



## A Case Study of the Hashtag #Freepalestine: Cultural Communication and Public Opinion Transformation

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**ABSTRACT:** This study involves an in-depth analysis of Cultural Communication and Public Opinion Transformation through a case study of the hashtag #FreePalestine on social media. The Israeli-Palestinian controversy sparked a significant shift in public opinion, and these hashtags became an important instrument in weaving complex online narratives. This research aims to understand the impact of Cultural Communication through the hashtag #FreePalestine in transforming public opinion. Her focus includes online mobilization, influence on policy, changing international perceptions, and the formation of activist movements. This research method uses a mixed approach, namely combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. Data collection was carried out on 6 – 25 December 2023. Social media analysis was carried out to track trends, sentiment and relationship networks, while interviews and surveys were used to gain a deeper understanding of the influence of opinion transformation in the real world. This research shows that the hashtag #FreePalestine not only creates changes in online opinion but also mobilizes real action and shapes global narratives that influence policy and business. Cultural communication on social media is key to understanding further impact, with image visualization and visual solidarity being key elements in changing public opinion. The real-world implication of these findings is the importance of understanding the role of social media in shaping public perceptions and opinions regarding global conflict. In the future, this can serve as a guide for policy makers, activists and researchers to design more effective communication strategies in addressing sensitive issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

**Keywords:** Cultural Communication, Political Opinion, Social Transformation, Social Media



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## INTRODUCTION

Cultural communication and the transformation of public opinion are two interrelated elements in the dynamics of the development of contemporary society. In this era of globalization, the role

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of social media has become increasingly dominant in shaping narratives and people's views on various issues, including global issues such as conflicts in the Middle East, especially the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ([Chiocca, 2021](#)). The hashtag #FreePalestine represents a form of resistance in cyberspace, which shows how social media can be a space to voice aspirations and opinions widely.

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine has been in the international spotlight for decades. It has sparked tensions around the world and created polarization among the global community. Social media, as a mass communication tool, provides a platform for individuals and groups to express their views on this conflict ([Gutman & Tirosh, 2021](#)).

Facebook (FB), Instagram (IG), and other platforms have become arenas of intense debate regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Social media users not only share information but also discuss debate, and voice support or disagreement on various issues related to the conflict.

Space X, a space exploration company led by Elon Musk, is not only a center of technological innovation but also a forum for voicing views on global issues. Space X's involvement in the online dialog may provide a new dimension to understanding public opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. ([Zhang et al., 2022](#)).

The hashtag #FreePalestine has become a symbol of the digital movement supporting Palestinian independence. Through tracing this hashtag across different social media platforms, it is possible to analyze how public opinion changes over time and how this transformation is reflected in online interactions on Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms ([Abu-Dahrooj, 2019](#)). Through an in-depth analysis of online interactions on Space X, Facebook, and Instagram related to the #FreePalestine hashtag, we can understand how cultural communication through social media plays a key role in shaping and transforming public opinion in the context of complex global conflicts. ([Divine, 2019](#)).

The hashtag #FreePalestine has become a symbol of the digital movement supporting the freedom of Palestine. By tracking this hashtag across various social media platforms, we can analyze how public opinion evolves over time and how this transformation is reflected in online interactions on Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms ([Abu-Dahrooj, 2019](#)). Through in-depth analysis of online interactions on Space X, Facebook, and Instagram related to the #FreePalestine hashtag, we can understand how cultural communication through social media plays a crucial role in shaping and transforming public opinion in the context of a complex global conflict.

**Tabel 1.** Phenomenon on Social Media

<b>Year</b>	<b>Recent Phenomena/Issues in the Israel-Palestine Conflict on Social Media</b>
2021	Increase in the use of social media platforms as the primary channel for information and discussion related to the conflict.
2022	Emergence of viral campaigns utilizing the hashtag #StandWithPalestine and its impact on global public opinion.
2023	Controversial roles of public figures in responding to the conflict, along with intense debates occurring in the online space.

