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e-Diasporas Atlas

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Abstract

The article analyzes Web-based networks of Palestinian communities in Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Australia, United States, Canada, Spain, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. The findings show a thematic and demographic shift from organizations of Palestinian communities abroad to a transnational solidarity network focused on Palestinian rights and the Boycott movement. Although Palestinian Territories function as the network's strong center of gravity, analysis of the references reveals that diaspora and non-diaspora actors operate as two distinct but intertwined networks: while diaspora actors are unique in putting emphasis on community as activity type and on diaspora and the right of return as primary cause, non-diaspora actors are mainly dedicated to solidarity as activity and Palestinian rights and the Boycott movement as primary cause. Despite this, ties between diaspora and non-diaspora actors are stronger than among diaspora actors, which indicates that part of the dynamics of Palestinian communities is manifest not only between diaspora communities, but mostly between diaspora communities and civil society organizations in their host societies.

Keywords

diaspora, web, internet, Palestine, boycott, Palestinians

Mots-clefs

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The term “Palestinian diaspora” is highly contested. It is often used alongside other terms such as exile, dispersal and refugeeeness¹, and relates to a heterogeneous group of individuals and communities whose time and circumstances of dispersal range from forced migration and exile to voluntary migration, and whose status in their host countries ranges from refugeeeness and statelessness to full assimilation (Hanafi, 2005, p. 157; Peteet, 2007, p. 630).

The demographics of the Palestinian diaspora and its history are described by S. Hanafi (2003) in four main categories: economic migrants to South America in the 19th century; the traumatic dispersal of 700,000 Palestinians from Israel to neighboring countries during the 1948 Arab–Israeli War; the second wave of displacement following the Six Day War in 1967 and Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian Territories; and more recent waves of political and economic migration to Europe and the United States which started in 1977 and were influenced by political events such as the 1982 Israel–Lebanon war, the 1991 Gulf War and the Intifadas in 1987 and 2001.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2009), 6.8 million Palestinians live in the diaspora, compared to 3.99 living in the Palestinian Territories (i.e. 2.5 million in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and 1.5 million in Gaza). That is, over than half of the Palestinian population worldwide lives in the diaspora. The PCBS report then specifies the demographics of the Palestinian diaspora:

1.25 million (11.5%) live in Israel; 3.24 million live in Jordan (29.8%); 1.78 million (16.3%) in the other Arab countries, and Palestinians living in foreign countries is estimated to be 618 thousand (5.7%)

It should be noted that these figures include the population of over 900,000 Palestinian refugees living in UNRWA camps in Lebanon and Syria (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, 2010).

1. Schulz and Peteet provide, each, a semantic analysis of the Arabic equivalents to the English term “diaspora”. While the term *shatat*, meaning “dispersal”, may be semantically closest to the English term, the frequent terms used by Palestinian refugees are *manfa* (exile, in the sense of forced expulsion), and *ghurba* (absence from the homeland). See Schulz, 2003:20, Peteet, 2007: 639.

The contestation of the term “Palestinian diaspora” is thus complicated primarily by the fact that it covers populations of refugees and non-refugees, and by the fact that both populations are considered a stateless diaspora, that is, a diaspora of people whose home country is not an independent and sovereign state (Sheffer, 2003, pp. 23–24, 153–154), or, as defined by Schulz (2003, p. 10), communities whose focal point of identity and politics is a place lost. The contestation of the term is further complicated by Palestinian refugees’ demand for right of return as part of a peace agreement that would settle the borders of a future Palestinian state. Palestinian acceptance of the term “diaspora” might indicate the acceptance of Palestinian refugees’ condition as permanent². While ‘diaspora’ connotes permanent settlement in the host country, “refugeeness” entails a temporary condition, and relates to the host states’ efforts to keep their status temporary. Since Palestinian refugees comprise the largest groups of Palestinians abroad, applying the term “diaspora” – with its connotations of permanent settlement abroad and as an outcome of social processes of identity formation vis-à-vis the host country and the home country – entails compromising their right to return. Reversely, the insistence on the politics of return may indicate the refusal of the Palestinian diaspora (Peteet, 2007, p. 628).

The literature on diaspora focuses on transnational networks, identities, flows and economic exchange as constituting contemporary diasporas in a globalizing world. Hanafi defines a diaspora as a set of relationships between the homeland, which functions as a center of gravity, and a periphery of nodes – communities, groups and individuals – who relate to the territory of origin as a center of gravity, but live in different parts of the world:

A classic diaspora is defined by a center of gravity which has two functions: it channels the flux of communications between diaspora members at different peripheries, and provides a location where members (especially family) can meet. The first function does not necessarily suggest a physical site; the meeting loca-

2. As Julie Peteet Notes, “Assigning Palestinians diasporic status could risk diluting concerns with policy and long-term, equitable solutions. This political dimension suggests a careful reading of the concept, in particular its flexibility and thus widespread currency” (2007: 636).

tion might be a service provider or institution such as the National Jewish Fund for world Jewry, the Tunisian Base of the PLO for Palestinians and the PKK in Germany in the Kurdish case. In regard to the second function, a physical geographical location is a necessity and is an important factor for communitarian economic transactions (Hanafi, 2003, p. 174).

Diasporas are thus constituted and defined by the multi-polar ties between the homeland and the periphery, as well as by the ties among communities in the periphery. Such ties are manifest at various levels, ranging from processes of identity and community-building, to economic exchange. Put differently, national diasporas are defined and formed by constantly changing dynamics between the national and the transnational. In the Palestinian case, the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1993 has radically changed the balance between the national and transnational components of the Palestinian diaspora, which necessitated rethinking the Palestinian diaspora in terms of transnational networks in times of rising Palestinian nationalism and a process of state-building. In many ways, the Palestinian struggle for statehood was initiated by the PLO, which was, historically, a diaspora organization (Peteet, 2007, p. 637). The 1993 self-rule arrangements that followed the Oslo Peace Process, however, changed the function of the Palestinian diaspora both in shaping Palestinian national identity, as well as in participating in the state-building process. According to Frisch, the "territorialization" of the PLO following the 1993 Oslo Interim Agreements reversed the role of the Palestinian political leadership from an "outside" into an "inside" organization, and resulted in the withering of the Palestinian diaspora at the expense of the state-building process, to the extent that diaspora political movements' ability to make claims on the state-building process from the outside is "a voice in the wilderness" (2009, p. 257). Hanafi, on the other hand, describes more complex and ambivalent ways in which diaspora members partake in the state-building process:

Though willing to support the homeland economically and financially, the diaspora also seeks a decision-making role regarding the process of institution building. There is a certain amount of ambivalence and paradox, composed of a positive appreciation and a de-

leterious suspicion of national commitments, at work in the construction of the diaspora composed. (2003, p. 175).

Thus Palestinian transnational networks and the Palestinian national entity maintain mutual dependencies of construction and deconstruction. While the Palestinian national identity has been imagined and constituted by transnational diaspora networks, the realization of the homeland in its current form has weakened them. In terms of Hanafi's analysis of diaspora networks as comprised around a center of gravity, the territorialization of the homeland as a self-ruling entity did not strengthen the transnational network around it, but rather turned the Palestinian Territories into a weak center of gravity around which partial and torn transnational networks are formed.

Since the term "diaspora" is too general to include all Palestinian individuals and communities around the world, too charged in relation to the politics of refugees' right of return, and too abstract to encompass the complexity of socially constructed and legal statuses, as well as changing levels of national and transnational affiliations, researchers agree that the term should be treated as an analytical term, not an ontological one.³

The following article presents Web-based networks of Palestinian communities abroad, while taking into account the politics and complexities of the Palestinian diaspora both in relation to the Palestinian refugees and their right of return, and to the complex ties between transnational networks, state-building efforts and the politics of a stateless diaspora. The research questions that guided the analysis draw on the theoretical problems described above. Treating "diasporic dimensions" of Palestinians abroad analytically, the analysis is guided by the following questions: Should the transnational network be treated separately from local politics? How can

3. Peteet, for example, suggests referring to "diasporic dimensions" in the lives of Palestinians around the world that are determined by factors such as the time of displacement, the spatial proximity to the homeland, and demography (Peteet, 2007:643). In a similar way, Schulz suggests treating the diaspora as a condition of alienation and estrangement of transnational networks of mobility that maintain uneasy relationships with their homeland. Instead of treating the "Palestinian Diaspora" as a homogenous group, she suggests to refer to Palestinians as people who "lead diasporic lives", where "diasporic dimensions" can also be applied to Palestinians who reside in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Israel (Schulz, 2003: 22, 73).

one study the relationships between diaspora and territory of origin in light of the ever-changing dynamics between center and periphery? Has the institutionalization and the territorialization of the political leadership indeed withered the Palestinian diaspora?

It should be noted that the following Web-based analysis of the Palestinian diaspora deviates from the demographics presented in the PCBS report, since it mainly shows actors and activities of Palestinians living in “other foreign countries” (to use the PBCS report wording), mainly the United States, Canada, Chile, Germany, Spain, France, Italy and Israel. As shall be further discussed below, Palestinian refugees and Palestinians living in Arab countries are referred to by many other actors (mainly humanitarian associations and inter-governmental organizations) or are discussed as a primary cause for advocacy or aid, but they are themselves absent as network actors. Their absence can be explained in both methodological and analytical terms. Methodologically, Palestinian refugees living in UNRWA camps have a very low Web-presence, despite efforts made in the past to establish websites for each refugee camp in the Middle East⁴.

Analytically, the absence of Palestinian refugees as actors in the following Web-based network of the Palestinian diaspora reinforces the political ramifications embedded in the concept of the Palestinian diaspora and its triangular relationship with the refugees’ right of return, and the Palestinian Authority’s state-building attempts.

To better understand the dynamics and politics of contemporary Palestinian diaspora networks on the Web, this article draws on Sari Hanafi’s analysis of the ties between new media and the Palestinian diaspora in terms of periphery and a (weak) center of gravity. Hanafi suggests that, although new media enable new forms of connectivity between diaspora actors unrelated to their physical presence – they are still affected by the absence of a physical meeting place – the possibility of all diaspora members, especially refugees, to meet in the diaspora’s center of gravity – the Palestinian Territories⁵. According to

Hanafi, the absence of a physical meeting place results in new forms of social integration, which include both physical and virtual networks that have distinct organizing principles. If, until the advent of new media technologies, Palestinian diaspora community networks manifested various levels of institutionalization, whether in the form of familial networks, “village clubs” in the US, or supra-national Arab networks, new media have individualized and atomized the agency of Palestinian diasporic actors, who now maintain various forms of physical and virtual relationships both with the center (the Palestinian Territories), as well with other members of the Palestinian diaspora (2005, p. 593). According to Hanafi, new media also contribute to the de-sanctification and de-territorialization of the homeland, as they are “capable of facilitating a conciliation between the diverse cultural heritages represented in the Palestinian diaspora by existing in the host country while connecting to an inaccessible (and perhaps idealized) homeland” (2005, p. 597). Thus although Hanafi claims that new media contribute to a simultaneous connection of dispersed communities not only with their center but also between peripheral nodes, the absence of a physical center of gravity results in torn and broken networks, which do not eventually result in a “Palestinian diaspora”, but in Palestinians as “partially diasporized people” (2003, p. 157). That is, in the Palestinian case, although new media enable new geographies of connectedness between diaspora actors, unrelated to their physical location, these new geographies and networks eventually result in new forms of de-territorialization, both of the center (whether virtual, imagined or physical), and of the periphery.

Method

In light of the above, the empirical questions that guided the analysis attempted to examine various levels of institutionalization of the Palestinian diaspora and the extent to which actors in the periphery form comprehensive ties between them, as well as between them and the (weak) center

4. Such efforts were materialized around the Across Borders Project, which aimed to reconnect Palestinian refugee camps in the Middle East with the Palestinian Territories through ICTs. See Hijab, 2001; Schulz & Hammer, 2003; Aouragh, 2010 and Ben-David, 2010.

5. The question how to name the Palestinian Territories

is also contested. The various official and unofficial names have political connotations and are often used exclusively by certain actors to make a political stand. For example, the UN refers to “Occupied Palestinian Territory”, Palestinian sources use “Palestine”, and the US administration refers to “West Bank and Gaza”. In this article “Palestinian Territories” is used as an umbrella term in order to avoid official language employment by specific actors.

of gravity. Therefore, the selected starting points for crawling the corpus for the analysis represent specific forms of institutionalization and political organization of Palestinian communities abroad – websites of associations and organizations of Palestinian communities that already represent existing structures and modes of organization, rather than individual actors. For each country, search-engine queries performed in the local language as well as in Arabic attempted to find the top actors for keywords such as “Palestinian community” and the name of the host country. The collected websites of Palestinian communities and diaspora organizations from different countries were put together as the starting points of the analysis in order to find out whether actors in the periphery form significant ties between them. To examine the extent to which these networks maintain ties with the center of gravity, and the extent of its “weakness” in organizing transnational diaspora networks, actors based in the Palestinian Territories were not included in the initial starting points (they emerged later on in the resulting hyperlinked network). Despite attempts to include Palestinian diaspora associations and organizations from countries in the Middle East, these were not found and thus not included in the starting points for the analysis, and thus contribute to its emphasis of actors from Europe and North America.

After the crawlers fetched and consolidated the corpus of the hyperlink network, a classification scheme was developed for analyzing the network according to various parameters. To analytically distinguish between different actors who may function as central hubs and authorities but are not diaspora actors, the first classification defined whether or not each actor in the network is a diaspora actor⁶. To capture the complexity of the actors in relation to the diaspora, other categories also relate to “diasporic dimensions” of the actors, such as whether or not the actors refer to the Palestinian diaspora, whether or not they refer to their country of residence and whether or

not they refer to the Palestinian Territories. These categories enable the analysis of the diaspora as an issue and the Palestinian Territories as a center of gravity, addressed both by diaspora and non-diaspora actors. Further classifications enable a zoomed-in view on relationships between various types of actors (“publisher types”), such as associations, media, individuals, governmental institutions, inter-governmental organizations, foundations and campaigns. For a detailed analysis of the webspace of the network, each actor was also classified according to its specific “genre”, that is, whether it is a website, a blog, a portal or an online news source. The country of residence of each actor was inferred from the website’s content (for example, a blogger who indicates that she is from Spain), as well as by the postal addresses provided by the actors, especially in the “contact us” page. In addition, the languages used by each actor were noted, and various methods were used to derive each website’s starting date. In terms of the content and activities of the actors, a distinction is made between the actors’ main activity, and their primary and secondary causes. Activities and causes may coincide, but are often times different. “Activity” describes the field in which the actor is operating, for example, “solidarity”, “media”, “education”, “policy” or “academic”. A “cause” is the main issue an actor is dedicated to. This enables a fine-tuned analysis of the actors not only in relation to the types of the organizations, but also in relation to the specific activities that go along with specific causes. For example, an association can be classified as operating in the field of media, but its primary cause is education. This may be very different from a research institution, whose activity is academic, and its primary cause is media justice. It should be noted that “diaspora” can be listed either as an activity or a primary cause so that non-diaspora actors too could be classified as dedicated to the Palestinian diaspora as a cause, or an issue. To sum up, the classification scheme enables the treatment of “diasporic elements” in the network, either by diaspora or non-diaspora actors, where diaspora can be the actors’ main activity, their primary or secondary causes, or a reference.

