



# The Role of Arab Music in Supporting the Palestinian Cause

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to shed light on the role of Arab music in supporting the Palestinian cause. The research seeks to provide a multifaceted perspective on the cultural, social, and emotional dimensions of music in supporting the Palestinian issue. A descriptive cross-sectional research design was used in this study. The study was conducted on social media platforms through the distribution of the questionnaire. The sample included 132 individuals. The results indicate that Arab music plays a significant role in supporting the Palestinian cause emotionally and socially, conveying various expressions of support. With respondents' highest average at 2.83 and the lowest at 2.16, the overall questionnaire received an average of 2.56, reflecting a general inclination toward "Agreement" on the three-point Likert scale. This research holds relevance in cultural anthropology, cultural studies, and the arts. It sheds light on the role of music as a tool for raising awareness about the Palestinian cause. Additionally, it contributes to understanding the profound cultural and political impact of music within the context of national struggle. This study provides a fresh perspective by exploring how Arab music serves as a unique means of cultural resistance in supporting the Palestinian cause. It offers new insights into the intersection of music, culture, and political activism, enhancing our understanding of the distinctive role that music plays in shaping the narrative of national struggle.

**Keywords:** Arab music, Palestinian cause, cultural expression, resistance music, solidarity.

**Received:** 15 January 2022; **Accepted:** 17 March 2022; **Published:** 9 June 2022

## INTRODUCTION

Arab music serves as a deep-rooted cultural element that reflects the diversity and history of the region's people. However, it is evident that it also plays a critical and profound social role, particularly in supporting the Palestinian cause (Saif & Ibrahim, 2013). This research relies on references and literature to enhance the understanding of the role of Arab music in supporting the Palestinian cause and its impact on public awareness (Abu-Lughod, 1990).

Arab music plays a crucial role in raising awareness and supporting the Palestinian cause. Artists and musicians express their solidarity with the Palestinian people through their artistic creations. This music aims to spotlight issues of justice and human rights, conveying messages of peace and solidarity (Bishara, 2006).

The topics addressed in Arab songs related to the Palestinian cause vary, ranging from expressing nostalgia for the lost homeland to condemning injustice and occupation. This music is considered an effective means to evoke emotions and convey messages powerfully and impactfully (Soleimani, 2018).

Concerts dedicated to supporting the Palestinian cause provide an opportunity for interaction between artists and audiences, fostering awareness and solidarity. Additionally, special events and humanitarian campaigns organized by artists contribute to supporting the cause and achieving the desired impact (Smith, 2005).

In general, the influence of Arab music in supporting the Palestinian cause is pivotal in raising public awareness and shaping international opinions on this humanitarian and political issue. The researcher will explore the role of Arab

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music in supporting the Palestinian cause, considering emotional, political, national, and social aspects, as well as the audience's interaction with the nature of this supportive music (Saleh, 2014).

The contribution of culture and the arts in shaping the national consciousness of the uprising generation is emphasized. This involves the use of images and posters, such as the iconic portraits of Jamal Abdel Nasser and Abdel Halim Hafez displayed on the walls of Palestinian homes. Music played a significant role, with the uprising generation listening to nationalist songs, engaging in folk dances, and participating in popular arts, contributing to the formation of national awareness and the preservation of Palestinian cultural heritage (Boeskov, 2023); (Brehony, 2023).

The conference underscores that the Palestinian uprising was a popular creativity. The Palestinian people demonstrated creativity not only in daily confrontations but also in extending it to popular education amidst the closure of schools and universities. The connection between art and the uprising is highlighted, with artists producing works during the day and participating in popular demonstrations and marches in the morning. The uprising served as a source of inspiration for Palestinian artists and artistic groups (Elayyan, 2019); (Erez & Degani, 2021).

This study examines the significance of "place" as a cornerstone in the series of struggles by the Palestinian people to defend and liberate themselves from occupation, particularly during the outbreak of the First Intifada on December 9, 1987. The study delves into the Palestinian landscape, stretching from the southernmost point to the northernmost during the First Intifada. The study's importance lies in its exploration of the reflections of the memory of this "place" in the songs of the "Stone Intifada," whose lyrics were composed in formal Arabic and gained widespread popularity throughout the uprising.