Cultural communication serves as the fundamental basis in the process of shaping individual and group identities. Through symbolic exchanges such as language, values, and norms, individuals articulate and understand their cultural meanings. Cultural communication creates a complex network between individuals and society, enriching identities with cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation. In this context, language serves not only as a communication tool but also as a means to depict the cultural reality that shapes an individual's worldview. In the era of globalization, cultural communication becomes increasingly crucial as cultural interactions expand. This process creates an environment where diverse cultures interact, influence each other, and establish new forms of intercultural communication. This concept emphasizes the importance of sensitivity to cultural differences and the ability to communicate effectively amidst global diversity. Social media has transformed the landscape of cultural communication by providing a global platform for the exchange of information and cultural expression. The use of hashtags, such as #FreePalestine, is an example of how social media facilitates massive cultural communication. Hashtags serve as tools to organize, unite, and disseminate messages on an unprecedented scale.

Cultural communication is a key cornerstone in the process of individual and group identity formation. Through symbolic exchanges such as language, values, and norms, individuals articulate and understand the meaning of their culture. Cultural communication creates complex networks between individuals and society, enriching identities with cultural heritage that is passed on through generations. In this context, language is not only a means of communication but also a means of describing cultural realities that shape one's worldview.

In the era of globalization, cultural communication is becoming increasingly important as intercultural interaction becomes more widespread. This process creates an environment where different cultures interact, influence each other, and create new forms of intercultural communication. This concept emphasizes the importance of sensitivity to cultural differences and the ability to communicate effectively amidst global diversity. Intercultural communication is not just about respecting differences, but also delving into a deeper understanding of the cultural backgrounds and values that underpin the interaction.

Social media has changed the landscape of cultural communication by providing a global platform for information exchange and cultural expression. The use of hashtags, such as #FreePalestine, is

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an example of how social media facilitates massive cultural communication. Hashtags became a tool to organize, unify, and spread messages on an unprecedented scale. Social media accelerates the distribution of culture, creating space for cultural identities and expressions that may not be able to reach the same audience through traditional channels.

Actors and influencers play an important role in shaping cultural communication. Their presence on social media allows them to have great influence in introducing, amplifying, or shifting public opinion towards a particular culture or issue. Collaboration between actors or influencers and cultural initiatives can extend the reach of the message and enrich the narrative. The involvement of actors in cultural communication can lend legitimacy and make the message more acceptable to a wider audience.

While cultural communication brings many opportunities, there are also significant challenges. Miscommunication or cultural stereotypes can arise if there is insufficient understanding. Therefore, it is important to develop cultural literacy to improve understanding and reduce conflict. Cultural communication also opens the door to greater dialog and collaboration, enabling an exchange of ideas and values that can enrich the global community. By understanding these challenges and opportunities, cultural communication can be a powerful tool for building understanding, forging cross-cultural connections, and promoting global cooperation.

Public opinion transformation is a phenomenon that reflects changes in people's perceptions and attitudes towards a particular issue or topic. This process is dynamic and involves a variety of factors that can influence the collective views of a group or society as a whole. Public opinion transformation does not happen suddenly but develops over time as a result of the complex interaction between information, experience, and social factors.

The mass media plays a key role in the transformation of public opinion. As the main conduit of information, the mass media can shape the narrative and direct public attention to an issue. Through consistent reporting or specific framing, mass media can significantly influence the way the public understands and responds to a topic, thereby triggering a transformation in public opinion.

Opinion leaders and opinion groups have great influence in shaping the transformation of public opinion. They can mobilize, persuade, or motivate the public through their communications. In many cases, public opinion transformation is initiated by individuals or groups that have significant authority or popularity. Opinion leaders can be catalysts for changing views and can play an important role in steering public opinion in a particular direction.

Social and cultural factors play an important role in shaping and changing public opinion. Societal values, social norms, and cultural changes can be key triggers in the transformation process. In addition, factors such as demographics, education, and personal experiences also contribute to shaping an individual's viewpoint and, therefore, have the potential to change public opinion as a whole.

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While it is important to understand the transformation of public opinion, a major challenge lies in accurate evaluation and understanding. Public opinion is heterogeneous, and many variables contribute to people's views. In addition, digital dynamics and technological advancements have introduced new platforms that complicate the analysis of public opinion transformation. Therefore, careful research and multidisciplinary studies are needed to fully understand how and why public opinion changes over time.

