest actions showcase the courage of Palestinians directly. Meanwhile, documentary films depicting daily life under occupation provide deep insights into the suffering and resilience of Palestinian society. Visual imagery of resistance in Palestine is a highly effective tool in conveying messages and fostering global solidarity. Graffiti, photography, posters, cartoons, national symbols, and other audiovisual media all serve as means for Palestinians to express their resistance, build collective identity, and draw global attention to their struggle. These images are not only vital for internal communication but also play a significant role in garnering support and sympathy from the international community.

### JIHAD THROUGH HASHTAGS (JtH03): THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE

On social media, there are various hashtags including #FreePalestine, #FreePalestineLand, #FreedomMovementForAlQuds, #PalestinianLivesMatter, #karachiuniversity, #UnitedStatesofIsrael, #ColumbiaUniversity,

and #GazaGenocide.

**Figure 2.4: Jihad Through the Hashtag #FreePalestine**



The hashtag #FreePalestine is a digital symbol of the global solidarity movement supporting the independence and rights of the Palestinian people. In recent years, this hashtag has become a crucial tool on social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to mobilize support, raise awareness, and disseminate information related to the Palestinian struggle. The solidarity movement with Palestine has been ongoing for decades, but the use of the #FreePalestine hashtag has significantly increased with the rise of social media. It gained popularity in the early 2010s and has continued to grow alongside escalations in conflicts in Palestinian territories, including military attacks and illegal settlement construction in the West Bank. By using this hashtag, social media users worldwide can show their solidarity with the Palestinian people, increase global awareness, and urge governments and international organizations to take concrete steps in supporting their rights and ending the occupation.

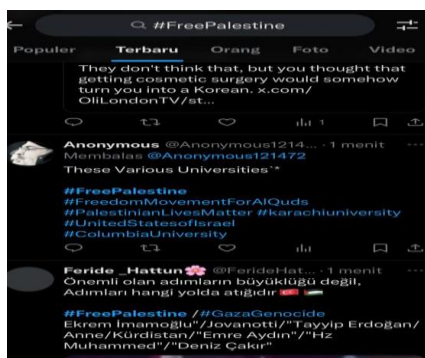
The use of the hashtag #FreePalestine on social media has had a significant impact. This hashtag helps rapidly disseminate news and updates about the situation in Palestine, often faster than traditional media. Moreover, campaigns to raise humanitarian aid for Palestine frequently utilize this hashtag to reach a broader audience of donors. #FreePalestine also plays a role in organizing protests and demonstrations in various countries, demonstrating global solidarity through tangible actions. However, despite its widespread support, this hashtag also faces various challenges and criticisms. The Palestinian issue often sparks intense debates and polarization on social media, where supporters and detractors hold strong views. This reflects the complexity and sensitivity of this issue on a global scale.

The hashtag #FreePalestine indeed serves as

a crucial tool in the global solidarity movement to support the rights of Palestinians on social media platforms. However, like other hashtags, there are concerns that it may be misused to spread inaccurate information or propaganda. Therefore, it is essential to always verify the source of information before sharing or believing it. Additionally, some social media platforms occasionally censor content deemed controversial, including issues related to Palestine. Nevertheless, the #FreePalestine hashtag continues to play a vital role in raising global awareness, disseminating accurate information, and rallying international support for peace efforts and independence in Palestine. Despite facing various challenges, this hashtag remains a symbol of struggle and hope for the Palestinian people in their quest for sustainable freedom and peace.

Hashtags on social media serve as critical tools that allow users to group conversations and content based on specific topics. They play a crucial role in disseminating information, shaping public opinion, and mobilizing support for various social, political, and cultural issues. In the context of supporting Palestine, several hashtags reflect diverse issues, such as #FreePalestine, #FreedomMovementForAlQuds, #PalestinianLivesMatter, #karachiuniversity, #UnitedStatesofIsrael, #ColumbiaUniversity, and #GazaGenocide. Each of these hashtags enables social media users to participate in global solidarity movements, convey messages of support, and organize protests and other activities to advocate for the rights of the Palestinian people.

**Figure 2.5: Varieties of Jihad Hashtags on Social Media**



The hashtag #FreePalestine is one of the most commonly used tags to express support for the freedom and independence of Palestine from Israeli occupation. Widely used by activists, politicians, celebrities, and the general public, this hashtag aims to raise awareness about the

issues faced by the Palestinian people. Its use often accompanies images, videos, and personal stories depicting their suffering and struggles. The impact of this hashtag includes mobilizing international support and increasing media attention on the Palestine-Israel conflict, sparking global discussions and solidarity campaigns.