Findings

The network is comprised of a population of actors that were crawled from websites of Palestinian communities in Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Australia, United States, Canada, Spain,

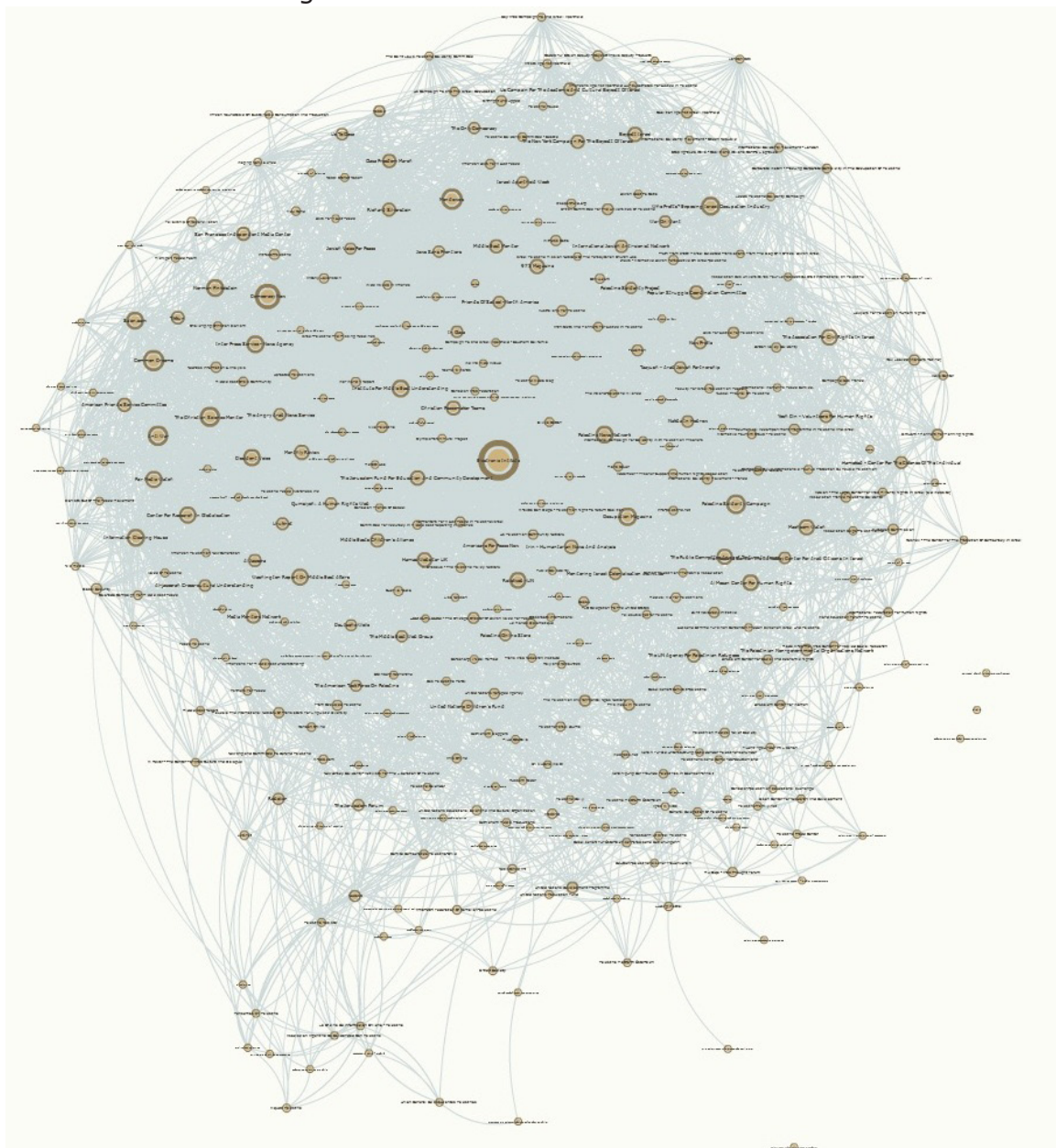
6. The guiding principles for classifying an actor as “diaspora” were the following: self-description of the actors as diaspora; when the majority of the members of associations are of Palestinian origin; actors that are Palestinian refugees. Within these guiding principles, websites of Palestinian Israelis were included as diaspora as well. This was in the attempt to capture the widest category of diaspora actors, while being aware of the political ramifications (and contestation), of the inclusion of Palestinians living in Israel as diaspora.

Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. At first sight, it is a dense transnational network with no distinct clusters, although its density varies in different areas of the network, which indicates some form of “internal clusters” (see figure 1)⁷. The network’s starting points – Websites of Palestinian communities abroad – are peripheral nodes in the network. As shall be further discussed, the network’s main actors and causes are shifted from organizations of Palestinian communities abroad to a more general solidarity network focused on the Palestinian cause and Palestinian rights, and

the boycott movement against Israeli commercial and cultural products. In that sense, the resulting network revolves around the center of gravity rather than representing the peripheral ties between various communities of the Palestinian diaspora. On the other hand, the dense transnational network, which includes close ties between diaspora and non-diaspora actors, indicates that part of the dynamics of Palestinian communities in North America, South America and Europe is manifest not only between diaspora communities in different places, but also and primarily between diaspora communities and civil-society organizations in their host societies.

7. See general map overview on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=map&map=56§ion=25>

Figure 1 – General Network Overview.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=map&map=56§ion=25>

providing news, opinion and analysis about Palestine in the English Language. Electronic Intifada is the top referenced actor by all publisher types and all website types from all countries of residence (see figure 2)⁸.

Figure 2 - Electronic Intifada, the Network's Star-Hub.

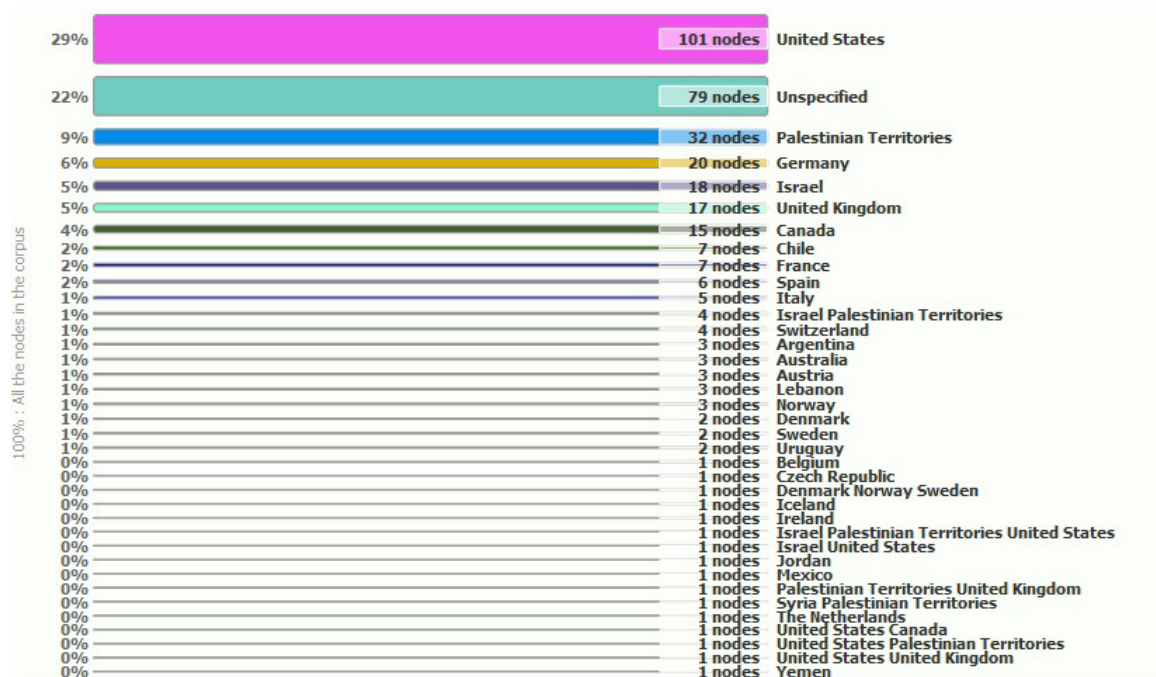


Network demographics

The structure of the network is geographically oriented. The largest group of actors is from the United States (29%, 101 nodes), which is also apparent in the centrality and density of US actors on the graph. The second-largest country of residence is the Palestinian Territories (9%), followed by Germany (6%), Israel and the UK (5%) and Canada (4%)⁹. The distribution of the other countries is lower than 3% each (see figure 3).

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Figure 3 – General Network Overview, Distribution of Country of Residence.



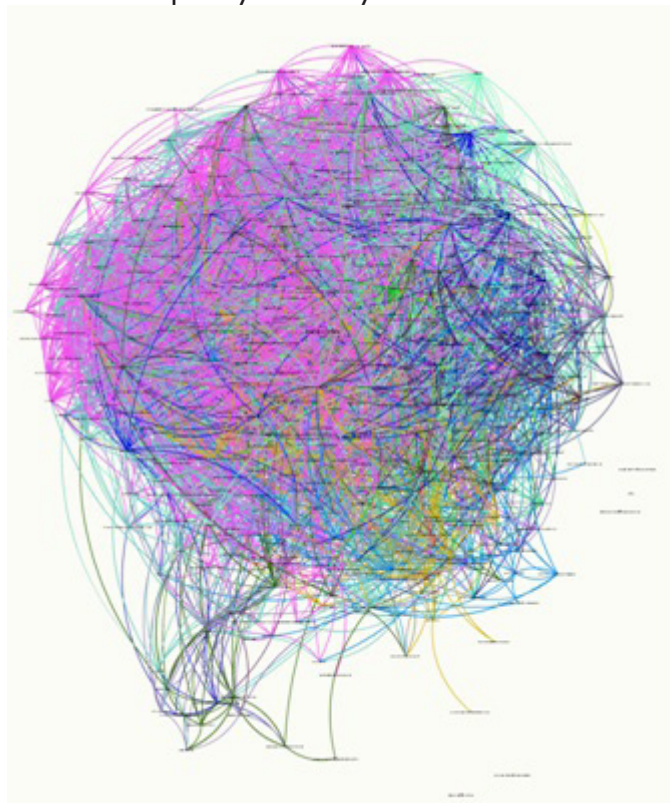
URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=13§ion=25>

There is specificity of issues and types of actors, which determine the geographical arrangement of the graph¹⁰. While the US cluster is central and is mostly populated by media actors, the UK cluster is mainly dedicated to campaigns and to the boycott movement. The local Palestinian/Israeli cluster is dedicated to advocacy of human rights and to alternative media (see figure 4).

At the bottom left of the graph, the Spanish language cluster includes actors from Spain, Chile and Argentina, which are mostly diaspora actors. Similarly, the German-language cluster on the bottom right of the graph is also diaspora oriented. The countries of residence mainly fit the starting points of the crawl, although Palestine/Israel were not included in the starting points. In that sense, the network has brought the “center of gravity” back in.

10. See subgraph Country of Residence on the E-e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=13§ion=25>

Figure 4 – General Network Overview, Graph by country of residence



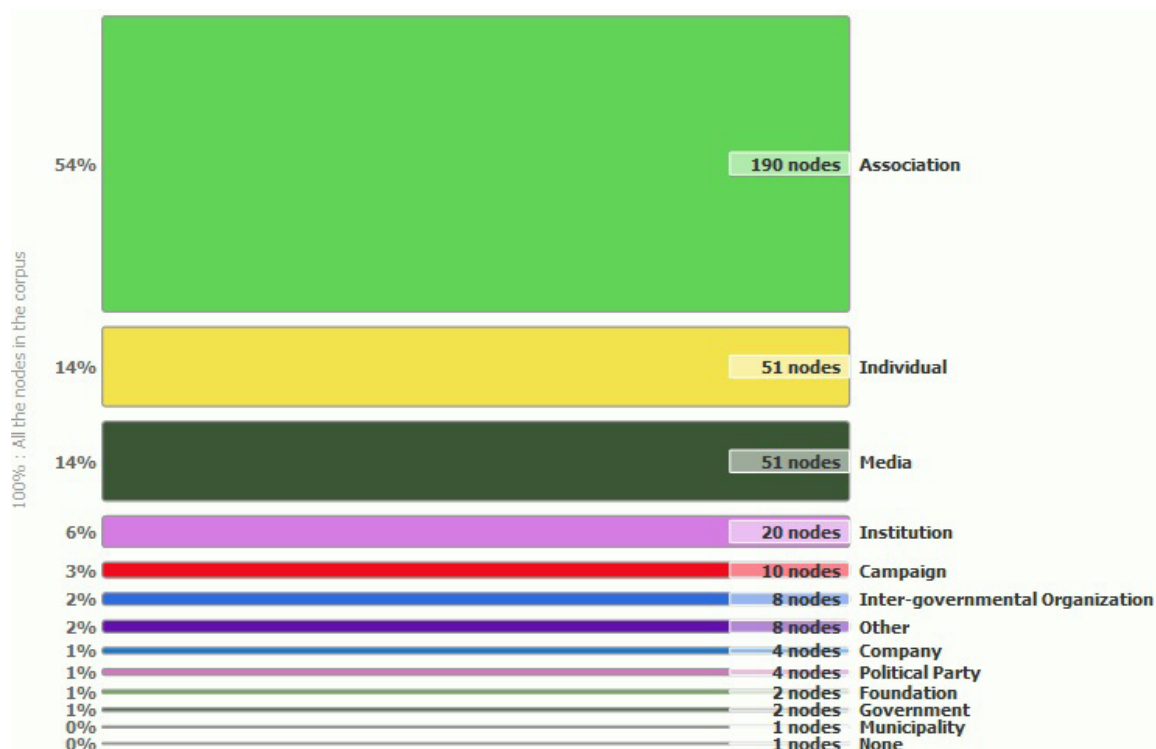
URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=13§ion=25>

General graph demographics

The corpus is mostly comprised of associations (54%, 190 actors). The second-largest category is

“individual” (14%, 51 nodes), and ‘media’ (14%, 51 nodes). It is thus a civic space, which mostly operates in media spaces (see figure 5).