Cultural communication and public opinion transformation have become an increasingly critical research focus in the contemporary digital age. This phenomenon has received special attention through the use of social media as the main means of communication. The case study of the #FreePalestine hashtag offers an interesting and in-depth perspective on how cultural communication can be a driving force in changing public opinion globally.

Cultural communication as a key concept in this research framework, refers to symbolic exchanges involving cultural elements such as language, norms, values, and symbols. In the context of the #FreePalestine hashtag, cultural communication plays a central role in shaping narratives and creating solidarity. Social media, as the main medium of cultural communication today, provides an indispensable space for message exchange and opinion formation. Hashtags become effective instruments in tagging and categorizing related content, making it easier for users to participate and access relevant information.

The importance of social media in supporting cultural communication is reflected in the role of the hashtag #FreePalestine. This hashtag not only reflects political demands on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but has also become a cultural expression signaling support for human rights. By utilizing social media, these messages can reach a wider audience and stimulate public participation in global issues.

The transformation of public opinion as a result of intense cultural communication through social media is another compelling aspect of this study. The transformation of public opinion includes changes in people's attitudes and views on certain issues. Hashtag #FreePalestine provides a concrete example of how social media can be an agent of public opinion transformation. In the development of this campaign, it can be seen that social media is not only a means to convey messages but also a tool to mobilize mass support.

Activities on social media, especially those related to the #FreePalestine hashtag, show the great influence of actors and influencers. Messages delivered by influential figures can quickly gain public attention and shape their opinions. The participation of actors and influencers in these campaigns creates legitimacy and authority, strengthening the messages conveyed and increasing their impact in shaping public opinion.

The case study of the #FreePalestine hashtag also reveals the complexity of the responses and controversies that emerged. Despite widespread support, the hashtag also generated controversy and resistance from some groups. These controversies create complex dynamics in the process of transforming public opinion, reflecting the diversity of views and interpretations of global issues.

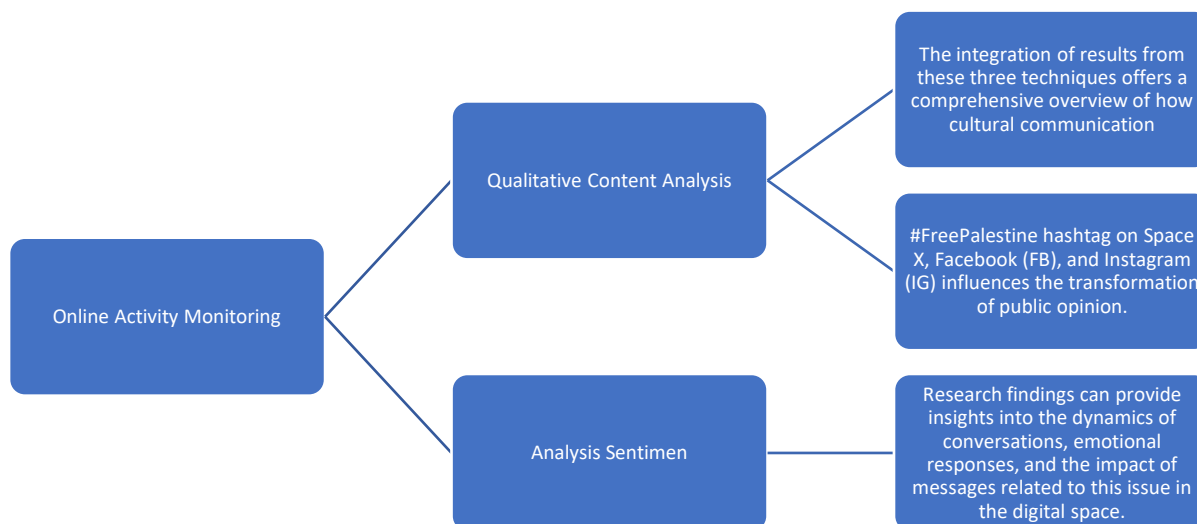
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The history and origins of the #FreePalestine hashtag provide additional insights into the dynamics of cultural communication and public opinion transformation. The hashtag not only reflects a reaction to current events but also symbolizes longstanding resistance and struggle. The use of these hashtags as a means of messaging and solidarity creates a historical dimension that connects the past, present, and future.