Additionally, the hashtag #FreedomMovementForAlQuds represents a movement to liberate the city of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) from Israeli occupation. Al-Quds holds significant religious and historical importance for Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike. This hashtag is used to highlight efforts aimed at freeing Jerusalem from Israeli control and ensuring fair access for all religious communities. Through demonstrations, awareness campaigns, and diplomatic efforts, #FreedomMovementForAlQuds emphasizes the importance of Jerusalem and supports the movement to liberate the city. This hashtag has successfully drawn international attention to the status of Jerusalem and promoted narratives advocating for fair and peaceful access to this sacred city.

The hashtag #PalestinianLivesMatter is a movement inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, where it is used to assert that the lives of Palestinians have equal value and should be respected. Its use involves protests against the violence, oppression, and human rights violations experienced by Palestinians. This hashtag often appears in advocacy campaigns, articles, and social media, demonstrating global solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. Its impact strengthens the global movement for human rights and equality, drawing attention to the suffering of Palestinians in the context of the global struggle against injustice.

Additionally, the hashtag #karachiuniversity is closely associated with the University of Karachi in Pakistan, one of the oldest and largest educational institutions in the country. Its use involves sharing news, events, and issues related to the university, such as academic announcements, student activities, research, and social campaigns. This hashtag helps build an online community for students, alumni, and staff of the University of Karachi, while highlighting the issues faced by the university. Furthermore, the hashtag #UnitedStatesofIsrael is often used to criticize the United States' policy perceived as overly supportive of Israel. This tag is typically



used by those opposing US foreign policy in the Middle East and appears in political discussions, opinion articles, and protests. #UnitedStatesofIsrael highlights America's excessive support for Israel, sparking discussions and debates about the relationship between the US and Israel. Its impact includes prompting critical examination of US foreign policy and raising awareness of the political implications of this relationship.

The hashtag #ColumbiaUniversity is closely associated with Columbia University in New York, one of the world's renowned Ivy League universities. Its use involves sharing campus news, research updates, events, and issues relevant to the Columbia University community. This hashtag helps foster an online community among students, alumni, and staff of Columbia University, while drawing attention to academic achievements and challenges faced by the institution. These hashtags play a crucial role in shaping and disseminating narratives on social media. They enable users to voice support, share information, and build communities around issues they care about. Analysis of the use and impact of each hashtag demonstrates how they contribute to global conversations and mobilize support for various movements and issues. Hashtags are powerful tools for creating social and political change, as well as increasing awareness and solidarity among social media users worldwide.

The hashtag #GazaGenocide resonates as a powerful voice, highlighting the brutality and destruction in Gaza by the Israeli military. More than just a symbol, this hashtag reflects the perceived injustice felt globally towards what is deemed as acts of genocide against the Palestinian population. Its use aims to raise global awareness of the conflict in Gaza. Through various digital platforms, information about military attacks causing countless casualties, including innocent women and children, spreads widely. Furthermore, #GazaGenocide serves as a call to action. By voicing pain and injustice, users of this hashtag hope to garner greater international support to pressure governments and international organizations to take concrete steps to end the violence and restore peace in the region. However, the use of the #GazaGenocide hashtag is not without criticism. Referring to genocide raises controversy, with some questioning whether Israel's actions truly meet the international legal definition of genocide. This

has deepened global polarization, intensifying conflicting views on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Therefore, #GazaGenocide is not merely a hashtag but also a digital movement influencing public opinion, stirring consciences, and advocating for peace and justice for the Gaza residents affected by the prolonged conflict.

## **SYMBOLS OF RESISTANCE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN PALESTINE (SRNIP04)**

In Palestine, symbols of resistance feature attire and emblems that reflect the spirit of struggle and national identity. These include the Watermelon, Kufiya or Shemagh, and the Key Emblem, each carrying profound meanings representing solidarity, resistance, and the hope for independence.

### **1. Watermelon**

Watermelon has become a highly meaningful symbol in the Palestinian context, symbolizing struggle, national identity, and solidarity with the Palestinian people. The use of watermelon as a symbol has a deep history and significance, reflected in several important aspects as follows.