Figure 5 – General Network Overview, Distribution of publisher types.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=4§ion=25>

The network's overview according to publisher types reveals a coupling of publisher types and their primary cause. The boycott movement on the top right combines associations and campaigns¹¹. On the top left, the blogosphere and media spaces combine individual and media publisher's types. The bottom right, which includes most diaspora

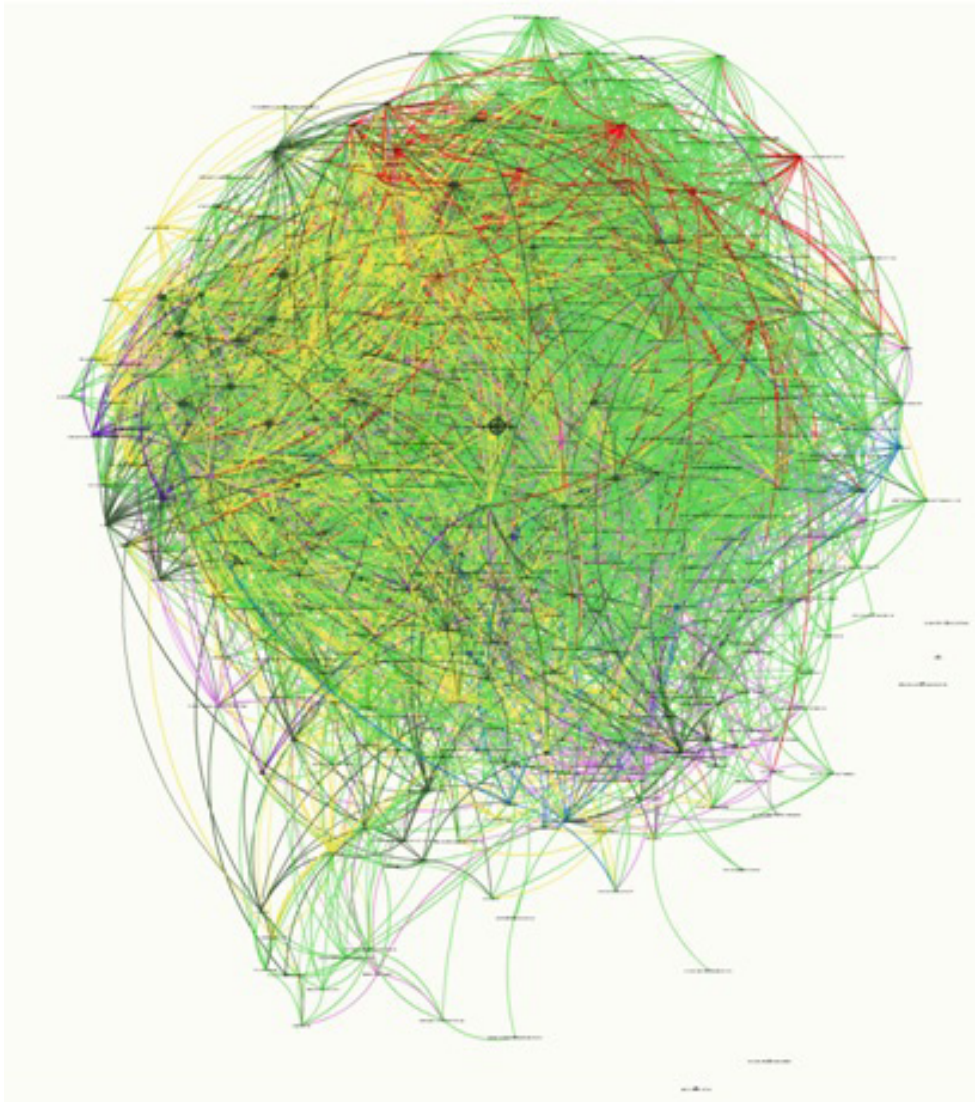
actors, is characterized by institutional actors such as the Human Rights Information and Training Center¹² and The Palestine Curriculum Development Center¹³. The Inter-governmental space is adjacent to the institutional actors (see figure 6).

11. See subgraph Publisher Types on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=4§ion=25>

12. See Actor's Profile on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=node&graph=67&map=56&node=165§ion=25>

13. See Actor's Profile on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=node&graph=67&map=56&node=170§ion=25>

Figure 6 – General Network Overview, Graph by publisher types



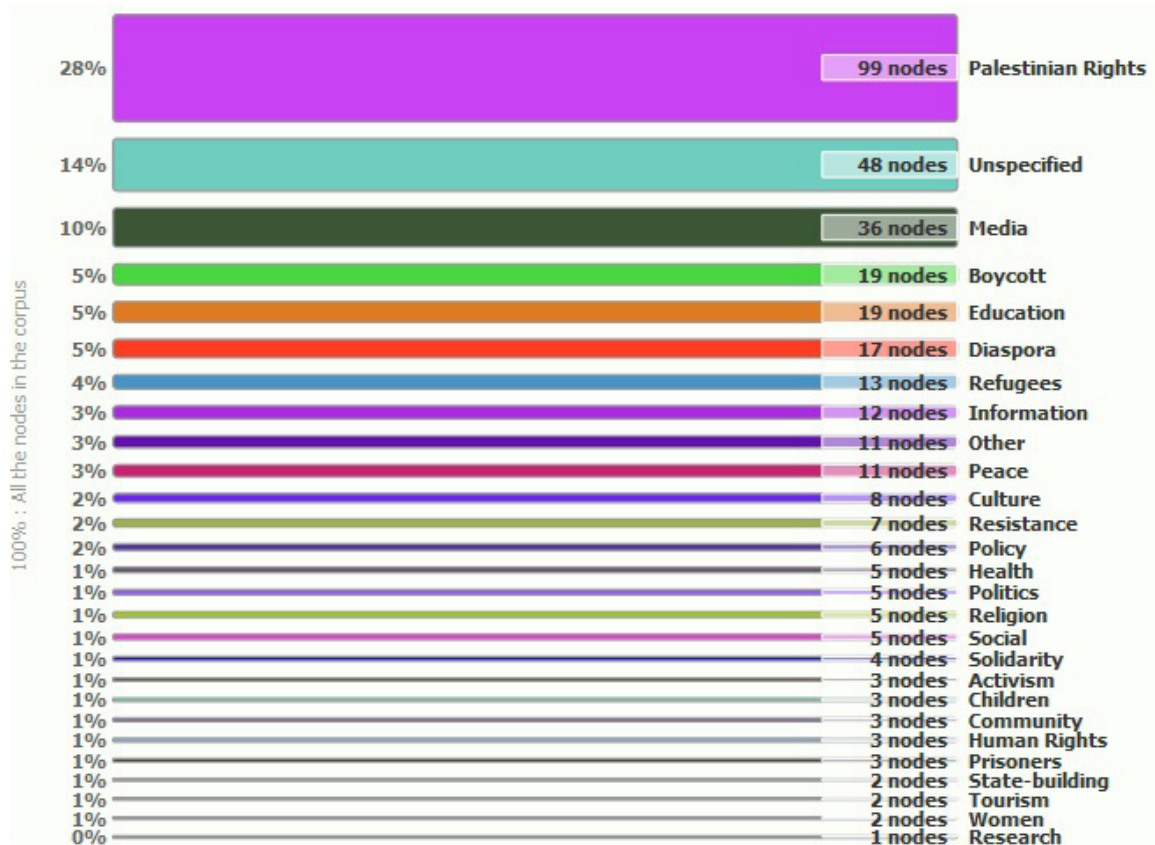
URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=4§ion=25>

Palestinian rights are the primary cause of most network actors, across all publisher types (23%). The second-largest cause is media (10%), followed by boycott, education and diaspora (5% each), and refugees (4%). The distribution of causes reveals that, despite the specificity of the starting points as diaspora communities, the overall network is more dedicated to solidarity with

the Palestinian cause than to issues related to the Palestinian diaspora¹⁴ (see figure 7). The specific diaspora-related issues will be further explored below.

14. See subgraph Primary Cause on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=8§ion=25>

Figure 7 – General Network Overview, Distribution of primary cause

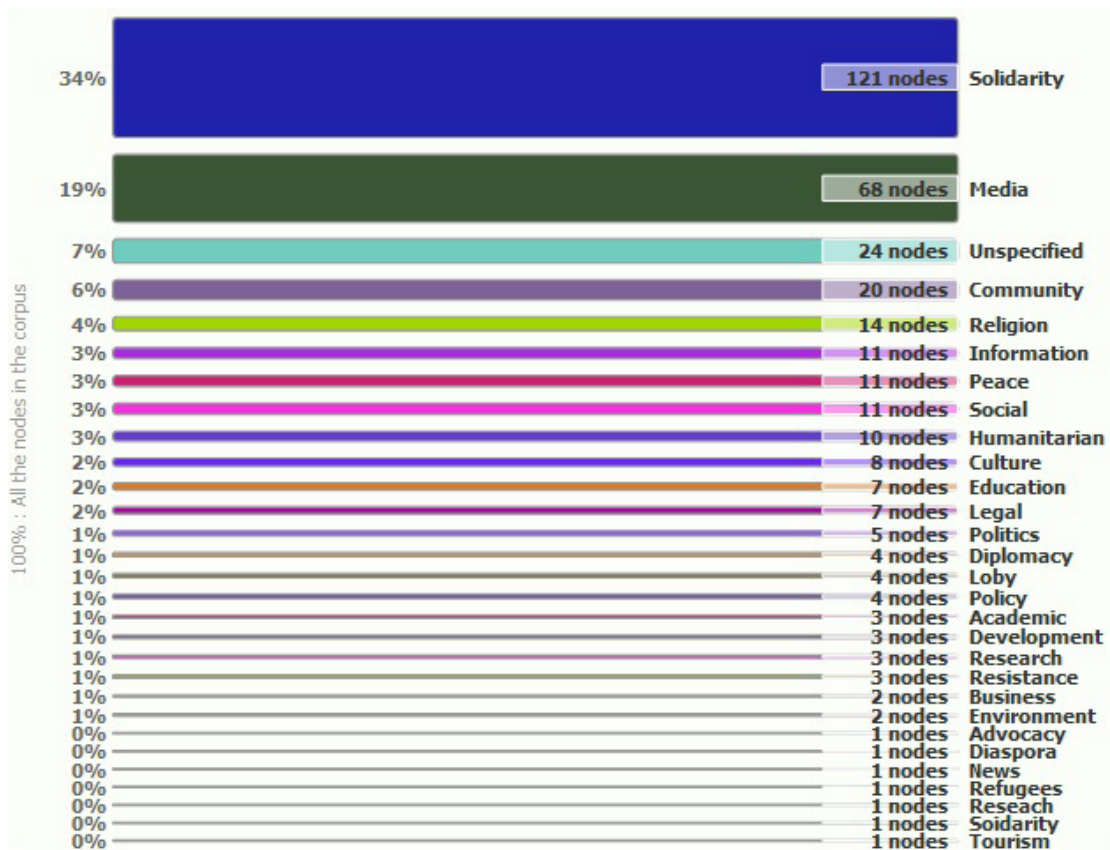


URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=8§ion=25>

Activity types are distributed among the large number of categories of activities employed by the network¹⁵. Still, the majority of actors' activity (both diaspora and non-diaspora actors) is categorized as "solidarity" (34%). (See figures 8 and 9.)

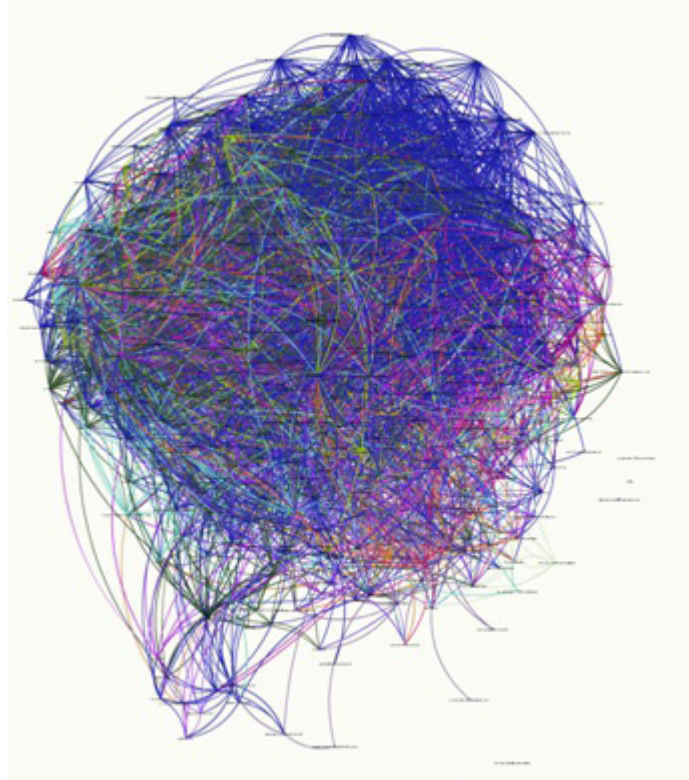
15. See subgraph Activity on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=7§ion=25>

Figure 8 – General Network Overview, Distribution of activity types



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=7§ion=25>

Figure 9 – General Network Overview, Graph by activity types



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=7§ion=25>

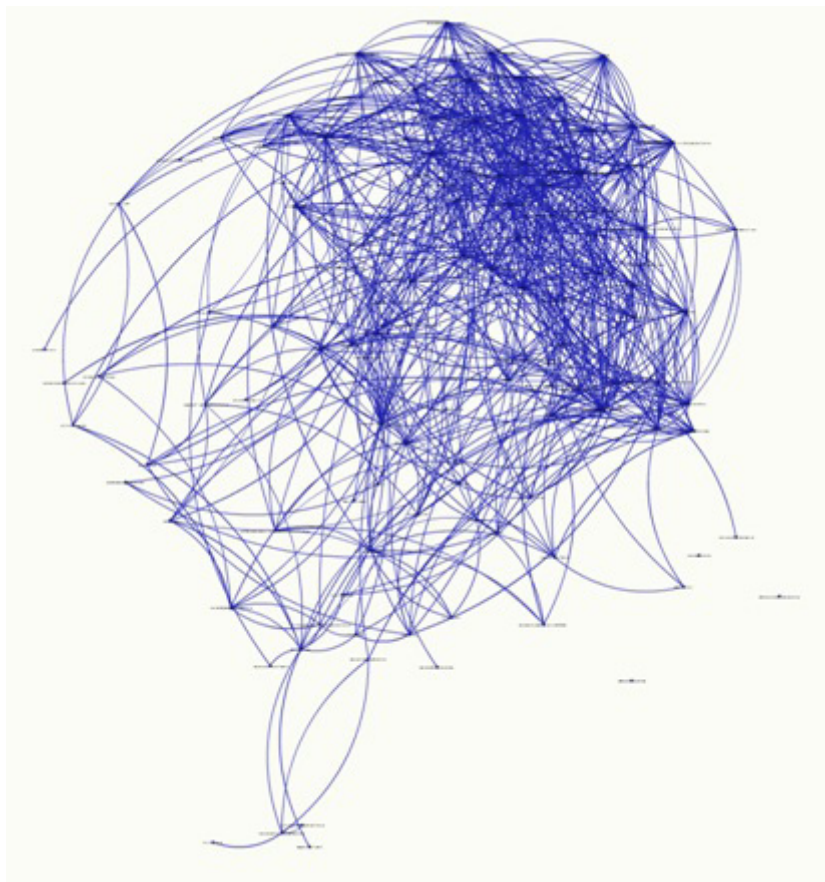
The second-largest group is “media”, with 19%, and 6% for “community”, 4% for “religion” and 3% for “information”, “peace” and “social”. There is only one actor whose activity is defined as “diaspora”¹⁶.