The primary questions addressed in the study are: How was the image of "place" formed in the songs of the "Stone Intifada," representing a natural scene with its shadows and dimensions? And how did this "place" reflect a resistance dimension (Peteet, 1996); (Cohen & Katz, 2006).

Laxminarayan (2022); (Al-Tae, 2002) sheds light on "Palestinian Folk Songs and Zionist Generals." Popular creativity is considered one of the most important forms of social awareness for communities. In creativity, as in awareness, there are popular sentiments and attitudes, a concept referred to by sociologists as popular psychology. Palestinian uprising participants use songs as a primary weapon in the process of popular mobilization. Such songs do not incorporate any reference to regressive values of openness but consistently emphasize the principle of the national identity of the Palestinian people. While Palestinian songs sometimes escape the clutches of Israeli oppression due to their symbolic significance, they often fall under strict scrutiny by the enemy. Penalties, including imprisonment, are imposed on those who express such songs that encourage ordinary people to defend their homeland.

Despite arbitrary measures taken against this type of folk art, its impact is growing day by day, expanding in popularity across Palestinian cities and villages. The song has become akin to a stone; just as a stone hurts the enemy, and suicide operations drain the infrastructure of the Israeli enemy, the folk song motivates the spirits of the fighters and those seeking a new dawn. The folk song remains a guarantee of the vibrant presence of the land in the collective consciousness (Laxminarayan, 2022); (Erez & Degani, 2021).

### ***The Most Famous Music Composers Supporting the Palestinian Cause***

In 1948, Mohamed Abdel Wahab composed a song titled "Palestine" with lyrics by Ali Mahmoud Taha, expressing condemnation for the historical massacre at Deir Yassin carried out by the Zionist groups "Irgun and Stern."

In his 1960 song "Nasser, We All Love You," dedicated to Hussein El-Sayed, Abdel Wahab reserved the final part to express solidarity and love for Palestine. Then, in 1961, the maestro of generations revisited the theme with a new poem titled "Palestine," written by the poet Saleh Judah, emphasizing unity with the Palestinian people in the face of challenges. (Alhumaid et al., 2021).

The operetta "The Arab Dream" is a musical work composed by the Egyptian composer Helmy Bakr, with lyrics by the Egyptian poet Medhat El Adel. It was orchestrated by the Libyan musician Hamid El Shaeri and was released in 1998. The operetta featured several renowned Arab singers, each representing different Arab countries, coming together to express the aspirations of Arab nations towards unity.

Despite the diverse origins of the participating singers, the lyrics of the operetta were predominantly in Egyptian Arabic. The main segment of the operetta opens with the lyrics: "Generations after generations, living for our dream," conveying the collective ambition of Arab peoples for unity and progress (Hausmann, 2022); (Kulthum, 2022).

This research examines the role of identity and belonging in folk songs through the analysis of Palestinian examples by the poet Musa Hafez and Algerian examples by the poet Rabeh Driasah. The study reviews the close relationship

between cultural and national concepts and how they are embodied in the lyrics of folk songs. The research focuses on the cultural and historical context of Palestine and Algeria to understand the impact of social and political conditions on the poets' creativity (McDonald, 2013); (Awais, Rahim, Alhossary, & Ab Rahman, 2022).

The study highlights the use of vernacular language and cultural symbols as a means to convey messages of identity and belonging in folk songs. It analyzes the elements of poetry and the themes that reflect the experience of national identity and belonging to the relevant communities (Massad, 2003).

### ***Objectives of the Study***

- Shedding Light on the Role of Arab Music in Supporting the Palestinian Cause.
- Analyzing Public Opinions on the Importance and Role of Music in Supporting the Palestinian Cause.
- Understanding the Role of Artists in Supporting the Palestinian Cause.
- Transmitting the Emotions and Sentiments Associated with the Palestinian Cause.