#### **Figure 2.6: Representation of the Watermelon in relation to Palestine**



The red interior and green rind of the watermelon directly symbolize the colors of the Palestinian flag, evoking the struggle of nationalism and Palestinian identity. The black seeds and white fibers inside the watermelon complete the four main colors of the Palestinian flag. Watermelon serves as a strong visual representation of national pride and the aspirations of the Palestinian people. Under Israeli occupation, Palestinian national symbols are often prohibited or removed. Using watermelon as a symbol is a creative way to circumvent these restrictions while still expressing identity and national solidarity. Watermelon as a symbol of peaceful resistance is deeply meaningful, depicting the Palestinian people's efforts to maintain their identity amidst pressure and oppression. It also reflects the courage and resilience of Palestinians in the face

of adversity and conflict, embodying a symbol of steadfast resistance and unwavering spirit.

Watermelon, with its large and robust form, serves as a metaphor for the resilience and courage of the Palestinian people in defending their rights and fighting for independence. The use of watermelon as a symbol of resistance has spread widely on social media, where many activists and supporters of Palestine incorporate watermelon imagery into their online campaigns. This helps spread messages of solidarity and raises global awareness about the Palestinian struggle. Hashtags and watermelon images frequently appear in social media posts supporting Palestinian rights, making watermelon a recognizable and powerful visual symbol. In the broader context, watermelon as a symbol represents a creative and peaceful expression of Palestinian resistance and national identity. This symbol reminds us of the importance of solidarity and the struggle for justice and freedom. By utilizing the watermelon symbol, Palestinians and their supporters worldwide can convey messages of resistance and hope for a better, peaceful future.

## 2. The Kufiya or Shemagh

The Kufiya or Shemagh symbol in Palestine holds deep and symbolic meanings that reflect the identity, struggle, and cultural heritage of the Palestinian society.

**Figure 2.7: Symbol of identity, struggle, and cultural heritage of Palestinian society**



Historically, the Kufiya has been a powerful symbol of national identity, representing the spirit of resistance and resilience of the Palestinian people against occupation and oppression. Since the first Intifada in the late 1980s, the Kufiya has become a symbol of resistance against Israeli occupation, demonstrating solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. Beyond being a symbol of resistance, the Kufiya is also an integral part of Palestinian culture and tradition. Originally used by farmers to protect themselves from the sun and dust, the Kufiya has evolved into a rich cultural emblem. The patterns on the Kufiya, such as the fishnet

and wheat motifs, symbolize the Palestinian community's connection to the sea and their history of fishing and agriculture, which are vital parts of their lives. Outside of Palestine, the Kufiya has transcended geographical boundaries to become a global symbol of struggle against oppression and injustice. Worn by various solidarity groups worldwide, the Kufiya carries a universal message of freedom and human rights. Therefore, the Kufiya or Shemagh is not just a piece of clothing but also a narrative of history, culture, and strong resilience, which remains alive and relevant in the hearts and minds of Palestinians and their supporters worldwide.

## 3. The Key Emblem

The Key Emblem, or in Arabic "المفتاح" (al-miftaah), holds a deeply symbolic meaning in the Palestinian context. Traditionally depicted as a golden key on a red background, often incorporating the colors of the Palestinian flag, its symbolic significance is closely tied to the history and struggle of the Palestinian people for their homeland. Historically, the key emblem symbolizes ownership rights and the right to land long inhabited by Palestinian families. It embodies the belief that the key is a symbol of the "right of return" to their ancestral land in Palestine.

**Figure 2.8: The Key Emblem symbolizing the "Right to Return"**



The Key Emblem symbolizes the "Right to Return" for millions of Palestinian refugees who were displaced from their homes during the 1948 Nakba (catastrophe) when the state of Israel was established. For Palestinian refugees, this key is a symbol of hope and determination to one day return to the homes and lands they left behind. Often passed down as a family heirloom through generations, the key reminds refugees and their descendants of their origins and lost homes. This emblem has become a symbol of Palestinian identity and collective memory, keeping alive the memory of their lost homeland in their hearts. Moreover, the key also symbolizes the resilience and resistance of the Palestinian people against occupation and oppression. It signifies that despite adversity, Palestinians never forget their

rights and continue to fight for freedom and justice. This resilience reflects an unyielding spirit of struggle amidst pressure. Beyond the Palestinian context, the key has also become a universal symbol for the struggle against oppression and injustice. Various solidarity groups worldwide use this key emblem to support the rights of refugees and those displaced from their homes, making it a symbol of unity in the global struggle against injustice. Thus, the Palestinian key symbol is more than just an emblem; it carries a message of history, identity, hope, and strong perseverance for the Palestinian people and their supporters worldwide. This emblem serves as a reminder of unfulfilled rights and the determination to continue striving for freedom and justice.