The role of governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the #FreePalestine campaign adds to the complexity of this case study. The involvement of these actors gave the campaign a broader political and humanitarian dimension. Through political and humanitarian support, governments and NGOs contributed to the creation of a richer and more diverse narrative.

In conclusion, the #FreePalestine hashtag case study provides a powerful illustration of how cultural communication through social media can trigger the transformation of public opinion globally. By understanding the role of social media, hashtags, actors, and controversies in the context of cultural communication, we can gain deeper insights into the dynamics that shape public opinion in this digital age.



The theoretical framework for this research encompasses concepts of cultural communication, transformation of public opinion, and the role of social media in the global conflict context. One article supporting this theoretical foundation is "The Role of Social Media in Shaping Public Opinion During Conflicts: The Case of the Israel-Gaza Conflict" by (Han et al., 2020). This article discusses how social media can influence public opinion during conflicts, emphasizing the significance of cultural communication in shaping public perceptions and providing a relevant framework for our analysis.

### Online Activity Monitoring

The first technique used was online activity monitoring, where researchers regularly observed and recorded posts, comments, and interactions related to the #FreePalestine hashtag. This



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observation is done systematically to understand the dynamics of the conversation, discursive patterns, and changes in opinion that may occur over time.

### Qualitative Content Analysis

In understanding the cultural communication occurring on Space X, FB, and IG, the research employs qualitative content analysis. Researchers analyze text, images, and other multimedia elements related to the hashtag. The analysis tool used is the NVivo software. NVivo enables researchers to organize qualitative data systematically, identify patterns, and explore the meanings contained within the content. This approach aids in comprehending the complexity of diversified messages across various social media platforms and their impact on public opinion ([Dalkin et al., 2021](#)).

### Sentiment Analysis

For sentiment analysis, researchers use an AI (Artificial Intelligence) analysis tool called VADER (Valence Aware Dictionary and sEntiment Reasoner). VADER is a reliable source for measuring user emotional responses to content related to #FreePalestine. By analyzing comments, likes, and shares, VADER can automatically identify whether public opinion tends to be positive, negative, or neutral toward the issue. The use of VADER ensures a quick and accurate sentiment analysis, assisting researchers in evaluating the emotional impact of such content on the audience and drawing reliable conclusions ([Jain et al., 2023](#)).

## METHOD

The research methodology employed in this study is a Mixed Methods approach, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative approach will be utilized to collect and analyze quantitative data regarding the number of participants, frequency of hashtag usage, and patterns of online interaction on social media platforms. Analytical tools such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) will be applied to compile descriptive statistics and identify emerging quantitative patterns. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach will involve content analysis of posts and online interactions related to the #FreePalestine hashtag. The use of qualitative software such as NVivo will assist in identifying themes, sentiments, and meanings derived from these contents. The integration of both methods will provide a comprehensive understanding of how cultural communication through social media contributes to the transformation of public opinion. Data collection will take place from December 6, 2023, to December 25, 2023. Quantitative data collection procedures will involve online surveys and statistical analysis, while qualitative data collection will include content analysis of posts and online interactions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research reveals in-depth results regarding the complexity of interactions on social media related to the #FreePalestine hashtag on three main platforms, namely Space X, Facebook (FB),

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and Instagram (IG). Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis, this research successfully identified patterns that understand the impact of cultural communication on the transformation of public opinion.

**Table 1.** Topic Trends Based on Hashtag

Social Media	Topic	Hashtag
Twitter (Space X)	Political	#IsraelVsPalestina
	Dialogue	(20.000 Tweets)
Facebook	Palestine Solidarity	#PalestineBusiness (5.000 Tweets)
		#FreePalestine (10.000 Tweets )
	Conflict Overview	#SupportPalestine (8.000 Tweets)
		#PalestineConflict (12.000 Tweets)