### ***Research Problem/Novel Contribution***

Despite the widespread popularity of Arab music, the effects and role it plays in supporting the Palestinian cause remain a mysterious issue that requires careful examination. It is crucial to investigate how Arab music integrates with Palestinian efforts to express identity and resilience, and whether it plays an active role in conveying political messages and shaping public awareness. The question arises about how Arab music can serve as an artistic and cultural means to achieve a positive and lasting impact in supporting the Palestinian cause and spreading awareness about it. This research problem opens the door for an in-depth exploration of the relationship between Arab music and the Palestinian cause, emphasizing the importance of examining the cultural and political influences of this art form within the context of Palestinian national struggle.

### ***Significance of the Study***

The role of Arab music in supporting Arab music is an essential element in preserving musical heritage and enhancing the cultural identity of the Arab community. This role fosters artistic communication and interaction between artists and audiences, contributing to the development and promotion of the Arab music scene.

Arab music contributes to enhancing cultural and artistic communication within society, serving as a bridge for cultural understanding and exchange among individuals. The support for Arab music signals pride in artistic heritage and the vital role it plays in promoting unity and belonging within the Arab community.

### ***Research questions***

- What are the challenges facing the role of music in supporting the Palestinian cause, and what opportunities are available to enhance this role?
- How do you believe Arab music contributes to enhancing cultural awareness about the Palestinian cause?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

A descriptive cross-sectional research design was used in this study. The study was conducted on social media platforms through the distribution of the questionnaire. The sample included 132 individuals. The data was collected by distributing an electronic questionnaire on social media platforms. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections:

- Demographic data such as age and gender.
- Seven questions with answers based on a Likert scale.
- Two open-ended questions.

The questionnaire was collected over a two-week period from 10/11/2023 to 25/11/2023. A test for the study questionnaire was conducted on 30 individuals to assess the clarity and simplicity of the study tools, and no modifications were made. Cronbach's alpha equation used to measure the reliability of the study tool (questionnaire) to ensure its stability. The Cronbach's alpha value for the total items reached (0.822), indicating that the questionnaire possesses a high level of reliability and can be relied upon in the field application of the study, according to Nunnally's scale, which considers 0.70 as the minimum threshold for reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

## RESULTS

Adopting an evaluative scale according to the Likert three-point scale (Likert, 1932).

Table 1 *Trends of Responses*

General Trend	Mean	The Response
Disagree	1-1.66	No
Neutral	1.67-2.33	Maybe
Agree	2.34-3.00	Yes

we will use the weighted Mean of individuals' responses to questions using a three-point Likert scale to determine the trend of responses.

Table 2 *Age Frequencies*

Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 years and above
Frequencies	90	21	14	6	1	0
Percentage	(68.2%)	(15.9%)	10.6%)	(4.5%)	(0.8%)	(0%)
Total	132 individuals					

The highest participation rate is among the age group 18 to 24 years, while the lowest participation rate is between 55 and 64 years. As for the age of 65 and above, no one participated.

Table 3 *Gender Frequencies*

Gender	Male	Female
Frequencies	31	101
Percentage	(23.5%)	(65.5%)
Total	132 individuals	

Through Table (4), the researcher presents the frequencies and percentages, adding the standard deviation and weighted average as follows for the questionnaire.

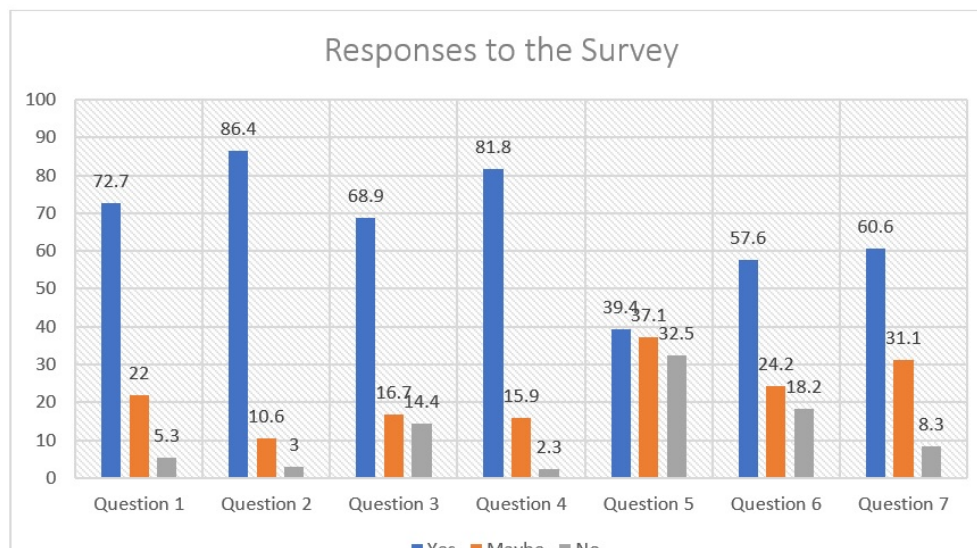
Through this table, it is evident that the highest Mean is 2.83 for the second statement and the lowest value is 2.16 for the fifth statement. The overall direction of the Mean is "Agree" except for one statement with a Mean of 2.16, which is "Neutral."