### **JIHAD IN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE (JIP05)**

Jihad, as a concept in Islam, carries complex and multifaceted dimensions. Its understanding often varies depending on the context and perspective used. To gain a comprehensive understanding, it is important to analyze the meaning of jihad through an interdisciplinary approach that includes theological, sociological, political, and communication perspectives. Theologically, jihad is traditionally understood as “striving” or “struggling”. In religious texts, there are two main forms of jihad, namely Jihad Akbar (Greater Jihad), which refers to the spiritual struggle against one's own desires and internal temptations, and Jihad Asghar (Lesser Jihad), which involves physical struggle such as self-defense and resistance against oppression.

Interpretations by scholars and religious figures provide historical context and modern relevance to the meaning of jihad, explaining how this concept is applied in the everyday lives of Muslims. Sociologically, jihad is understood and applied differently across various global Muslim communities. Significant differences can be observed between urban and rural societies in the interpretation and practice of jihad, which often intersects with broader social movements such as the struggle for social justice or against corruption. Sociological analysis helps understand the social dynamics influencing interpretations and practices of jihad. From a political perspective, the concept of jihad is often used to legitimize power or policies by states and specific political groups. It is also frequently exploited by radical groups to recruit members and gain support, impacting regional and global

political stability. A political approach allows for analysis of how jihad is used as a tool of power, as well as responses by governments and the international community to these challenges.

The communication perspective highlights the role of media in shaping and disseminating narratives about jihad. There are significant differences between traditional media and social media in terms of reach and influence. Social media enables rapid and widespread dissemination of information, which various groups use to promote their views on jihad. Analysis of communication strategies, including rhetoric and symbolism, provides insights into public perceptions of jihad. An interdisciplinary approach also includes a psychological perspective, examining the psychological factors that drive individuals to engage in jihad, both as spiritual and physical struggle. The mental and emotional processes in radicalization, as well as efforts in de-radicalization and social reintegration, are central to this analysis.

From an economic perspective, jihad is viewed in an economic context, such as jihad against poverty and efforts to enhance community welfare through halal and ethical economic activities. Analysis of the funding sources of groups claiming to engage in jihad, and international efforts to disrupt these funding channels, are integral parts of this study. By integrating these various perspectives, we can conduct a holistic analysis of the meaning of jihad. This helps identify the complexities and dynamics associated with the use and misuse of the concept of jihad in different contexts. Through specific case studies, interviews, observations, and media data analysis, we can develop a comprehensive understanding of jihad as a dynamic and complex social, political, and communicative phenomenon. This interdisciplinary approach is crucial for developing effective strategies to address issues related to jihad in the modern era. With deeper understanding, we can provide recommendations for public education and more effective policies in addressing challenges related to the interpretation of jihad in social media and real-life contexts.

### **THE CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF JIHAD IN THE MODERN ERA (TCSJIME06)**

In the modern era marked by rapid developments in information technology and communication, social media has become the

primary platform for disseminating information and shaping public opinion. Social media not only influences social and political life but also plays a key role in the interpretation and understanding of religious concepts, including jihad. Jihad, which means "struggle" or "striving" in Arabic, has various meanings and interpretations in Islam. Traditionally, jihad has often been understood in the context of spiritual struggle against temptations and internal evils. However, in recent decades, the concept of jihad has been contextualized and reinterpreted influenced by social, political, and cultural factors. Social media adds complexity to this by facilitating widespread and rapid dissemination of diverse views by various groups and individuals.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have become new battlegrounds where the meaning of jihad is debated and promoted. Various narratives about jihad, both moderate and extreme, are easily found on these platforms. Religious figures, influencers, and organizations use social media to convey their messages to a global audience with diverse backgrounds and understandings. This research aims to analyze how the meaning of jihad is interpreted contextually in the modern era with social media as the primary tool for information dissemination. Through content analysis of social media, interviews with religious experts, and case studies, this research will explore the evolving narratives about jihad and how these narratives influence public understanding.

This research also discuss the social and political implications of interpretations of jihad on social media, including the potential for radicalization and governmental responses to this phenomenon. Thus, this study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the dynamics of interpreting jihad in the digital era and its contribution to religious discourse in the modern global context. Additionally, the research seeks to offer recommendations for public education and more effective policies in addressing issues related to the interpretation of jihad on social media. The study provides a deep understanding of how the Palestinian resistance is represented in the media of jihad through symbols and signs. This helps uncover how media shape and communicate narratives of resistance.

