

The University of Roskilde

**WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN  
TERRITORIES**

- a case study on gender and power representations  
in a development project

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“We (...) are between the devil and the deep blue sea. Behind us lies the patriarchal system; the private house, with its nullity, its immorality, its hypocrisy, its servility. Before us lies the public world, the professional system, with its possessiveness, its jealousy, its pugnacity, its greed. The one shuts us up like slaves in a harem; the other forces us to circle, like caterpillars head to tail, round and round the mulberry tree, the sacred tree of property. It is a choice of evils.”

**Virginia Woolf, 1938**

## **ABSTRACT**

In the midst of the Oslo Accords, an expansion in donor-driven organizations with focus on women-specific programs accelerated in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This development has established a current situation where several programs concerning 'women's empowerment' can be detected as a result of international agencies' and local NGOs interests, but also due to the fact that women's status is highly affected by traditional gender relations and patriarchal structures in the Palestinian society.

This study is interested in the articulation between women's empowerment and development discourses in the sphere of development projects in the oPt. It will investigate the potential of creating empowerment, on the premises of local craftswomen, through the NGO project Design in Context facilitated by the NGO the Danish House in Palestine.

The study recognizes how perceptions and ideas of gender and development on the governmental/institutional, organizational and practical levels manifest strong discourses. Discourses that are largely defined by a categorical notion of gender and proves how a development project is a system of relational and institutional power structure embedded in discourses. Women's empowerment is a dynamic process and an aim, which in this current project, creates women's collectives and social integration, but somehow does not manage to challenge local power structures considered as boundaries to gender equality.

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# 1. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

## 1.0 Background and context

Historically, grassroots non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been an incorporated part of Palestinian communities' involvement in societal issues, hence the organizations have had a service provider role due to the absence of state authority. Since the late 1980s, the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt) has received significant amounts of aid and development finances provided by regional Arab funding, supplanted by western and multilateral aid during the Oslo peace process in 1993 and 1995 (Challand 2009: 59).

The emergence of a donor-driven strategic interest on gender and women's empowerment articulated in the aftermath of the Oslo process and led to official registrations of several women's grassroots movements. The World Conference of Women in Nairobi in 1975 and the following conference in Beijing in 1995 have established and manifested a feminist discourse in developing countries, which had an impact on local NGOs worldwide. The Beijing Platform for Action has been criticized for neglecting the local and national context and enforcing universal standards on women's development. NGO programs and projects funded by foreign donors entailed Western assumptions on women and enforced a liberal feminist agenda in development operations concerning gender and women's empowerment (Kuttab 2008: 106, Kuttab 2010: 247, Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 7, 9, 12, Esim & Kuttab 2002). As a result, this caused both a lack of understanding and focus on cultural relativism in development projects in the oPt as well as the establishment of a rather mechanical relationship between international donors and the agenda of local NGOs. Furthermore, local internal competitions over funding to sustain the Palestinian NGOs were established and reflected the agenda of the local organizations (Kuttab 2008: 106, 109f, UNWOMEN/ PA MoWA 2011: 31). This had a marginalizing effect on women's political participation and engagement, however the state-building process provided space for women's movements putting women's rights on the political agenda (Kuttab 2006: 232, 234f).

The finalization of the Oslo Accords did not only affect the women's grassroots movements, the process also supported the liberation from the Israeli economy. The Palestinian National Authority (PA) was assumed to be in charge of the future of the Palestinian economy, with the prospects of establishing an environment for self-reliance by expanding the labor market. The economic



development underpinned the expansion and registration of several women's movements as the political and societal situation was considered to be in a state of post-conflict, where formal government institutions were formed, and political and legal systems established (Kuttab 2006: 231f). This development, however, maintained and underscored gender segregation at the Palestinian labor market yet again, which forced women to work in the informal economy or in the domestic sphere (Ibid.: 237f). Thus, the expansion did not change women's labor market opportunities as structural segregation prioritized job tasks for men primarily (Kuttab 2006: 232, 234f, World Bank 2017: 8). Numbers from 2016 demonstrate that the participation rate for women in the Palestinian labor market is 18% compared to 71 % of men. *The Economic Monitoring Report* from the World Bank further underscores that structural mobility restrictions due to fear of checkpoints and limited work opportunities in the local society discourage women from the Palestinian labor market (World Bank 2017: 8).