16. The blog “Uprooted Palestinians” is the only actor whose activity is defined as “diaspora”. See actor’s profile on the E-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=node&graph=67&map=56&node=318§ion=25>

The subgraph of solidarity as activity shows high density around the campaigns and boycott thematic areas, indicating close collaboration between solidarity and the boycott movement, and with related campaigns (see figure 10)¹⁷. By contrast, the Spanish and German spaces, which are more dedicated to diaspora-related issues and actors, are peripheral to the larger solidarity cluster.

17. See subgraph Solidarity as Activity on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=7§ion=25&value=Solidarity>

Figure 10 – Subsection Graph of Solidarity as Activity Type.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=7§ion=25&value=Solidarity>

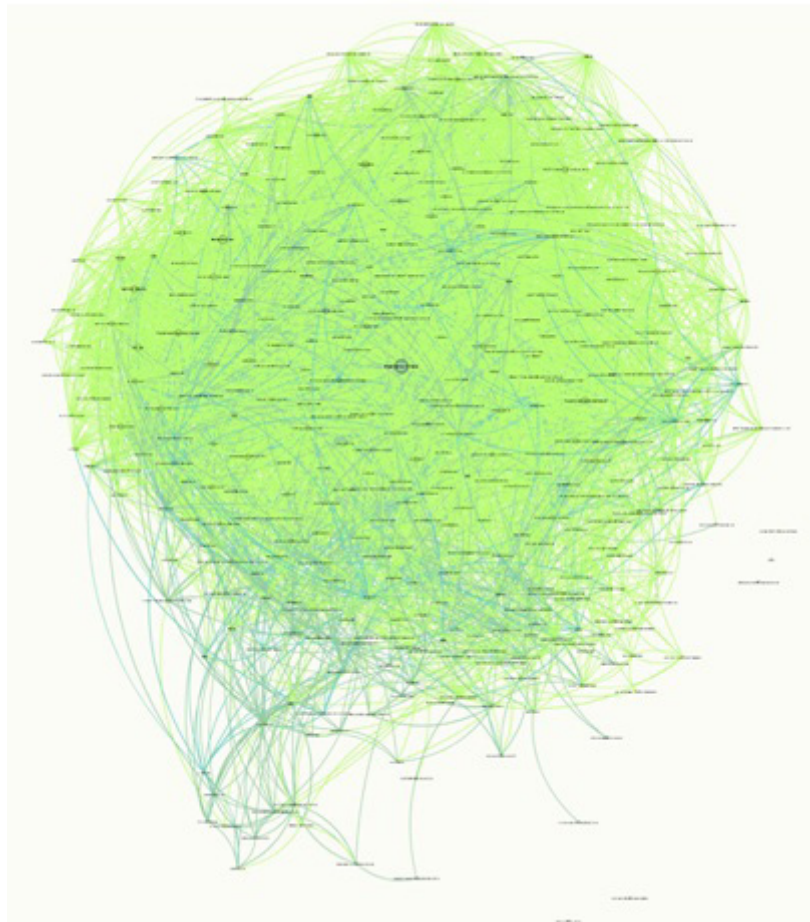
The role of diaspora actors in the network

An overview of the network according to the classification of actors as diaspora and non-diaspora shows that diaspora actors are interwoven throughout the transnational network, and, although the network’s star-hub is defined as a diaspora actor, the majority of diaspora actors

pull the network from its center (see figure 11)¹⁸. Apart from the Spanish-language space, which forms a separate cluster of diaspora actors, the density of links between diaspora actors is determined mainly by geography and language.

18. See subgraph Diaspora? on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25>

Figure 11 – General Network Overview, Graph by diaspora.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25>

Diaspora actors

Considering the exclusivity of diaspora actors in the starting points, the percentage of diaspora actors in the crawled population is rather low (22%, 78 nodes). The percentage of edges is even smaller – only 4% of the network's edges are defined as diaspora (see figure 12). Compared to the dense hyperlinked network – the loose structure

of the diaspora actors may be in line with Hanafi's definition of Palestinians as “partially diasporized people” representing torn and partial networks (see figure 13)¹⁹.

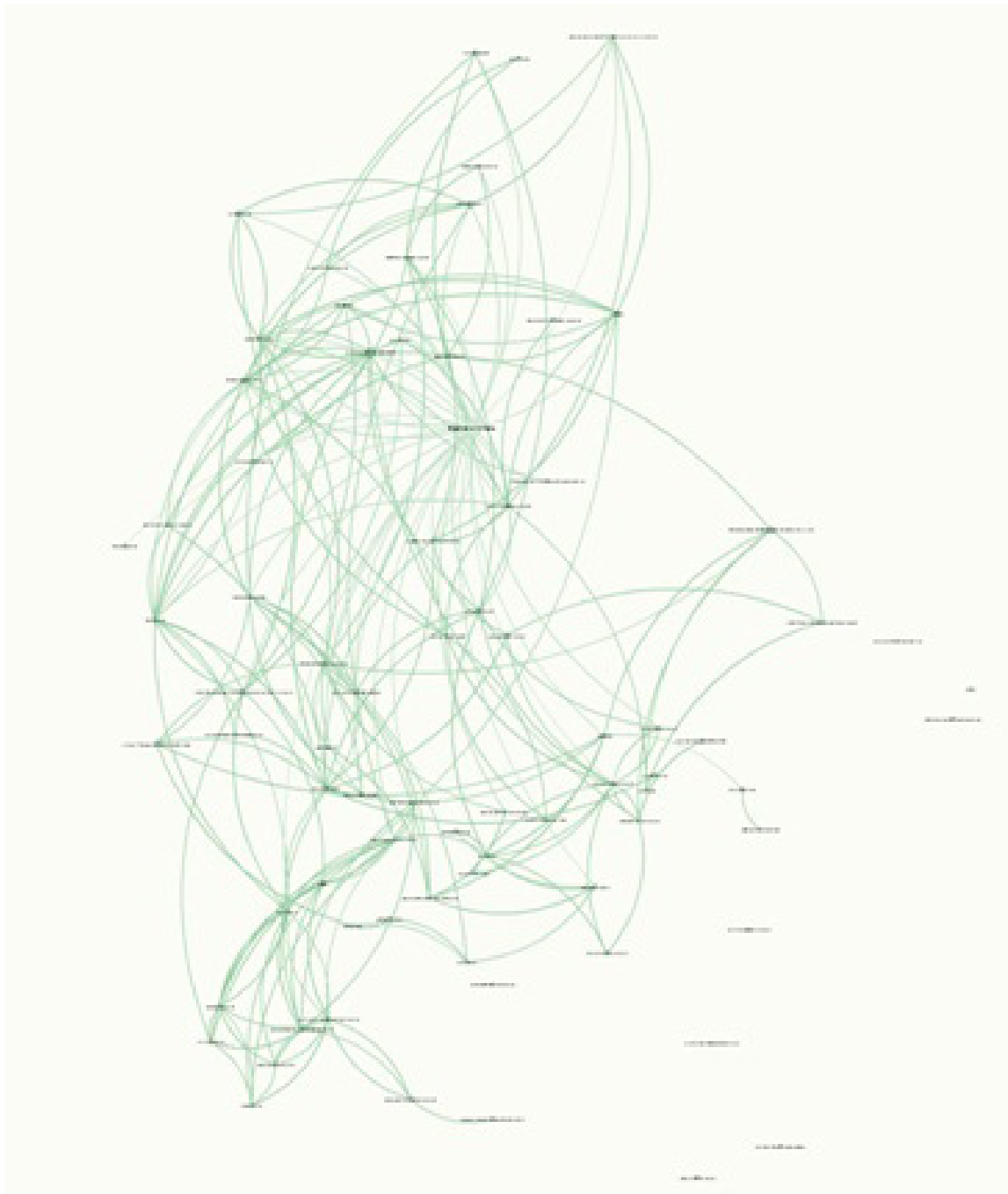
19. See subgraph Diaspora?=yes on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

Figure 12 – Connectivity Profile of Actors Defined as Diaspora.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

Figure 13 – Subsection Graph of Diaspora Actors.

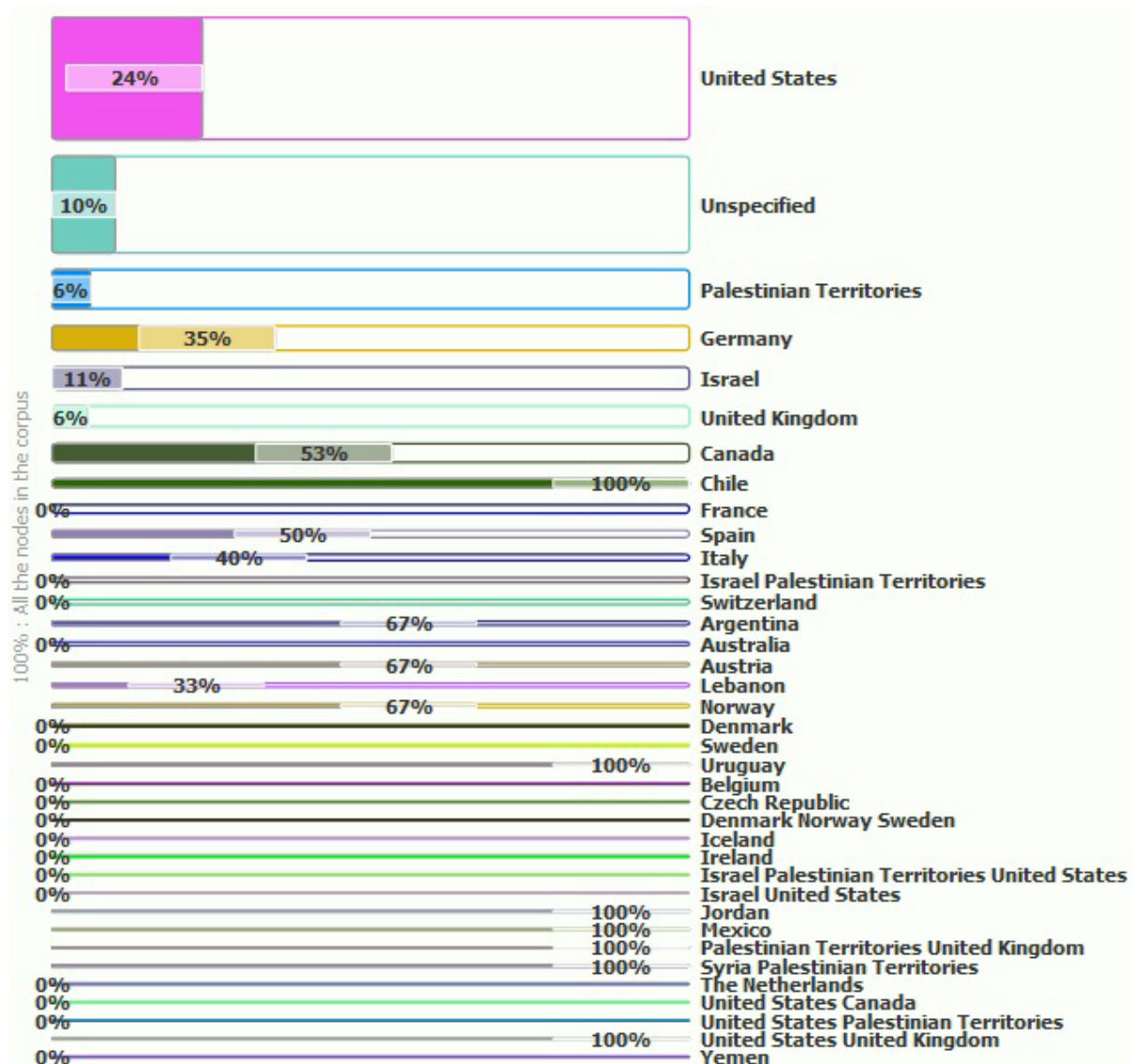


URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

The practice of link-sharing is differential among diaspora actors and is also geographically determined. Among diaspora actors, those receiving the most edges are from the US, but those that share the most links are from other countries,

such as Germany, Canada and the UK. In other words, the US forms the core of the network also in terms of the organization of diaspora actors (see figure 14).

Figure 14 – Diaspora Actors – Distribution of country of residence.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

Electronic Intifada, for example, which is the most cited source both by diaspora and non-diaspora actors, is not listed in the top diaspora actors that share the most links to either diaspora or non-diaspora actors. The top-actors list does not include Palestinian refugees or organizations related to them (see figure 15).

Figure 15 – List of Diaspora Top Actors.