The weighted average for the questionnaire is 2.56, and the overall direction is "Agree." This means that Arab music plays a significant role in supporting the Palestinian cause from various emotional and social perspectives, as indicated by the statistical data of respondents' responses to this questionnaire.

Table 4 Frequencies and Percentages

Questions	Yes N %	Maybe N %	No N %	Mean	Std.Dev	The Order	General Trend
Do you believe that music plays a role in enhancing communication and awareness among individuals regarding the Palestinian cause?	96 72.7	29 22	7 5.3	2.67	0.573	3	Agree
Do you consider the lyrics of Arabic songs as an effective means to convey supportive messages for the Palestinian cause?	114 86.4	14 10.6	4 3	2.83	0.448	1	Agree
Do you think that the fame and social influence of Arab artists can contribute to enhancing support for the Palestinian cause?	91 68.9	22 16.7	19 14.4	2.55	0.735	4	Agree
Do you feel that Arab music conveys emotions and feelings associated with the Palestinian cause?	108 81.8	21 15.9	3 2.3	2.8	0.458	2	Agree
Do you believe that Arab music can play a role in exerting political pressure in favor of the Palestinian cause?	52 39.4	49 37.1	31 32.5	2.16	0.78	7	Neutral
Does Arab music specifically promote the Palestinian cause among the youth?	76 57.6	32 24.2	24 18.2	2.39	0.779	6	Agree
Do you believe that Arab music can stimulate social change in favor of the Palestinian cause?	80 60.6	41 31.1	11 8.3	2.52	0.648	5	Agree

The mean for the questionnaire= 2.56 (Agree)





### ***Challenges Facing the Role of Music in Supporting the Palestinian Cause:***

- Access and Exposure: Limited access to global platforms and mainstream media may restrict the exposure of Palestinian music to a wider audience.
- Political Barriers: Political tensions in the region can create challenges for musicians to collaborate across borders and hinder the promotion of their work.
- Resource Constraints: Musicians and artists may face resource constraints, limiting their ability to produce and distribute their music effectively
- Cultural Misunderstandings: Misinterpretations or lack of understanding of Palestinian culture may pose challenges in conveying the intended messages through music.

### ***Opportunities to Enhance the Role***

- Digital Platforms: Leveraging digital platforms and social media can provide a global stage for Palestinian musicians, overcoming geographical barriers.
- Collaborations: Encouraging cross-cultural collaborations can broaden the impact of Palestinian music and foster global connections.
- Cultural Diplomacy: Engaging in cultural diplomacy initiatives can promote Palestinian music internationally, fostering understanding and support.
- Educational Programs: Implementing educational programs to raise awareness about Palestinian music and its role in advocating the cause.

### ***Contribution of Arab Music to Cultural Awareness about the Palestinian Cause***

- Emotional Connection: Arab music has the power to evoke emotions and create a deep connection with listeners, fostering empathy and understanding for the Palestinian cause.
- Storytelling: Many Arab songs are rich in storytelling, narrating the struggles and aspirations of the Palestinian people, effectively conveying the historical and cultural dimensions of the cause.
- Unity and Solidarity: Arab music often emphasizes themes of unity and solidarity, serving as a unifying force that resonates with the collective support for the Palestinian cause.
- Cultural Representation: By incorporating Palestinian musical elements and themes in Arab music, artists contribute to the representation of Palestinian culture on a broader Arab and international stage.