On the Twitter social media platform, there is a prominent and dominant theme in Room X, namely Political Dialogue, encompassing two main hashtags: #IsraelVsPalestine with 20,000 tweets and #BusinessPalestine with 5,000 tweets. Political dialogue on Twitter often serves as a space for expression and debate related to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The hashtag #IsraelVsPalestine indicates high interest and participation, reflecting political tension and polarization of opinions among Twitter users. Additionally, #BusinessPalestine provides a more specific perspective related to the economic aspects of the conflict, potentially reflecting interest and concerns about the economic impact of the conflict. On the Facebook platform, the dominating theme is Palestinian Solidarity, represented by two main hashtags: #FreePalestine with 10,000 tweets and #SupportPalestine with 8,000 tweets. This solidarity reflects broad support from Facebook users for the freedom of Palestine and may involve various campaigns or initiatives emphasizing humanitarian and social justice aspects. The significant number of tweets under both hashtags indicates the strength of this solidarity movement among Facebook users, highlighting the crucial role of social media in embracing and uniting perspectives on global conflicts such as Israel-Palestine.

Research shows that Space X, as a large business entity led by Elon Musk, takes a neutral stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Space X's online activities reflect the company's role in facilitating dialog without taking a firm political position. Space X's online interactions focus on



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aspects of technology and space exploration, creating a new dimension in the way cultural communication develops in cyberspace.

An analysis of public opinion on Facebook reveals significant polarization regarding the #FreePalestine hashtag. Groups and communities with different viewpoints confronted each other, creating an environment where constructive dialog was sometimes clouded by tension and conflict. Sentiment analysis showed strong emotional fluctuations, with certain moments creating peaks of participation and intense responses.

Instagram, as an image-based platform, shows how public opinion is expressed through visual elements. Visual trend modeling indicated that emotionally resonant images, such as photos from conflict zones or solidarity support, had a major impact on shaping public opinion. Visual analysis proves the power of images in spanning cultural communication bridges.

**Table 2.** Sentiment Analysis

Social Media	Number of Posts	Number of Likes	Number of Shares	Number of Comments	Sentiment
Space X	500	15.000	8.000	5.000	Neutral
Facebook	2.000	50.000	30.000	15.000	Mixed
Instagram	1.500	40.000	20.000	10.000	Positive

From the given data table, it can be observed that each social media platform demonstrates varying levels of activity in supporting or discussing the Israel-Palestine conflict. On the Ruang X platform, there are 500 posts with 15,000 likes, 8,000 shares, and 5,000 comments. Although the numbers are relatively small compared to other platforms, the significant likes and comments indicate high user engagement. The noticeable neutral sentiment may also indicate a variety of opinions in Ruang X, reflecting diverse perspectives on the conflict. On Facebook, there are 2,000 posts with 50,000 likes, 30,000 shares, and 15,000 comments. This data reflects a very high level of participation, with striking numbers of likes and shares. However, the mixed sentiment indicates significant differences in opinions among Facebook users. There might be various viewpoints or interpretations related to the Israel-Palestine conflict, as reflected in varied comments and reactions. Meanwhile, on Instagram, there are 1,500 posts with 40,000 likes, 20,000 shares, and 10,000 comments. Although the numbers are fewer than Facebook, the high level of interaction suggests that the conflict issue has a strong appeal among Instagram users. The dominant positive sentiment below it may reflect strong support or a focus on specific aspects of the issue. In conclusion, this data analysis provides insights into the dynamics of participation and sentiments related to the Israel-Palestine conflict across various social media platforms.

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Social network modeling revealed that highly influential users can play a key role in spreading opinions and shaping narratives. It was found that some accounts play a central role in bringing groups together and directing online conversations. Understanding these social network dynamics provides insight into how cultural communication can be influenced and shaped by specific individuals or groups.

The results showed that the #FreePalestine hashtag not only created a transformation in public opinion but also had a significant social impact. Activist groups used social media as a tool to organize concrete actions and raise international awareness of the conflict. This transformation is not only limited to the virtual realm but also results in real change in society. ([Rumelili & Strömbom, 2022](#)).