By applying semiotic theory in the context of conflict and media jihad, this research also contributes to the development and expansion of

semiotic theory, particularly in understanding communication and interpretation in conflict situations. The integration of various disciplines such as communication, media studies, and sociology provides a holistic and rich perspective on the phenomenon of Palestinian resistance and its use in media jihad. The focus on visual and audiovisual analysis enriches the study of the role of images, videos, and music in constructing narratives of resistance, which significantly contributes to media studies and visual communication research. The implications of this research can be utilized by policymakers and media organizations to understand how messages of resistance are crafted, delivered, and their impact on audiences, aiding in formulating more effective communication strategies.

Furthermore, this research has the potential to be utilized in an educational context to enhance awareness of how media influences perceptions and public opinions about conflicts, as well as to help communities become more critical media consumers. By uncovering how Palestinian resistance is represented in jihadist media, this study also delves into understanding the dynamics of culture and identity in conflict contexts, contributing to cultural and national identity studies. The findings from this research can serve as a foundation for developing more effective social policy and interventions to address the impacts of jihadist media, as well as efforts to promote peace and conflict resolution. The implications of this research also include the development of more comprehensive academic curricula in media, communication, and conflict studies, preparing students to understand and analyze complex phenomena in the modern media world. Thus, this research not only contributes to the development of academic theory and knowledge but also has broad practical implications for communication strategies, education, policy-making, and cultural understanding in conflict contexts.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

This research endeavors to reveal the diverse forms of resistance employed by the Palestinian community through a semiotic lens. The study identifies four primary forms of resistance. Firstly, expressions conveyed through hashtags such as #WorldStandsWithPalestineFlag and #IsraelStopPlayingVictim highlight global solidarity and challenge dominant narratives. Secondly, visual representations including graffiti, murals, documentary videos, national

flags, posters, pamphlets, cartoons, and caricatures serve to visually articulate Palestinian narratives and experiences. Thirdly, the strategic use of hashtags like #FreePalestine, #FreePalestineLand, #FreedomMovementForAlQuds, #PalestinianLivesMatter, #karachiuniversity, UnitedStatesofIsrael, and #ColumbiaUniversity amplifies advocacy efforts and mobilizes international support. Lastly, the embodiment of Palestinian statehood through symbols like the watermelon, Kufiya or Smagh (traditional Palestinian headscarf), and the Key symbol encapsulates enduring cultural and national identities amidst ongoing challenges. These findings underscore how semiotic strategies empower Palestinians to assert their voice, challenge perceptions, and assert their rights on the global stage amidst ongoing conflict.

This research needs to be extended by adopting several strategic and methodological approaches in depth. Firstly, a multidisciplinary approach that integrates semiotics with discourse analysis, communication studies, and media theory will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how jihadist media interprets and conveys Palestinian resistance. Moreover, comparative studies are crucial to comprehend the variation in jihadist media representations across platforms such as television, internet, and social media, as well as their differences and similarities in various countries or regions. This approach will help identify patterns and shifts in the narratives of resistance used by jihadist media. Longitudinal analysis is also necessary to explore the evolution of Palestinian resistance representations in jihadist media over time. This research can encompass changes in the use of symbols, narratives, and communication strategies that reflect the evolving dynamics of the conflict. Understanding the influence of jihadist media representations on public perceptions of Palestinian resistance, both domestically and internationally, is also crucial. This study can uncover how jihadist media shapes public opinion, mobilizes support, or generates opposition to Palestinian resistance. Therefore, this research will not only enhance our understanding of jihadist media and Palestinian resistance but also provide a solid foundation for developing more effective policies and communication strategies to address these complex dynamics.

Participatory studies involving activists, academics, and the general public can provide

valuable insights into how various groups interpret and react to the symbols and narratives used in jihadist media. The involvement of diverse stakeholders enriches understanding of the reception and impact of jihadist media messages. Focusing on visual and audiovisual analysis of jihadist media content, including images, videos, and music, is also crucial. This research can reveal how visual and audiovisual elements are used to construct narratives of resistance and influence the emotions of audiences. Placing jihadist media representations in a broader cultural and historical context is essential to understanding how Palestinian resistance is influenced by and influences cultural and national identities. This contextual study provides a more holistic perspective on the dynamics of resistance. The influence of new technologies and media, such as social media and instant messaging applications, in disseminating messages of resistance and mobilizing support should also be explored. This research will uncover how jihadist media utilizes these technologies to reach wider audiences. Gender perspectives in jihadist media representations are also an area that warrants investigation. Such studies can uncover the role of gender in resistance narratives and how this affects public perceptions of the conflict. Finally, developing new theoretical frameworks that integrate semiotic theory with resistance theory and media studies will provide a more holistic perspective in analyzing jihadist media. These theoretical frameworks can help researchers understand the complexity of communication and culture in conflict contexts.

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