Development operations which focus on women-specific programming in the oPt have increased significantly in recent years. The proportion of women's programs increased from 150 programs in year 2000 to 363 programs in 2007 (UNWomen/PA MoWA 2011: 31). However, most of the NGOs implementing women-specific programs are considered ancillary programs, whereas fewer NGOs have 'women's empowerment' as a primary focus (Ibid.). Furthermore, the majority of these NGOs consider women's empowerment as a secondary objective obtained through "education, micro-finances, research, gender training and women's services" (Ibid.). Today, gender and women's empowerment are still crucial interests among local NGOs and international donors due to the fact that women's status is highly affected by traditional gender relations and patriarchal structures in the Palestinian society (UNWomen/Promundo 2017: 198).

This study focuses on the articulation between women's empowerment and development discourse in the sphere of development projects in the oPt. Many political and societal factors are considered to influence the context and the field of this study, which makes it a complex area of engagement. Taking the expansion of NGOs focusing on women-specific programming and the strained and gender-segregated Palestinian economy into account, this study seeks to investigate the potential of doing empowerment, on the premises of local craftswomen, through the NGO project Design in Context (DiC) conducted by the NGO the Danish House in Palestine (DHIP). The DHIP is a Danish-funded, cross-cultural organization, and this specific project aims to empower local Palestinian craftswomen.

The project entails working with traditional Palestinian embroidery and modern design practices to establish opportunities for twelve Palestinian craftswomen to develop and strengthen their individual work. Thus, the purpose is to rethink Palestinian embroidery and the possibility of utilizing it in a contemporary context, thus seeking the potential of generating income for the craftswomen and establishing them in the Palestinian labor market (Appendix I). The project is interesting as its framework involves a widespread and professionalized handicraft, manifested in Palestinian cultural heritage, and thus the project seeks the potential of empowering craftswomen socially and financially within their own professional sphere.

This study focuses on how powerful discourses around the development project DiC shape the social reality of the project participants involved - especially in relation to the perception of gender representations and women's status in the oPt. Furthermore, this study focuses on the notion of 'women's empowerment' to comprehend the potential and/or limitations to create change for the women involved in the project.

### **1.1 Statement of problem and research questions**

This study addresses discourses on gender, women's empowerment and development in a development project. The research looks at different dynamics of empowerment and disempowerment in the oPt as this area, in a nutshell, appears disempowering due to the strained political and humanitarian situation. The political context seems to boost the development industry, and it has expanded the registration - and thus number - of NGOs since the Oslo Accords, a significant amount of which are women's NGOs. The main initiatives from women's NGOs focused on equality indicators by improving women's status structurally and socially in the oPt. However, these initiatives, while having the potential of empowering Palestinian women, were marked by contradictions.

The focus of this study is to discover the potential of empowering women socially and professionally through DiC, and it does so build on the assumption that development programs which are entangled with Western hegemony on gender and representations of women from the South lack understanding of cultural relativism (Kuttab 2008: 106, Kuttab 2010: 247, Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 2, 7, 12). The analysis of the project will provide valuable insight to the nature of gender, development and the perceptions of local Palestinian women articulated in the case of DiC, and further try to assess the

potential and/or limitations of empowering women through development. This is built on the assumption that power dynamics are responsible for constructing ideas about ‘men’ and ‘women’ and ideas about ‘development’, which establish and maintain hierarchical understandings of gender and development initiatives and the actors embedded therein. Hence, a crucial interest of this study is how discourses around the project DiC shape the gendered social reality of the actors involved.