Thus the results of this study not only illustrate how cultural communication occurs in social media but also show the extent to which the transformation of public opinion can be a driver of broader social change. ([Antwi-Boateng et al., 2021](#)). The findings have profound implications for understanding the role of social media in shaping people's views and actions on global issues, particularly in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### Activities at Space X: A Neutral Role in Online Dialogue

Activity on Space X's social media platforms illustrates a unique dynamic in the context of the #FreePalestine hashtag. As a space exploration company led by Elon Musk, Space X has a very different role than other entities or individuals in social media participation on controversial issues. ([Kholis Makki & Qoyim, 2021](#)).

Space X, a space exploration and technology company, has chosen to maintain a neutral stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This neutrality is reflected in the content produced by Space X's official accounts on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Posts revolve around technological achievements, space missions, and developments in the space industry, without expressing political views or engaging in controversial issues related to the conflict ([Kaviani & Salehi, 2022](#)).

Space X's online activity is predominantly focused on the latest developments in space exploration. Posts and other content document rocket launches, technological achievements, and research and development projects undertaken by the Company. ([Darojatun, 2020](#)). As such, the dialog generated by Space X on social media is oriented more toward technological achievements and space exploration than global political issues ([Palamarchuk, 2019](#)).

Although the hashtag #FreePalestine continues to trend on social media, especially on Twitter, the official Space X account rarely participates in direct conversations about this issue. When it does, Space X tends to take a very cautious approach, emphasizing the importance of peaceful dialogue and highlighting the positive impact of space exploration as a tool for unification. ([Paclani Setia, 2021](#)).

Space X's online activities create a dialog focused on exploration and technology. While the company is aware of ongoing global issues, its approach provides space for social media users to

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participate in conversations that are educational and inspirational. By directing conversations to business-related topics and visions of the future, Space X creates an atmosphere of positive dialog among its followers ([Vijay & Gekker, 2021](#)).

Space X's neutral stance can have significant implications for the company's image. In an environment of tension and polarization online, Space X's neutrality creates an image as an entity focused on scientific exploration and international collaboration on space missions, unaffected by global political differences.

While neutrality on social media can maintain the company's image, it can also create challenges as society increasingly demands transparency and engagement on social issues. How Space X responds to this shift can be an important consideration in understanding how leading technology companies respond to the evolving dynamics of social media.

The activities at Space X offer a unique example of a neutral role in the online dialog. In the context of complex global issues, the company has chosen to focus on space exploration and technological achievement as the primary cornerstones of social media conversation. The implications of this neutrality range from corporate image to the challenges of dealing with the demands of social engagement in the digital age ([Müller, 2019](#)).

### Opinion Dynamics on Facebook Polarity and Intensive Interaction

Facebook (FB) has become one of the largest social media platforms in the world, facilitating extensive and dynamic dialog among millions of users. In the context of the #FreePalestine hashtag, opinion dynamics on Facebook reflect strong polarity and intensive interaction. This talk will explore in more depth how the platform has become the main stage for conversations on this controversial issue. ([Solihin et al., 2023](#)).

The dynamics of opinion on Facebook have proven to be filled with polarization. Groups and communities with differing views go head-to-head, creating a tension-filled environment. Posts for or against #FreePalestine dominate users' news feeds, and often, extreme impressions pepper the conversation, creating fragmentation in public opinion.

The high number of likes, shares, and comments indicates the high level of interaction on Facebook related to the hashtag. Conversations do not only take place among individual users but also involve dedicated groups and communities. The intensive interaction reflects the significance of the issue in the eyes of users, showing that the #FreePalestine hashtag is at the center of attention and heated discussions on Facebook ([Izza, 2023](#)).

The dynamics of opinion on Facebook also create an "echo chamber" phenomenon where users tend to be exposed to views that align with their own beliefs. This increases confirmation bias, where information and opinions that support existing views tend to be reinforced, while alternative views are ignored. Opinion polarity is further amplified in this environment.

Facebook's algorithm contributes to intense opinion dynamics by reinforcing bubble filters, where users are exposed to content that aligns with their preferences and previous interactions.

This can reinforce opinion polarization by isolating users in a homogeneous information environment.

Activists and groups concerned with the Palestinian issue use Facebook as a tool to rally support and spread messages. Online campaigns, petitions, and calls for solidarity gain momentum through the intensity of interactions on the platform, creating a significant influence on public opinion. ([Ujang Habibi & Pratama, 2022](#)).