SUBGRAPH AUTHORITIES		SUBGRAPH HUBS	
Nodes <i>inside</i> Yes		Nodes <i>inside</i> Yes	
that are cited by the most nodes in Yes		that cite the most nodes in Yes	
Node name	Inbound edges FROM Yes	Node name	Outbound edges TO Yes
Electronic Intifada	35	Peace Palestine	12
The Jerusalem Forum	12	Arab Voiced Radio Talkshow	10
Institute For Middle East Understanding	11	Uprooted Palestinians	10
The American Task Force On Palestine	10	La Oficina De Informacion Chileno - Palestina	8
Nodo50	10	Palestina Plattform Österreich	8
The Angry Arab News Service	8	Palestina Resistel	8
Palestine Online Store	8	Us Palestinian Community Network	7
Middle East Monitor	7	The Angry Arab News Service	7
Us Palestinian Community Network	6	Asociacion Argentina De Solidaridad Con Palestina	7
Comite Democratico Palestino-Chile	6	Webgaza.net	7

REPRESENTATIVE AUTHORITIES		DIFFUSING HUBS	
Nodes <i>inside</i> Yes		Nodes <i>inside</i> Yes	
that are cited by the most nodes in other diaspora?		that cite the most nodes in other diaspora?	
Node name	Inbound edges FROM other diaspora?	Node name	Outbound edges TO other diaspora?
Electronic Intifada	166	The Angry Arab News Service	50
Institute For Middle East Understanding	50	Tadamon	42
Middle East Monitor	33	Uprooted Palestinians	38
The Mossawa Center The Advocacy Center For Arab Citizens In Israel	25	Palestina Plattform Österreich	32
The Angry Arab News Service	23	American Palestinian New Generation	30
Palestine Online Store	20	Land And People	30
Tadamon	20	Niagara Palestinian Association	29
Birthright Unplugged	19	Americans Against Apartheid Uk - Expatriates For Justice In Palestine	28
The Jerusalem Forum	16	Peace Palestine	26
Tlaxcala The International Network Of Translators For Linguistic Diversity	16	Palestina Liberal	21

EXTERNAL ATTRACTING AUTHORITIES		EXTERNAL SOURCE HUBS	
Nodes <i>outside</i> Yes		Nodes <i>outside</i> Yes	
that are cited by the most nodes in Yes		that cite the most nodes in Yes	
Node name	Inbound edges FROM Yes	Node name	Outbound edges TO Yes
Information Clearing House (No)	16	Anis Online (Unspecified)	14
Palestine Solidarity Campaign (No)	16	SIRATYST (Stuff I Read And Thought You Should Too) (Unspecified)	11
Democracy Now (No)	14	Vermonters For A Just Peace In Palestine/israel (No)	11
Rebellion (No)	12	Institut Fur Palestinakunde (No)	11
Common Dreams (No)	12	Wide Asleep In America (No)	10
Anti War (No)	11	Al Awda California (No)	10
Al Mezan Center For Human Rights (No)	10	The Independent News Agency (No)	9
Norman Finkelstein (No)	10	El Palestino (Unspecified)	9
Washington Report On Middle East Affairs (No)	10	Guerilla Radio (No)	8
Mondoweis (No)	10	Zionists Out Of The Peace Movement (No)	8

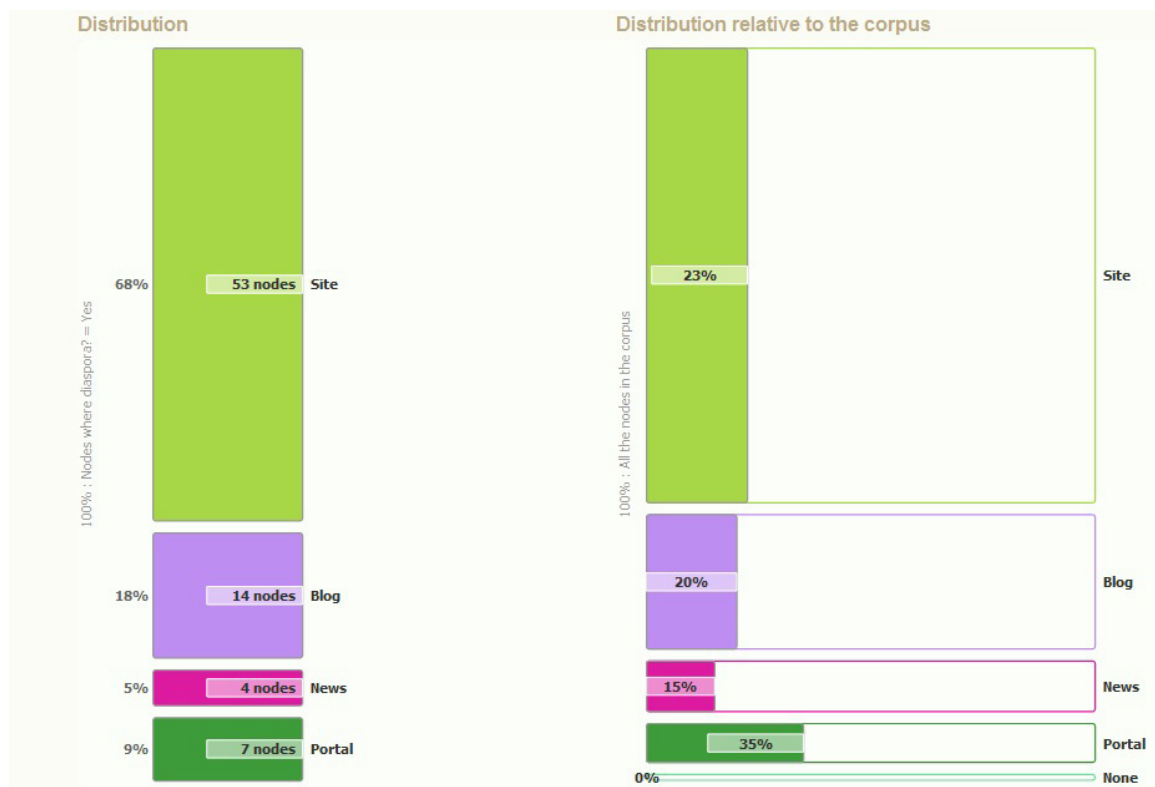
URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

Demographics of diaspora actors

The typical demographic profile of the network's diaspora actors are associations dedicated either to community or solidarity as activity, and either to Palestinian rights or to diaspora as a primary cause. 59% (46 nodes) of all diaspora actors are

associations. 17% (13 nodes) are individual websites, and 6% (5 nodes) are defined as "media" (see figure 16). In terms of types of websites, the majority of diaspora actors are websites (68%, 53 nodes) and the second largest category is blogs (18%, 14 nodes). (See figure 17.)

Figure 16 – Diaspora Actors – Distribution of publisher types.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

Figure 17 – Diaspora Actors – Distribution of website types.

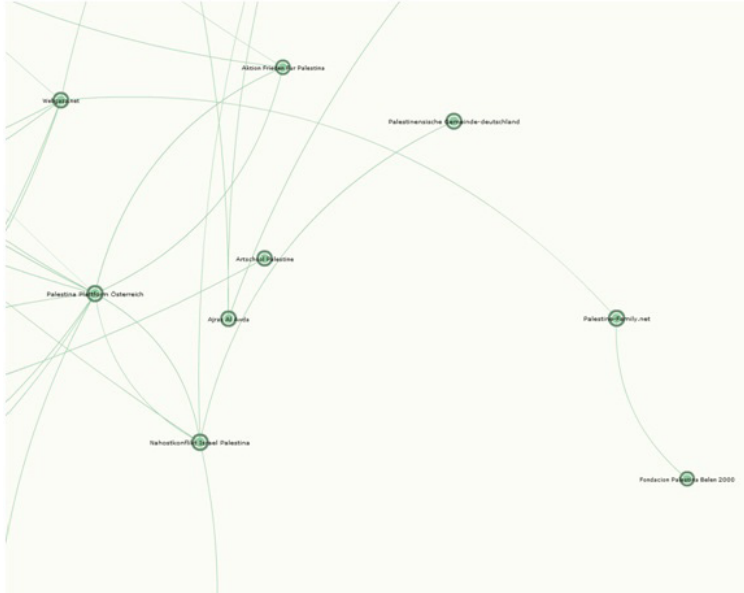


URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

of all other actors from Germany²⁰. Diaspora actors from Canada are closer to the center since they are more interlinked with US-based actors. (See figures 18-20.)

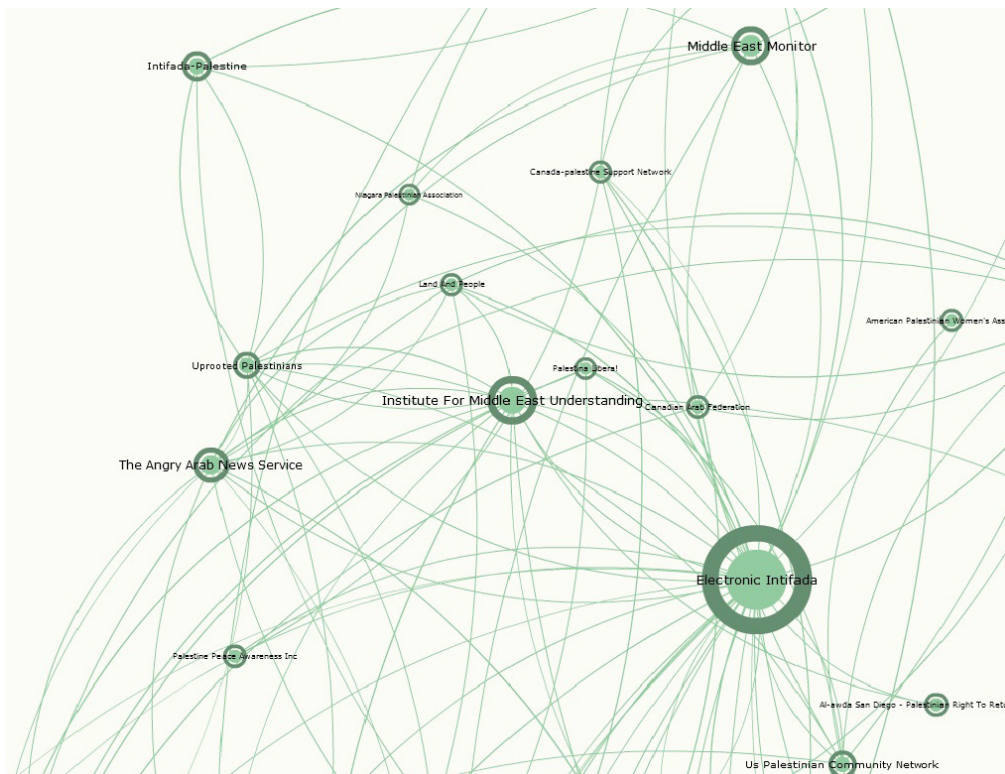
20. Websites of Palestinian communities in Berlin are loosely interlinked.

Figure 18 – Diaspora Actors Graph – German-language cluster.



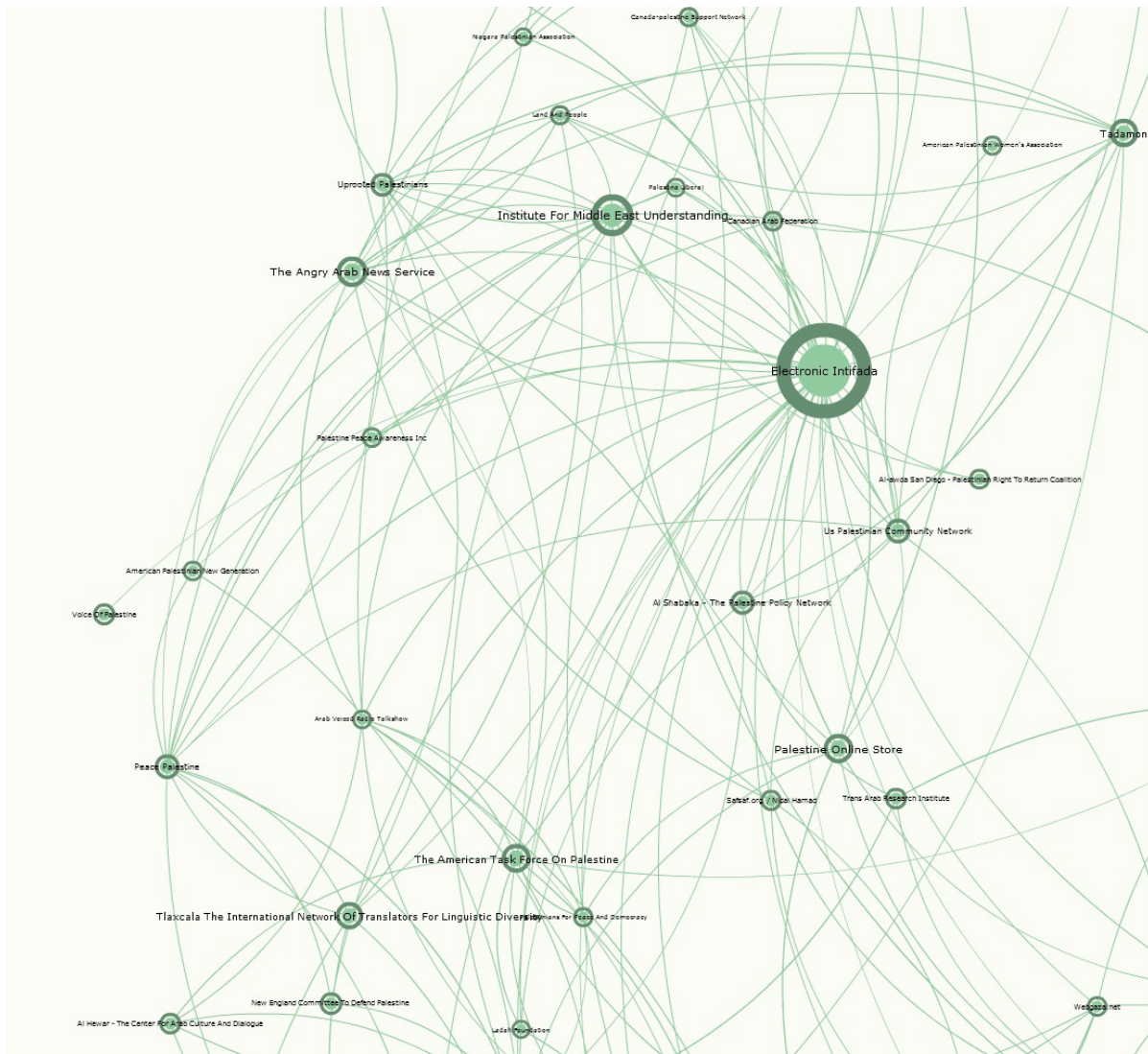
URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

Figure 19 – Diaspora Actors Graph – Canadian cluster.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

Figure 20 – Diaspora Actors Graph – US cluster.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