To comprehend this task, the study will concentrate on the relationship between the developer and the developpee (de Sardan 2005: 178). Thus, the relationship between the development organization, the DHIP, and the local Palestinian women engaged in the project. Interviews with local and organizational actors involved in the specific project, and interviews with experts embedded in the sphere of gender and development in the oPt, legal documents and program descriptions will be examined to comprehend structures of power and the articulation of gender. These findings, which are obtained from field research, will be supplemented by secondary literature including research by international scholars and especially local scholars within the oPt.

To encompass the historical background of development engagement within the sphere of gender and the political connection in development interventions in the oPt, the structural framework of the Israeli occupation in terms of political, economic and social life needs to be considered to grasp the complexities of the area.

To achieve these objectives, this study will be guided by the following problem formulation:

**Which assumptions about gender, development and women’s empowerment are articulated in the project DiC implemented by the DHIP, which interests do they promote, and which project-related practices do they inform and result in?**

Research questions:

- How does the DHIP operate in accordance with other gender-specific programs in the oPt?
- To what extent does the DHIP, through DiC, encounter cultural relativism and local gendered norms and relations through DiC?
- What kind of notion of ‘empowerment’ informs perceptions and how can ‘empowerment’ be conceptualized in the project DiC?

- To what extent does the DHIP increase chances of women's empowerment through the project DiC?

The listed research questions will help to examine how DiC renounces, confirms and/or maintains power structures and discourses on gender and development, which have a constituting effect on the involved women's livelihood. Thus, the questions will aid in discovering how development is gendered, and if the change in power relations, for the betterment of women, is a result of women's own actions and thus empowerment.

## **1.2 Expected results**

The extended study on the project DiC seeks to contribute to the scholarly literature on gender and feminist engagement in development operations in the oPt. Hence, the expected outcome is to contribute to the body of research related to the critique of liberal and neo-liberal feminist engagement in development. The study will focus on the relationship between development frameworks and feminist post-modern theories by focusing on the conceptual understanding of women's empowerment, and the implications it has for the project participants engaged in the project in practice. Based on the empirical evidence, this research will have an extended focus on gender-specific programming and feminist engagement in development in the oPt, and hopefully be able to conclude how strong discourses on gender and 'women's empowerment' establish power structures in development operations.

Further, the study will provide an organizational focus, a single-case approach, on the DHIPs project DiC and an analytical focus on gender and the empowerment of women in this project to hopefully manage to extract elements of empowerment and disempowerment in DiC.

## **1.3 Outline of the thesis**

The thesis has seven chapters. The first chapter provides background knowledge and a contextual understanding of the study, followed by the problem area and presentation of research questions, which have guided the study. Chapter two presents the methodology and highlights the philosophy of science and presents different sources of data thoroughly. The third chapter contains a literature review guided by two pertinent bodies of literature to comprehend the empirical research and theoretical literature that informs this study. Chapter four presents the theoretical framework that

underpins the study and focuses distinctly on feminist critical discourse analysis and the conceptualization and operationalization of 'empowerment'. Chapter five and six are the two analytical chapters; Chapter five analyzes discourses on gender and development and attempts to answer the two first working questions. The findings in chapter five concerning the articulation of discourse will be used and expanded on in chapter six, which also analyzes dynamics of empowerment and disempowerment in the case of DiC, thus answering the last two research questions. Finally, chapter seven will conclude on the analysis and findings of the study.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.0 Introduction**

An extended research of the DHIP with explicit focus on the project DiC as a single-case will be initiated to analyze discourses in gender and development and further to grasp the potential and prospect of empowering women through the organizations' operational machinery. This chapter will discuss the philosophy of science, choices of theory and other key concepts, describe the case of DiC in a methodological framework, collection and sources of primary and secondary data and finally, discuss the limitations of the research.

### **2.1 The philosophy of science**

The empirical data collected on the DHIP's project DiC cannot be separated from the context it appears in, nor from the history from which it emerges. Thus, this study is situated in the field of critical social science since the empirical data positions itself in a historical reality (Lund 2014: 225).