In summary, while challenges exist, leveraging digital platforms, fostering collaborations, engaging in cultural diplomacy, and implementing educational programs present significant opportunities to enhance the role of music in supporting the Palestinian cause. Arab music, through its emotional impact, storytelling, emphasis on unity, and cultural representation, plays a crucial role in enhancing cultural awareness about the Palestinian cause.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **"Artists and Palestine: Visual arts, theater, and cinema" (Hamid, 2009)**

#### ***Study Objectives:***

- Analysis of Visual Arts Role: Conducting an in-depth examination of how visual arts, such as painting and visual representation, are used to enhance and shed light on the Palestinian cause.
- Exploration of Theater's Role: Studying the effectiveness of cinematic and dramatic arts in conveying messages related to the Palestinian cause, whether through live performances or film.
- Assessment of Cinema Impact: Reviewing the impact of cinema on building public awareness and directing attention to the challenges and conditions facing the Palestinian people.

In view of points of agreement, Both studies emphasize the importance of art as a means of expressing experiences, and demands, and supporting the Palestinian cause. They both focus on how art can shape local and global perspectives and culture regarding the Palestinian issue.

While Hamid (2009) focus on visual arts, theater, and cinema, the study of the role of Arab music centers around the musical domain.

### **The arts and culture in Palestine: Paths of creativity and resistance" (Makki, 2013)**

**Study Objectives**

- Review the history of arts and culture in Palestine to understand the paths taken by creativity and resistance.
- Focusing on artists and creators who contributed to shaping the cultural and artistic scene in Palestine.
- Studying a wide range of creative fields, including literature, visual arts, theater, and music.
- Exploring how arts and culture in Palestine contribute to resistance and resilience against challenges.

In view of point of agreement, Both studies emphasize the importance of culture and arts as a means of expressing identity and influencing the cultural landscape. They shed light on how art can play a social role in supporting resilience and resistance.

While Makki (2013) addresses a broad range of creative fields, the study on the role of Arab music primarily focuses on the musical domain. Differences may arise in how the impact of culture and arts on resistance is analyzed, with music, in particular, highlighting its unique influence.

**"Music of Resistance in the Arab World" (Said, 2016)****Study Objectives**

- Analyzing the history of music as a means of resistance in the Arab world.
- Understanding how musicians use music to convey messages of resistance and confront challenges.
- Examining how music can influence public awareness and shape public opinion on political and social issues.

In view of point of agreement, Both studies acknowledge the role of music in amplifying voices and conveying messages of resistance in the Arab context. They emphasize the effectiveness of using art, specifically music, as a medium to influence social and political attitudes.

While, There might be a difference in focus, where Said (2016) could be more general regarding resistance in Arab music, while the study on the role of Arab music in supporting the Palestinian cause addresses a specific issue. There could be a difference in how the impact of music on public awareness regarding the Palestinian cause is analyzed.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the role of music as a powerful tool to support the Palestinian cause and raise global awareness about the challenges facing the Palestinian people becomes evident. Music serves as a universal language, where its melodies and lyrics can create an emotional impact and a deeper understanding of the humanitarian conditions in Palestine.

Songs and music convey strong messages about justice and human rights, artistically advocating for the Palestinian cause. Musical arts contribute to bringing the voices of Palestinians to the world, shedding light on their stories and challenges in a way that fosters human interaction.

Furthermore, music constitutes a space for cultural convergence, facilitating the exchange of experiences and understanding among diverse cultures through rhythms and melodies. The support of artists and musicians for the Palestinian cause exemplifies an artistic solidarity that transcends borders and unites nations.

In this context, music remains a powerful ally in the struggle for rights and justice, undeniably contributing to enhancing international awareness and advocating for peace and justice in Palestine.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Appreciation and thanks to the President of Assiut University for his contribution to enhancing the performance of researchers and encouraging them towards international publications, thereby elevating the university's standing.

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