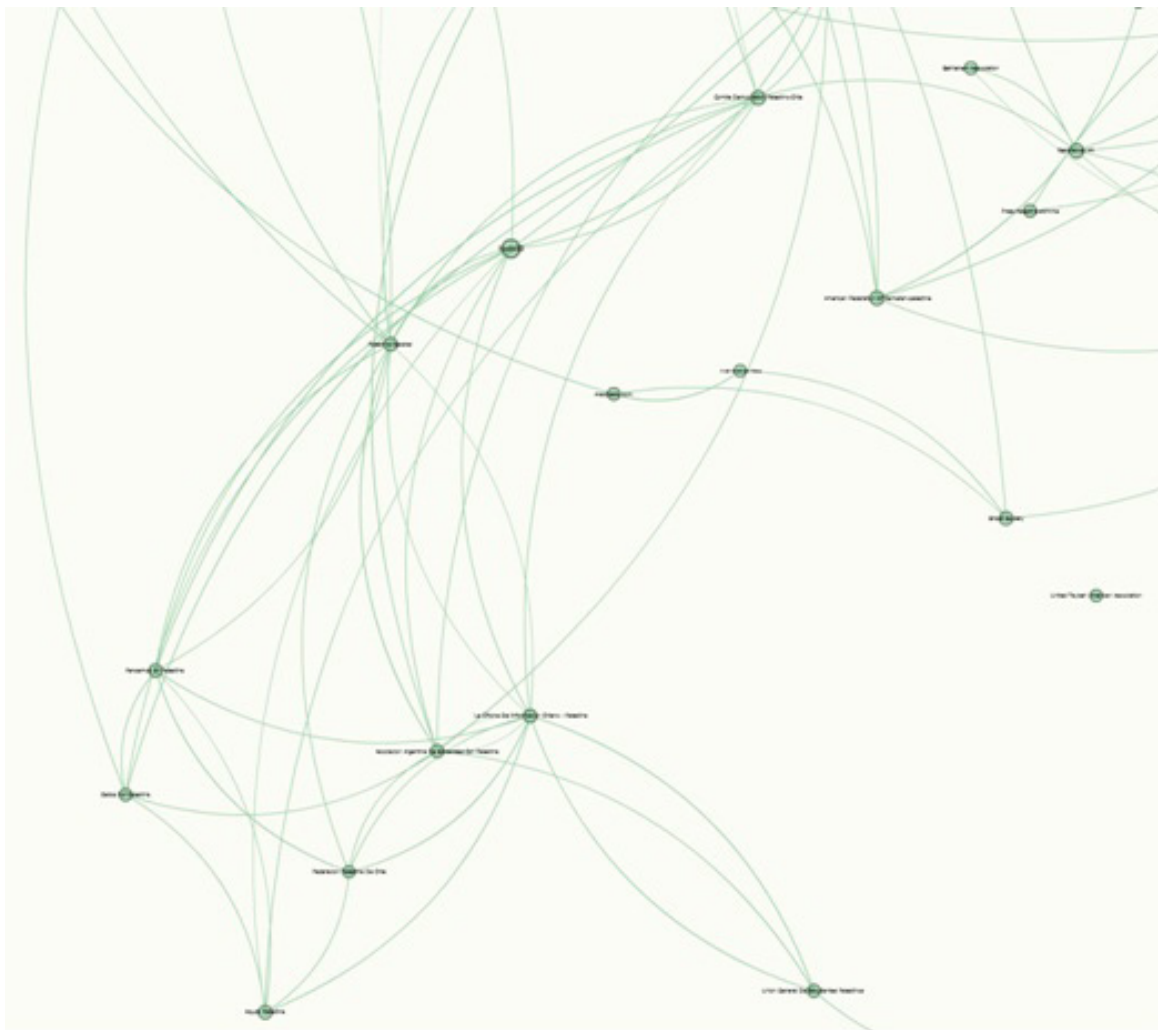
While diaspora actors from the US, Germany and Canada share their hyperlinked space with non-diaspora actors from their countries of residence, the Spanish-language space stands out as a diasporic space since 100% of the corpus' actors from Chile (9 nodes) Uruguay (2 nodes) and Mexico (1 node) are diaspora actors (see figure 21).

Notably, among the diaspora actors that only share links with non-diaspora actors (and are thus

seen as isolated nodes in the graph of diaspora actors) is the Palestinian Right of Return Coalition²¹, which highlights the tension concerning the homogeneity of the Palestinian diaspora in terms of refugees and non-refugee communities (see figure 22).

21. See Actor's Profile on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=node&graph=67&map=56&node=270§ion=25>

Figure 21 – Diaspora Actors Graph – Spanish-language cluster.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

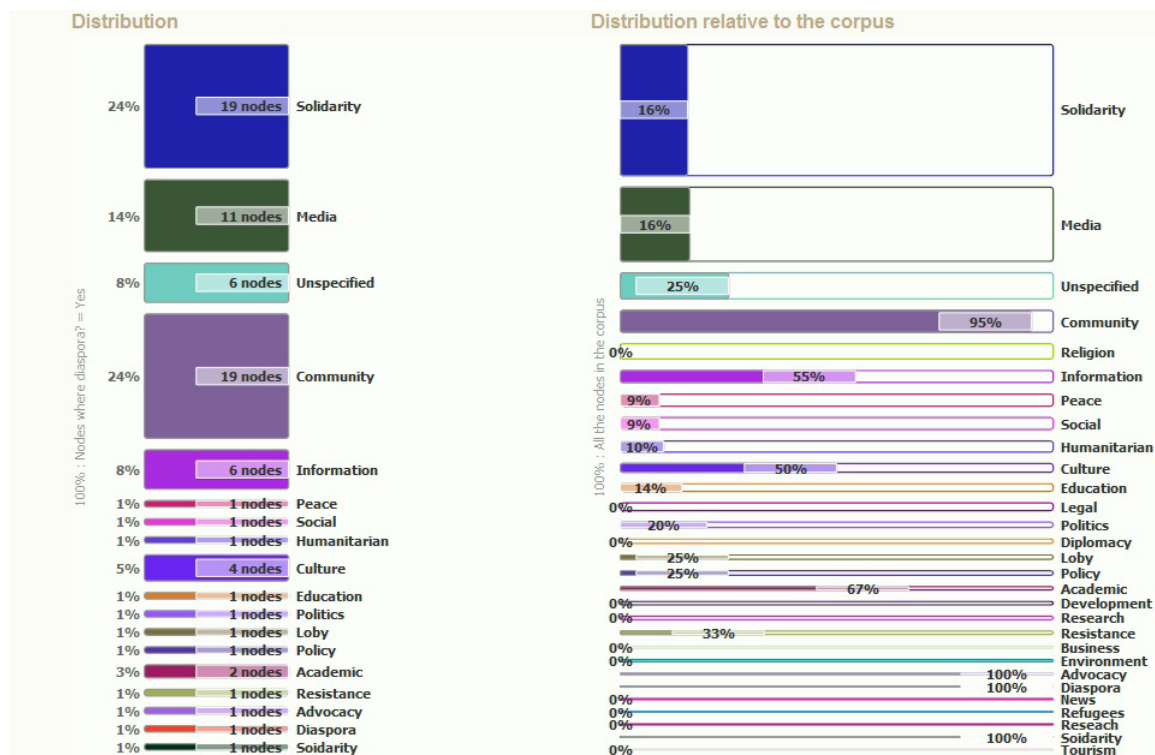
The type of activity characterizing diaspora actors shows that “community” as an activity type is unique to diaspora actors compared to the entire corpus. While the popular activity types among diaspora actors are evenly distributed between “community” and “solidarity” (24%, 19 nodes each), diaspora actors’ activity as “community” comprises 95% of the entire corpus, compared to 50% for “solidarity”. Similarly, diaspora actors whose activity is defined as “information” (6 nodes) and “culture” (4 nodes) make up 50% of the entire corpus (see figure 23).

Figure 22 – Diaspora Actors Graph – Isolated nodes that do not share links with other diaspora actors.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

Figure 23 – Diaspora Actors – Distribution of activity types.

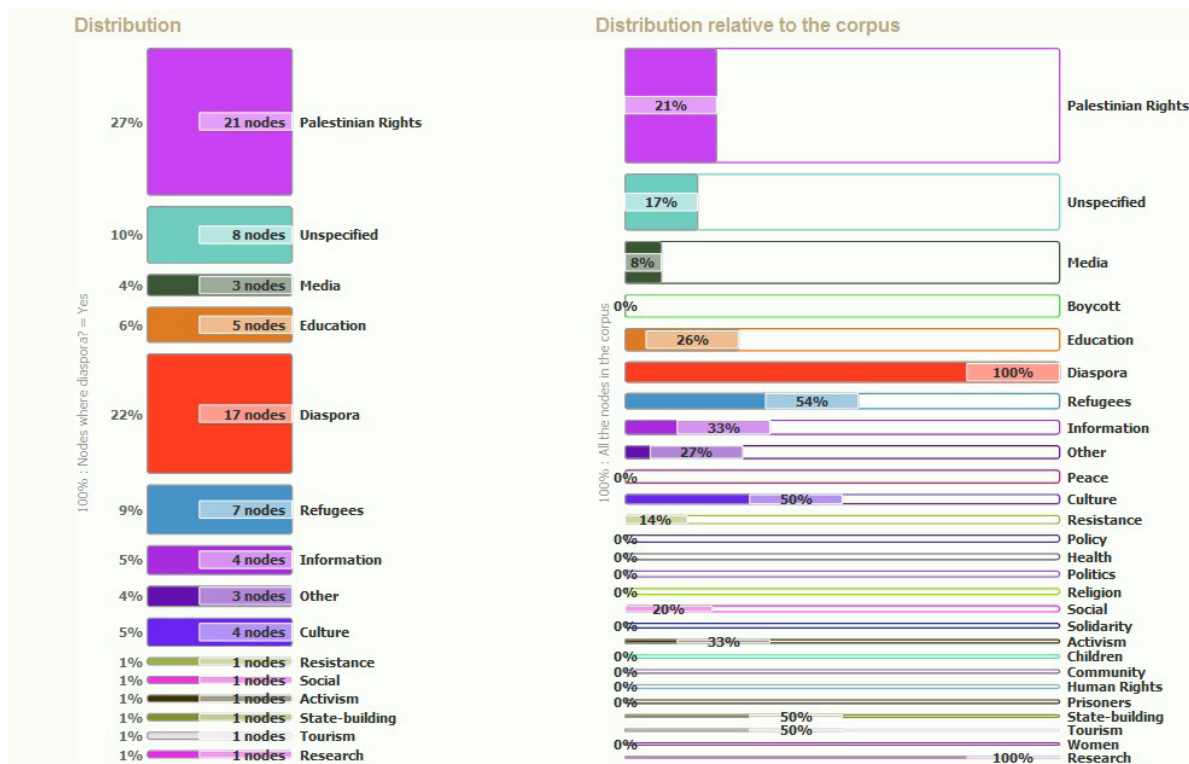


URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

This alludes to the pattern of unique issues dealt with by diaspora actors compared to non-diaspora actors. Like non-diaspora actors, the largest group of diaspora actors is dedicated to Palestinian rights as a primary cause (27%, 21 nodes). But the second-largest primary cause among diaspora actors is “diaspora”, which makes up 100% of “diaspora” as a primary cause in the entire corpus.

And while only 9% of diaspora actors (7 nodes) are categorized with “refugees” as their primary cause, they make up 54% of the entire corpus (see figure 24). In other words, the entire discussion about diaspora and almost half of the discussion about refugees as a primary cause is brought to the network by diaspora actors.

Figure 24 – Diaspora Actors – Distribution of activity types.



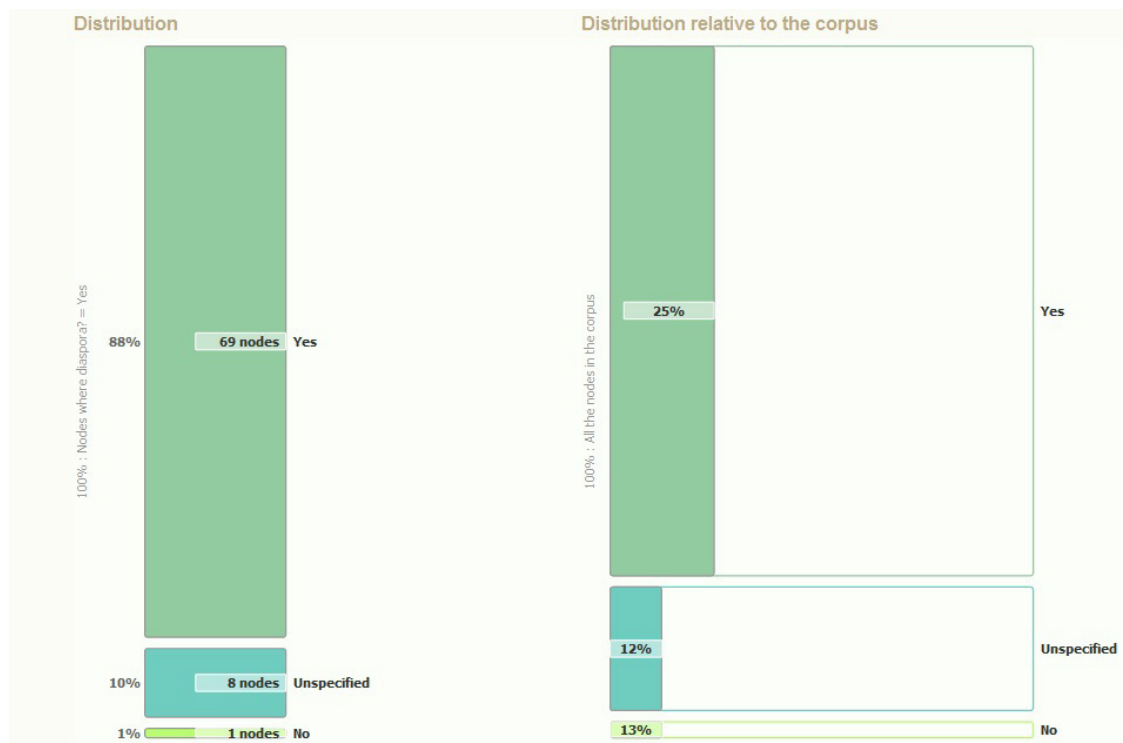
URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

In terms of references to the Palestinian Territories as a center of gravity, diaspora actors contribute 25% of the corpus' references to the Palestinian Territories (88% of all diaspora actors, 69 nodes). (See figure 25.) As with non-diaspora actors, most diaspora actors do not mention specific places of origin in the Palestinian Territories. That is, the network at large is dedicated to the Palestinian Territories as its center of gravity,

but in ways that are more related to the network's characterizations as a transnational solidarity network rather than as a diaspora network.

By contrast, diaspora actors differ from not-diaspora actors by their high rates of references to the diaspora. 73% of all diaspora actors refer to the diaspora. That makes up 63% of references to the diaspora by the entire corpus (see figure 26).

Figure 25 – Diaspora Actors –
Distribution of reference to the Palestinian Territories.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

Figure 26 – Diaspora Actors – Distribution of reference to the diaspora.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=5§ion=25&value=Yes>

Center of gravity

The Palestinian Territories function as the network's center of gravity for all network actors, but in a sense it brings together two types of intertwined networks: diaspora actors, with their related activities and issues, and solidarity actors, whose activities and issues are not diaspora related. This is especially evident when analyzing the network's subsections of "community" as an activity type, and of the boycott of Israel as a primary cause.