This study is based on a social constructivist approach, thus proclaiming that social phenomena are given meaning based on social actors' interpretations (Bryman, 2012: 33). Discourses and orders of discourses are understood as established historically, socially constitutive and interwoven. The analysis draws on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1995) and further applies a feminist CDA (Lazar 2005, 2007) to grasp gendered power structures and ideologies. Discourses are considered to be in dialectical relationship with the text-oriented linguistic dimension and the social practice-oriented dimension that captures sociocultural processes (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 65). Further, it combines the post-structuralist principles of complexity, diversity and transformation, which view discourses as a struggle focusing on social (re)production and contestations (Baxter 2008, Lazar 2007: 144).

The over-all epistemological position approached in this study can be described from Haverland and Blatter's (2012) conceptual definition of the 'anti-fundamentalist and pluralistic epistemological middle-ground' (Haverland and Blatter 2012: 13f). This position acknowledges reflections of the empirical data led from a theoretical conceptual framework. Thus, the empirical evidence can be used to judge the sufficiency of the conceptual framework and the theories and their effort to provide meaning of the social reality. Furthermore, the epistemology of this study is built on the premise that

social scientists can only reduce the complex social reality by trying to understand social practice, however the representation of the social reality cannot be complete (Ibid.). Due to the relatively small size of this study, the analytical findings are not supposed to generalize on the right way to cultivate women's empowerment in development operations in the oPt. However, the findings will contribute to the body of literature within this area to grasp empowering, as well as disempowering, aspects in a development project. Further, the interest is to generate empirical knowledge on women's empowerment in the oPt and how development initiatives can influence this process.

The theoretical perspective is feminist postmodernist theory as it enables the analysis to focus on conceptions and assumptions engrained in development projects including DiC. Feminist postmodernist critiques challenge the paradigmatic assumption that knowledge and conceptions from the North concerning women from the South is unquestionable (Marchand & Parpart 1995: 11, 17). Thus, it is a common perception amongst feminist post-modernists that development discourses have a way of generalizing, thus standardizing, the reality and identities of the women living in developing countries. The feminist postmodernist premise will be used in chapter five to understand power structures between the actors engaged in DiC, and assumptions on gender and women's status in the oPt.

## **2.2 Choice of theory and key concepts**

The theoretical framework of the thesis is conducted from a merged approach of classic CDA (Fairclough 1995) and Feminist CDA by Michelle M. Lazar (2005, 2007). The key concepts 'hegemonic gender ideology' and 'categorical thinking' will be applied, and finally, Mosedale's (2005) conceptual notion of 'empowerment' will be expanded upon in the analysis.

Feminist CDA is found to be appropriate for this study because it explores dominant articulated discourses on gender and women in development. It explores the interest that these discourses reflect and the social effect they indicate. Feminist CDA will uncover various underlying gender assumptions, representations and power relations by focusing on key concepts extracted from critical feminist theory and social theory. The key concepts 'hegemonic gender ideology' (Lazar 2005, 2007) and 'categorical thinking' (Connell 2011) will be addressed in the analysis of discourses. Adding these gender and power perspectives to the analysis of the development project DiC will help to pinpoint if categorical perceptions of gender and the women ingrained in the project are represented,

and to grasp if existing power relations and structures are reproduced in the discourses around the project. The analysis will address if DiC (re)produces hegemonic discourses on gender and women from the South, and if the project deviates from, or maintains, a socio-cultural agenda relevant to the social and political context - in accordance with the strategic needs of the Palestinian women engaged.

From the feminist CDA lines will be drawn to de Sardan's (2005) social theorization of the anthropology of development by focus on the linguistics of development. This will be applied to grasp the relationship between the 'developee' and the 'developer' (de Sardan 2005: 178), and to further analyze if behavioral change occurs among the participants and how and/or if DiC contributed to this.

The study will account for the conceptual understanding of 'empowerment' (Mosedale 2005, 2014) and analyze if and how 'empowerment' as an aim or process can be identified in the case of DiC. This is due to the fact that 'women's empowerment' is considered the purpose of DiC (Appendix I) and possesses contested meanings. These contested meanings are accommodated, which is why it becomes crucial to conceptualize the term. This will be covered in chapter 4.