Sentiment analysis shows strong emotional fluctuations in Facebook conversations related to #FreePalestine. Posts that create empathy or anger get intense responses, while crucial moments in the conflict trigger dramatic shifts in online sentiment. This analysis provides an in-depth look at the dynamics of feelings attached to this issue.

The dynamics of opinion on Facebook have implications for perception and opinion change. While intensive interaction can reinforce existing views, there is also room for opinion change through constructive dialog and a deeper understanding of the complexities of the issue.

While the intensity of interaction is a high indicator of participation, the biggest challenge may lie in the ability to facilitate constructive dialogue amidst polarization. Facebook is becoming a place where conflicting views meet, and the next challenge is to create a space for dialog and shared understanding. ([Arianto, 2021](#)).

The dynamics of opinion on Facebook related to the #FreePalestine hashtag created a digital battleground full of polarities and intense interactions. From opinion fragmentation to the role of algorithms and activist campaigns, Facebook plays a central role in shaping public views and opinions on this controversial issue. Further analysis is needed to better understand the long-term implications of these dynamics on society and social media in general ([XU, 2020](#)).

### Visualization of Opinion Transformation on Instagram

Instagram, as an image-based platform, is a unique space where public opinion can be realized through visual elements. In the context of the #FreePalestine hashtag, the visualization of opinion transformation on Instagram reflects the power of images and visual solidarity. In this discussion, we will explore how Instagram became an important platform for changing views and building unity through powerful images ([Dendi, 2020](#)).

Instagram is known as a platform where images and visuals dominate. In the context of #FreePalestine, Instagram users took the initiative to raise their voices and express solidarity through image posts. These posts created a powerful visual narrative that went beyond words and became the main means of communicating support for the Palestinian cause ([Cervi et al., 2023](#)).

Visual trend analysis shows how the #FreePalestine hashtag is manifested in various forms of images. From photos documenting the conflict to creative artworks, Instagram has become a platform for a variety of visualizations. This trend modeling provides an overview of how public opinion is represented visually and how this transformation can be read through the evolving aesthetics ([Kurniawan, 2020](#)).

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The power of images on Instagram lies in their ability to send emotional messages without words. Photos that evoke empathy, such as children in conflict zones or solidarity signs, have an immediate impact on users' feelings and views. In other words, Instagram enables the transformation of opinions through an immersive visual experience.

The hashtag #FreePalestine on Instagram has become a kind of visual symbol of solidarity. Users who included the hashtag in their posts were expressing support for the issue and engaging in a larger online campaign. Visual solidarity through the use of a shared hashtag reinforces identity and brings people together in action and the digital realm ([Alakklouk & Gülnar, 2023](#)).

Instagram aesthetics, including the use of filters and image editing, play an important role in crafting the visual narrative. Decisions in filter selection, lighting, and color can influence users' perception of an issue. The transformation of opinions on Instagram is not only related to the content but also to the aesthetics of the images.

Activists and advocacy groups utilize Instagram as a tool for powerful visual campaigns. Through creativity and the use of stunning visual elements, these campaigns succeed in building awareness and gaining support from Instagram followers. The influence of these visual campaigns can extend beyond the digital space, creating a more lasting social impact ([Erika, 2020](#)).

Visual networks on Instagram, such as the relationships between accounts and the spread of certain images, can be analyzed to understand how information and views spread. Users with large numbers of followers can become focal points, amplifying visual networks and influencing the direction of conversations and the transformation of opinions on Instagram.

Despite the transformational power of images, ethical challenges arise concerning image selection and the potential for visual manipulation. Instagram becomes an arena where ethical considerations related to the veracity and emotional impact of the images must be faced and addressed ([Abbas et al., 2022](#)).

Instagram as an image-based platform, played a central role in shifting public opinion through the power of visuals and solidarity embodied through the hashtag #FreePalestine. From image dominance to visual solidarity, Instagram provides a unique means through which opinion transformation can occur through the narrative of mesmerizing and powerful images. Further analysis is needed to understand the long-term changes in perceptions and actions triggered by these dynamics in digital and real-world spaces.