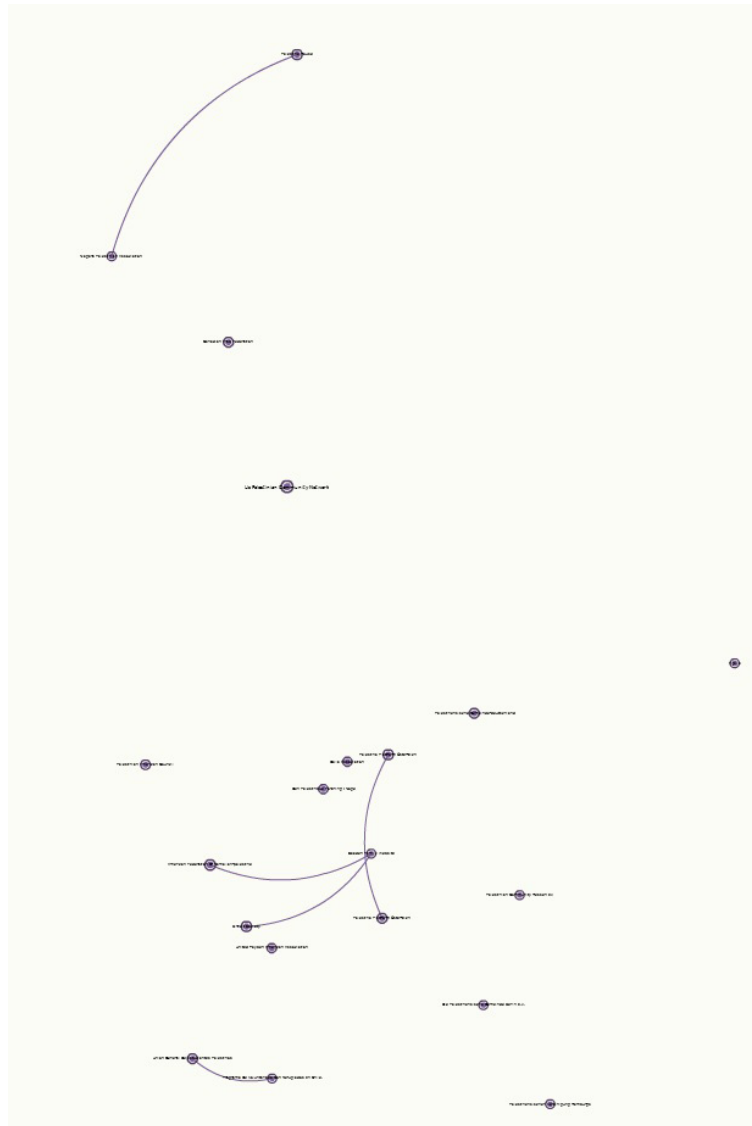
Activity type – community

The network's subsection of community-as-activity is a relatively small space (20 nodes, 6% of

all activity types), characterized by low density of edges; but its analysis highlights the unique activity and causes of the network's diaspora actors, which make up 95% of this subspace (see figure 27)²². The list of top actors (both in terms of authority and diffusing hubs) include websites from diaspora communities from around the world, with a similar profile to the crawl's starting points (see figure 28).

22. See Subgraph Community as Activity on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=7§ion=25&value=Community>

Figure 27 – Subsection Graph of Community as Activity Type.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=7§ion=25&value=Community>

Figure 28 – List of Top Nodes of Community as Activity Type..

SUBGRAPH AUTHORITIES Nodes <i>inside</i> Community that are cited by the most nodes in Community		SUBGRAPH HUBS Nodes <i>inside</i> Community that cite the most nodes in Community	
Node name	Inbound edges FROM Community	Node name	Outbound edges TO Community
Palestina Plattform Österreich	1	Saadeh Family Website	2
Palestine House	1	Programa De Voluntariado Con Refugiados En Chile.	1
Birzeit Society	1	Palestina Plattform Österreich	1
Union General De Estudiantes Palestinos	1	Niagara Palestinian Association	1
American Federation Of Ramallah-palestine	1		
REPRESENTATIVE AUTHORITIES Nodes <i>inside</i> Community that are cited by the most nodes in other activity		DIFFUSING HUBS Nodes <i>inside</i> Community that cite the most nodes in other activity	
Node name	Inbound edges FROM other activity	Node name	Outbound edges TO other activity
Us Palestinian Community Network	15	Palestina Plattform Österreich	40
American Federation Of Ramallah-palestine	8	Niagara Palestinian Association	32
Palestinensische Gemeinde-deutschland	5	Us Palestinian Community Network	22
Palestina Plattform Österreich	5	Saadeh Family Website	9
Palestine House	5	Palestinian American Council	6
Birzeit Society	5	Dalia Association	2
Palestina Plattform Österreich	5	Den Palestinske Forening I Norge	2
Canadian Arab Federation	5	Union General De Estudiantes Palestinos	2
Union General De Estudiantes Palestinos	3	Palestinian Community Hessen Ev	2
Palestinian American Council	2	Programa De Voluntariado Con Refugiados En Chile.	1
EXTERNAL ATTRACTING AUTHORITIES Nodes <i>outside</i> Community that are cited by the most nodes in Community		EXTERNAL SOURCE HUBS Nodes <i>outside</i> Community that cite the most nodes in Community	
Node name	Inbound edges FROM Community	Node name	Outbound edges TO Community
Electronic Intifada (Media)	5	Anis Online (Unspecified)	5
General Delegation Of Palestine (Diplomacy)	3	Al Awda California (Solidarity)	4
Middle East's Children's Alliance (Humanitarian)	3	Arab Voiced Radio Talkshow (Media)	3
Arabs48 (Media)	3	Nahostkonflikt Israel Palestina (Peace)	3
Information Clearing House (Media)	2	Safsaf.org / Nidal Hamad (Unspecified)	2
Christian Peacemaker Teams (Solidarity)	2	Peace Palestine (Solidarity)	2
Palestine Solidarity Project (Solidarity)	2	Israeli Apartheid Week (Solidarity)	2
Resistance Art (Culture)	2	SIRATYST (Stuff I Read And Thought You Should Too)	1
Safsaf.org / Nidal Hamad (Unspecified)	2	(Solidarity)	
Ludwig Watzal (Media)	2	Association Des Universitaires Pour Le Respect Du	1
		Droit International En Palestine (Solidarity)	
		Americans And Palestinians For Peace (Solidarity)	1

URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=7§ion=25&value=Community>

Unlike other subsections of the network, the Community-as-Activity subsection is dedicated to the diaspora as the largest category of primary cause (60%, 12 nodes). This makes 71% of all actors in the corpus dedicated to the diaspora as a primary cause. Unlike any other category, the “community” activity type does not treat Palestinian rights as a primary cause – only 5% (1 node), which is only 1% of the corpus of websites dedicated to Palestinian rights²³. The second-largest

categories of primary cause for “community” as activity type are “education” and “refugees” – all of which are diaspora-related issues (10% each). 5% are dedicated to “culture” and “activism”. By contrast, 0% of the community-as-activity actors are dedicated to boycott as a primary cause (see figure 29).

23. The Palästinensische Vereinigung Hamburgs . See Ac-

tor's Profile on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=node&graph=67&map=56&node=277§ion=25>

Figure 29 – Community as Activity Type, Distribution of primary cause.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=7§ion=25&value=Community>

Boycott as a primary cause

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement brings together most organizations in the world campaigning for the Palestinian cause. The BDS network originates from the Palestinian Territories and is steered by the Palestinian BDS National Committee, comprised of 19 Palestinian civil-society organizations. The committee's statement was issued in 2005, and has since been adopted by the International Coordination Network for Palestine, which brings together most Palestinian solidarity movements around the world, unified under the BDS cause²⁴. On the map, the BDS movement and

the Palestinian diaspora reside in the network as side-by-side issues, but a closer inspection shows that there is less thematic connection between the two issues and their actors (see figure 30)²⁵. A zoomed-in view of the actors dedicated to boycott as a primary cause shows a dense internal cluster (18.3% internal density, compared to 3.3% inbound and 5.5% outbound), indicating an issue-network. Among boycott actors, most edges exchanged with actors dedicated to Palestinian rights and media as a primary cause, indicating both the framing and the target activity of the boycott movement in the media space.

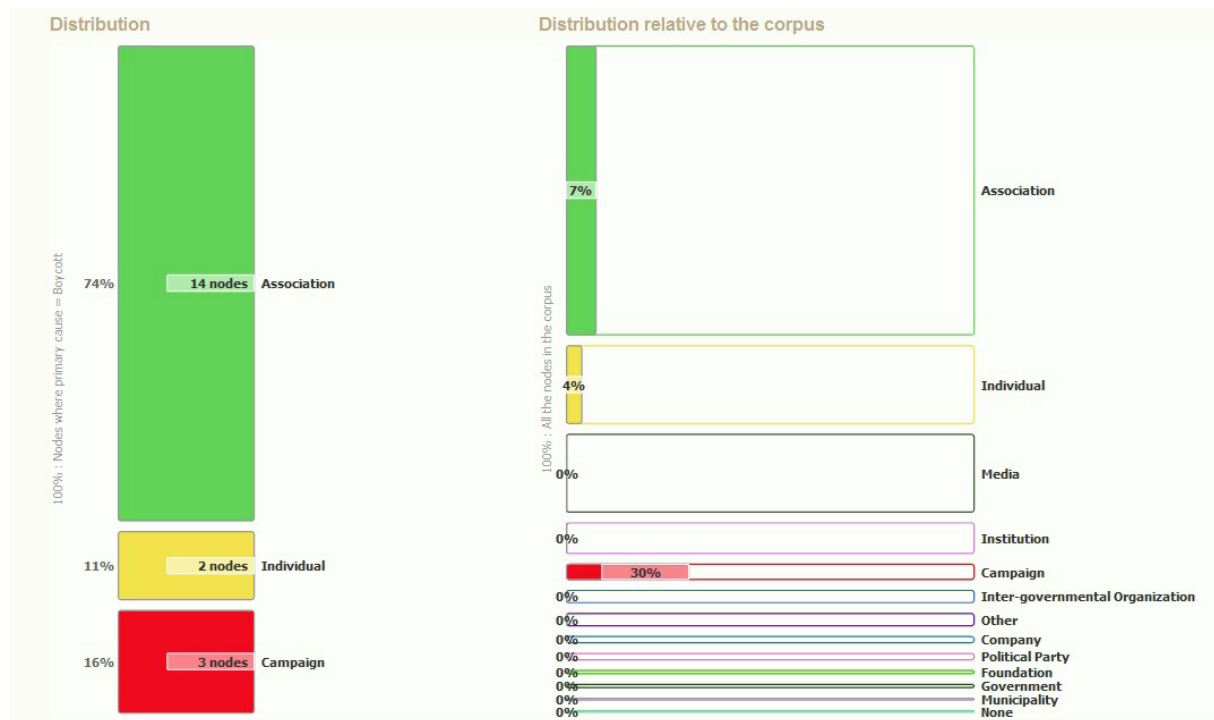
24. The global BDS network has 59 official members from 22 countries around the world, including Australia, the US, Canada, Europe (Belgium, France, Catalunya, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Ireland, UK, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland), The Middle East (Syria, Pales-

tinian Israelis, Egypt) and Asia (Malaysia). See the BDS movement website, <http://www.bdsmovement.net/>. This umbrella site is not listed as an actor in the graph.

25. See subgraph Boycott as a Primary Cause on the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=8§ion=25&value=Boycott>

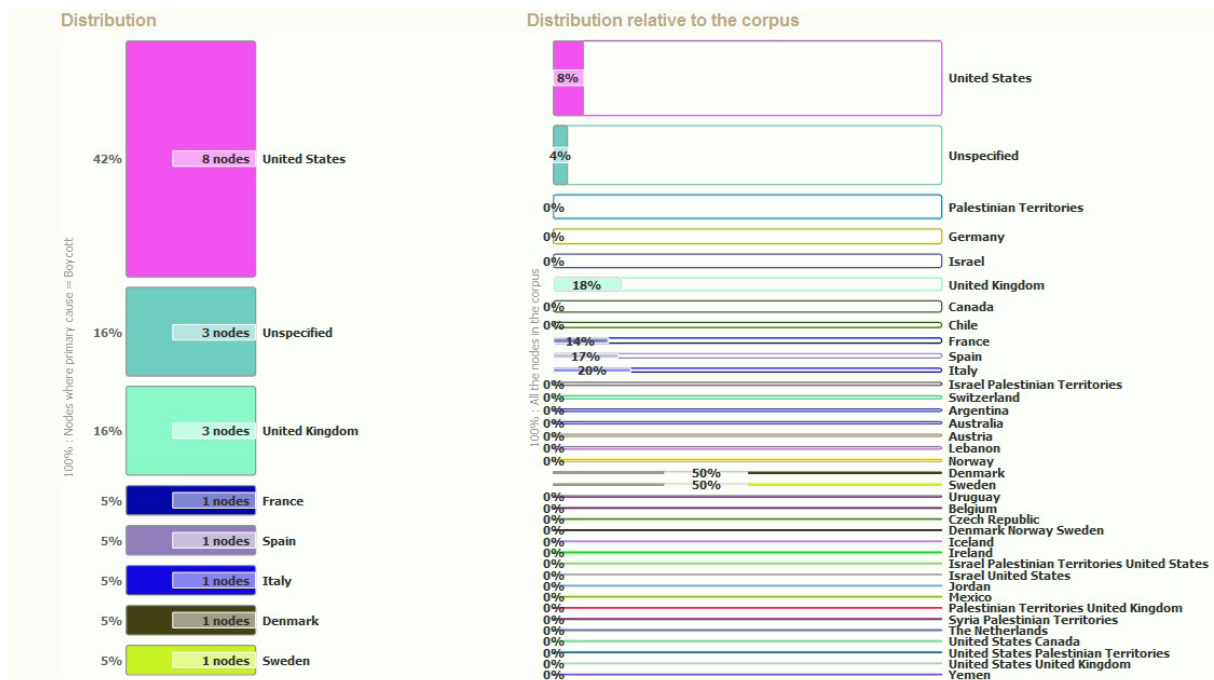
Programme de recherche TIC-Migrations
Projet e-Diasporas Atlas : <http://e-diasporas.fr>

Figure 31– Boycott as a Primary Cause, Distribution of publisher types.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=8§ion=25&value=Boycott>

Figure 32 – Boycott as a Primary Cause, Distribution of country of residence.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=8§ion=25&value=Boycott>

The Palestinian Territories as a country of residence

The role of the Palestinian Territories as the network's center of gravity, especially in relation to the bi-directional links between diaspora and its center of gravity, is further highlighted in the analysis of actors whose country of residence is the Palestinian Territories^{28 29}. (See figure 33.)