### **2.3 The case of 'Design in Context'**

This study will have a single-case study design. The main reasoning for this methodological choice is because the theoretical scope has specified certain propositions, which can be applied or identified in the single case of DiC, to confirm, challenge and/or extend the theory (Yin 1994: 38). The contributory cause of focusing exclusively on the DHIP's project DiC originates from personal experiences with the organization as the researcher spend six months as the DHIP's project intern, spring 2015. Thus, the internship provided in-depth knowledge of the limitations and potentials of the DHIP, and explicitly, an unexplored potential in terms of women's empowerment in the DHIP's programming has been encountered. This relationship will be critically expanded on in this chapter in the section *2.5 Acknowledgements and limitations of the study*.

Furthermore, the reasoning behind this choice is in line with Haverland and Blatter's argument that only focusing on one case enables the researcher to invest more time in reflections concerning the relation between empirical research and the theoretical and conceptual framework (Haverland & Blatter 2012: 20). As mentioned, a single-case is capable of unfolding whether the theory's propositions are valid or if other explanations can be more adequate (Yin 1994: 38). The aspirations



of the study of DiC is then to make a substantial contribution to the theoretical framework, and further to act as a “critical test” (Ibid.: 44) of the literature, which exists within the nexus of gender and development in the oPt.

## **2.4 Sources of data**

The empirical foundation of this study is eclectic; hence it is based on both primary and secondary sources of data to grasp the problem field. The primary data was collected during fieldwork conducted from October 24th -7th of November 2017, in the oPt and consists of ten interviews and formally written field notes. The secondary data contains of legal documents and reports (policy papers and country papers), considered pertinent for the area of engagement. The following section will discuss the choice of data.

### 2.4.1 Primary data

Field work and the collection of empirical data was initiated after the theoretical framework was established. The primary data was collected through qualitative social science research, hence semi-structured interviews with key-informants. The interviews gather local experts on gender and women’s empowerment in development, the DHIP’s cooperation partners, staff members from the DHIP and project participants from DiC to comprehend the case.

Following the recommendation from King (1994), the empirical data of this study was collected in different diverse contexts, hence the interviews were conducted on different venues (King 1994: 24). The interviews with the two Palestinian craftswomen were conducted in their home village al-Ubeidiya in the oPt at their workshop. The interviews with the two Danish designers were conducted in their workshops in Copenhagen. The interviews with the two staff members from the DHIP were both conducted at the organization’s office in Ramallah, the oPt. The interviews with the cooperation organization and the external experts were also conducted in Ramallah due to the fact that most NGOs in the oPt are located in the capital of Ramallah.

### 2.4.2 Key informants interviews

The collection of data includes ten qualitative in-depth interviews with crucial key-informants related to the DHIPs work and further to the scholarly and experiential field of women and development in

the oPt. The interviews focus on the informants' relation to DiC and further, what kind of assumptions different actors have on gender, development and women's empowerment in the oPt.

The interviews were conducted with a semi-structure (see table 3 and 2), using the strategy of being open-ended and focusing on key informants. The semi-structured interviews were scheduled to gain insight on the informants' perspectives. They were conducted in an unstructured manner and took form as an informal discussion guide by key topics, prepared in advance, thus pertinent for the research. The reasoning behind this methodological choice is due to its potential of gaining deep understanding and entering a detailed but flexible dialogue with the informants (Yin 2014: 12, Bryman 2012: 471). The key informants provide rich and valuable insights to the study and make a high degree of reliability of the qualitative research (Bryman 2012: 492), thus a comprehensive amount of key informants associated with the DHIP and the field of gender and development in the oPt were selected. This is built on the assumption that having a small amount of key informants will jeopardize the validity of the research (Ibid.: 496).

De Sardan focuses on the series of actors of a development project, which all engage on different and sometimes merging levels in which the development operation takes place and encounter direct or indirect relationships with each other (de Sardan 2005: 185). Built on this assumption, the interviews have been grouped in the following categories: I) Project participants and beneficiaries, II) Staff members of the DHIP, III) Cooperation partners, and IV) External experts from central organizations in the field of gender and development in the oPt (see table 1 and 2).