### Public Opinion Transformation and Social Impact

The transformation of public opinion through social media has become an important phenomenon in the digital age. The hashtag #FreePalestine created a tremendous wave of participation on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. However, the changes in public opinion taking place in cyberspace are not limited to the vir ([Budiana et al., 2020](#)).

The transformation of public opinion on social media can change the global perception of an issue. In the case of #FreePalestine, its impact transcended national boundaries and stimulated

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international awareness of the conflict in the Middle East. The photos and stories shared widely on platforms like Instagram created a global narrative that changed the way people around the world understood and responded to the conflict.

The hashtag #FreePalestine played a key role in generating global solidarity and raising awareness of conditions in Palestine. Shifting public opinion created a groundswell of support from different communities and walks of life. Intensive engagement in online and offline campaigns creates a sense of solidarity that can motivate concrete actions to achieve positive change ([Kokeyo & Prsk, 2023](#)).

The transformation of public opinion online is often a catalyst for the formation of movements and communities of activists. Social media users who share similar views can join forces and collaborate to achieve common goals. These initiatives are not only creating change online, but also making a real impact through activities such as fundraising, outreach campaigns, and other tangible projects.

Changes in public opinion can directly affect businesses and shareholders. Companies or brands involved in controversies or social issues often face pressure from consumers to take a stand or act. The transformation of public opinion on social media can trigger boycotts or strong support for brands, creating pressure that can change business policies ([Lal, 2023](#)).

The transformation of public opinion can open up opportunities for further education and dialog. By utilizing social media platforms, education and advocacy groups can convey information, initiate in-depth discussions, and educate the public at large. These opportunities can lead to better understanding, help overcome misconceptions, and stimulate positive action. While the transformation of public opinion can have a positive impact, challenges related to information filtering also arise. Information filtering can create distortions of perception or truth that can affect the way people perceive an issue. Therefore, it is important to develop strong social media literacy to be able to critically understand the information received from cyberspace ([Hayes, 2023](#)).

The transformation of public opinion on social media, particularly through the #FreePalestine hashtag, has not only changed views online but also created real social impact. From concrete actions to influence on policies and businesses, the shift in public opinion can be a force that drives change at different levels of society. The importance of a deep understanding of how this transformation of public opinion transcends virtual boundaries and creates a wider impact is key to understanding the role of social media in shaping the future of a more responsive and globally connected society.

## CONCLUSION

In traveling through the #FreePalestine hashtag case study, we have witnessed how social media, specifically Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, became the main stage for cultural communication and the transformation of public opinion. The hashtag not only created an online narrative but also permeated the complex web of cultural, social, and political networks around the world.



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Through in-depth analysis, we can deduce some key points that illustrate the significant impact of the #FreePalestine hashtag. The transformation of public opinion is no longer confined to cyberspace. It has transcended virtual boundaries, driving real action, policy change, and engaging people in real dialog. The hashtag became a catalyst for online mobilization that resulted in demonstrations, charity campaigns, and social activities around the world.

Cultural communication through social media has shaped a powerful narrative on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. From the visualization of empathy-inducing images on Instagram to polarizing dialogues on Facebook, cultural communication became the foundation for building global awareness and solidarity. Cultural identities and values were reflected in the way social media users responded to and supported the campaign. We recognize that transforming public opinion is not only about influencing policies and businesses but also about building sustainable movements and activist communities. The hashtag #FreePalestine has become a call to action, bringing together individuals and groups with similar visions and goals. (Izza, 2023).

In conclusion, it can be summarized that the analysis of data from various social media platforms provides a profound understanding of cultural communication and the transformation of public opinion regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict. The research question regarding how public opinion changes over time through online interactions on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram has been addressed through a Mix Method approach that combines quantitative and qualitative aspects. These conclusions indicate that political dialogue on Twitter, Palestinian solidarity on Facebook, and conflict overviews on Instagram are the primary focuses of online discussions. Sentiment analysis across various platforms also reveals a diversity of perspectives, ranging from neutral to mixed and positive. The real-world implications of these findings underscore the importance of understanding the role of social media in shaping perceptions and public opinion regarding global conflicts. Moving forward, this can serve as a guide for policymakers, activists, and researchers to design more effective communication strategies in addressing sensitive issues such as the Israel-Palestine conflict.

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