28. The definition of actors residing in the Palestinian Territories includes actors from Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem.

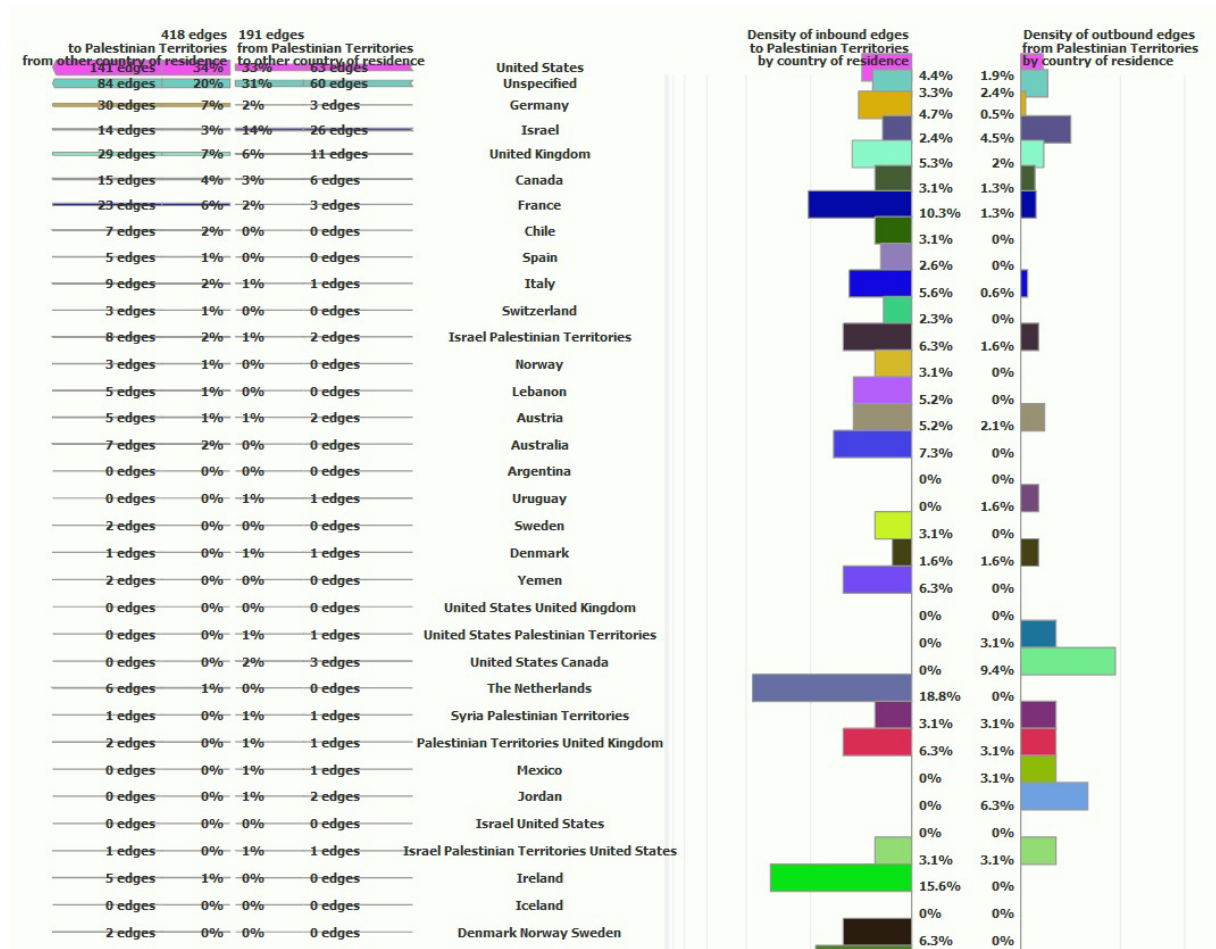
29. See subgraph Palestinian Territories as a Country of

In terms of inbound links to actors residing in the Palestinian Territories from actors residing in other countries, the most edges are received from the US, but the highest density of links is from the Netherlands (see figure 34)³⁰.

Residenc in the e-Diasporas Atlas platform, <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=13§ion=25&value=Palestinian%2BTerritories>

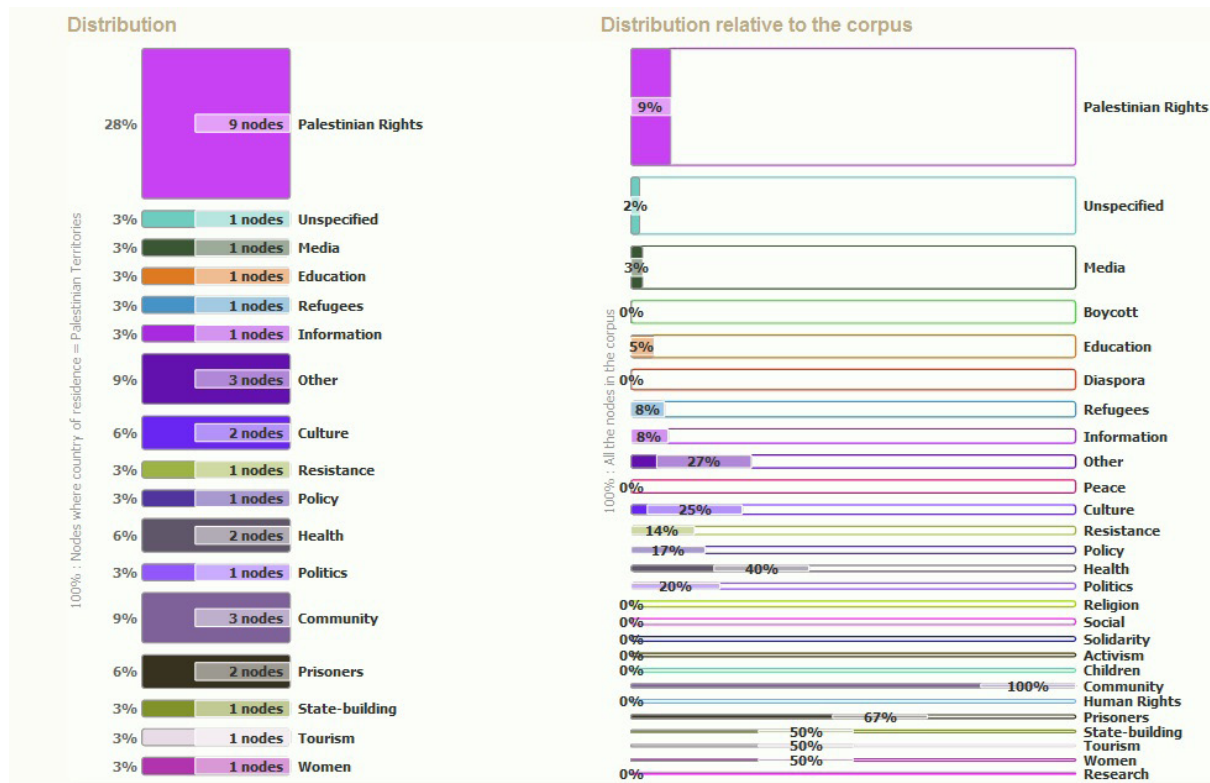
30. Interestingly, Israel is third in the list of inbound links to actors in the Palestinian Territories, indicating perhaps the collaboration between Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations, as evident in the cluster of the general graph.

Figure 33 – Subsection Graph of the Palestinian Territories as a Country of Residence.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=8§ion=25&value=Boycott>

Figure 34 – Palestinian Territories as a Country of Residence, Distribution of density.



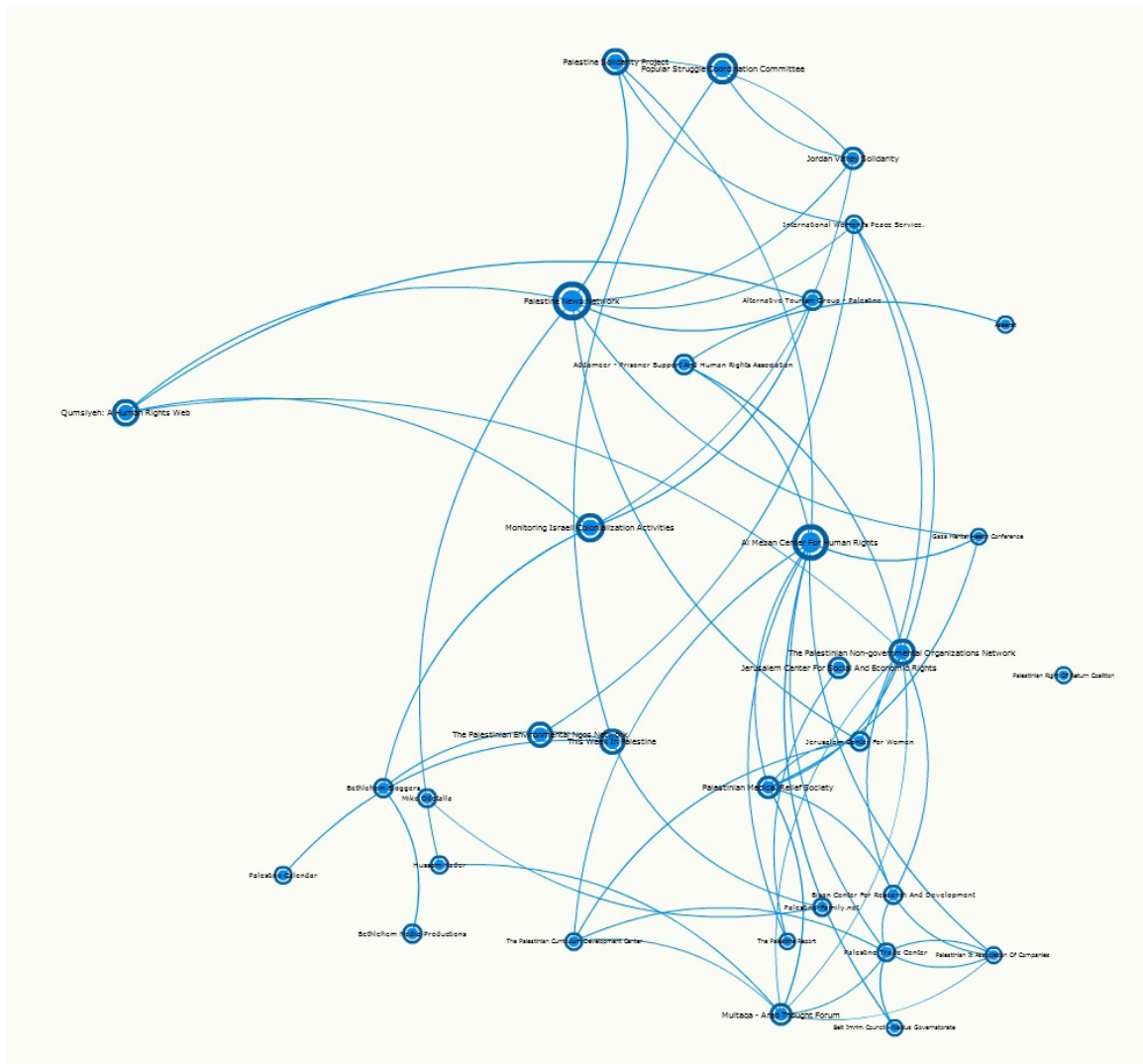
URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=8§ion=25&value=Boycott>

However, the participation of actors from the Palestinian Territories in the diaspora spaces is rather low. Only 6% of actors from the Palestinian Territories are defined as diaspora actors, and 25% (8 nodes) of them refer to the diaspora. While the primary cause of 28% of actors residing

in the Palestinian Territories is Palestinian rights, 0% is dedicated to “diaspora”³¹.

31. Diaspora makes up 6% of the secondary causes in the Palestinian territories, which are 11% of the entire corpus dedicated to the diaspora as a secondary cause.

Figure 35 – Palestinian Territories as a Country of Residence,
Distribution of primary cause.



URL <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=value&graph=67&map=56&nodeattribute=8§ion=25&value=Boycott>

Conclusions

The network crawled from starting points of organizations of Palestinian communities in different countries is characterized by its strong transnational solidarity with the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian Territories as a center of gravity. The network is dense and cohesive, and most network actors are dedicated to Palestinian rights as either a primary or secondary cause. However the shift from the network's starting points as diaspora actors to its resulting transnational solidarity network is perhaps indicative of the lack of ties between diaspora actors among themselves and in relation to the center of gravity. Rather, they are brought together by their strong ties to non-diaspora civil-society organizations in their

host societies, which are dedicated to the Palestinian cause and less to issues related to the Palestinian diaspora.

Thus the network reveals dynamics of the Palestinian diaspora that emerge on the Web: it is no longer defined around Palestine as a *place of origin*, but is instead constructed around Palestine as a *point of reference*; its organization is less around a network of familial, social and transactional ties between *communities* of Palestinians who have been dispersed to many places in the world, and more around global *advocacy networks* that transcend their immediate social networks; and its members are no longer only *Palestinians abroad*, but also *natives of the host countries* who identify with the Palestinian cause.

Since most actors are dedicated to Palestinian rights and the Palestinian Territories, distinguishing between diaspora and non-diaspora actors is mostly poignant in terms of type of activity and the specific issues related to geographical location. In that sense, the geographic specificity and arrangement of actors and causes reaffirms the de-territorialization of the Palestinian diaspora, as noted by Hanafi. On the other hand, the network's strong emphasis on the Palestinian Territories as a cause and as the network's center of gravity may indicate re-territorialization of the Palestinian diaspora vis-à-vis the state-building process.

The time of data collection is important in examining the relationships between networks of Palestinian diaspora communities, the Palestinian Authority as representing the center of gravity and the boycott movement. The data was collected during the months that preceded the Palestinian UN bid for recognition as a sovereign state in September 2011, and when the boycott movement and campaigns were reaching international volume and success. It is noteworthy that the Palestinian Authority is hardly represented in the network, indicating the extent to which the Palestinian diaspora is not aligned with its policy and its tendency to prefer the settling of a sovereign state demarcated by the 1967 borders, which compromises to various extents the question of Palestinian refugees' right of return. On the other hand, the boycott movement, which started in the Palestinian Territories and vastly expanded among transnational activists abroad, is very dominant in the network, showing a different kind of transnational commitment to the center of gravity, one that is less affiliated with political movements and more with cultural and civic modes of engagement.

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