The interviews were conducted in English, Danish and Arabic. The interviews conducted with the two Palestinian project participants (category I) were conducted in Arabic with an authorized English-Arabic translator, and the interviews with the two Danish project participants (category I) were conducted in Danish, which is the native language of the interviewer. None of the informants wanted to be anonymous, which provides a high transparency and reliability of the content of the interviews. The contact with informants of category I was established through the interviewer's personal relationship with the staff members of the DHIP (category II). Thus, Doha Jabra, the Project Manager of DiC established contact with the Danish and Palestinian project participants and the DHIP's cooperation partners, hence category I and III. The only informants which the interviewer had a personal relationship with were the informants from category II, Doha Jabra and Lone Bildsoe

Lassen. As to category IV, the interviewer screened the field of gender and development organizations in the oPt and two experts from respectively Palestinian Businesswomen's Association (ASALA) and the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWSD) were highly recommended by locals in the area, which the interviewer consulted with. Before all ten interviews were conducted, the informants were briefly updated on the focus of the research, hence the nexus of women's empowerment and development projects in the oPt.

Finally, the interviews of this study will be considered in terms of social performance, which can be described as a social situation where the local and situation-specific context is crucial to grasp what is happening in the interview (Alvesson and Kärreman 2013: 5, Alvesson 2003: 169). Furthermore, the informants are considered as "politically conscious actors" (Alvesson 2003: 170), hence the informants are concerned about specific interests which influence their perception of the social reality and possibly illustrate a specific selective agenda (Ibid.). All the informants are directly engaged in the field of women's empowerment and development in the oPt albeit on different levels. This assumption will be reflected on in chapter five. This is very fruitful for the study, as the informants provided a first-hand account of their own engagement with the nexus of gender and women's empowerment in development to grasp the case of DiC.

#### 2.4.3 Secondary data

The primary data that consists of ten interviews as described in the section above, is supported by secondary data extracted from the field of gender and development in the oPt. The secondary data is built on legal documents and reports from organizations, which help to consolidate the case. The and organizational documents are authorized by the DHIP, and legal documents and reports are from state and non-state actors, hence Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the PA, the World Bank and the UN, and relate to the focus on gender and women's empowerment in development in the oPt. The content of the legal documents and organizational documents are vital in strengthening the findings of the study. This section will elaborate on the reports used in the analysis:

DANIDA's *Denmark-Palestine Country Policy Paper 2016-2020* (2016) describes Denmark's development agenda in the oPt based on contextual needs. The policy paper outlines the strategic objectives which have a strong emphasis on supporting state building, economic development and strengthening human rights and democratic accountability.

DANIDA's *Palestine Country Programme Document 2016-2020* (2016) is a descriptive document of Denmark's framework of development programs in the oPt supporting the objectives of the policy paper described above. Explicitly, the DHIP is mentioned in the program document, thus stressing the strategic objectives of the organization.

The DHIP's *Project Description of Design in Context* (2015) is a document, which outlines the strategic objectives and the indicators of DiC. Finally, the document outlines the aims of the project in terms of project sustainability and target groups (Appendix I).

The DHIP's *Final Evaluation Report - Design in Context* (2017) evaluates on the project throughout the whole period from 2012-2017 and concludes on recommendations and further provides a sustainability plan for the project participants (Appendix II).

UNWomen and PAs Ministry of Women's Affairs' *Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy: Promoting Gender Equality and Equity 2011-2013* (2011) outlines the Palestinian Authority's commitment to gender equality.

## **2.5 Acknowledgements and limitations of the study**

A crucial acknowledgement is that social science literature has a tendency to represent the oPt according to western academics' priorities and world views, thus neglecting local scientists' directions (Challand 2009: 12, Lazar 2005: 18). This will be taken into account and the academic literature of this study will represent a large amount of local and/or area familiar scholars to embrace and acknowledge the importance of local researchers. It is still a limitation of this study that the researcher is not capable of reading and incorporating Arabic literature and studies in the research due to language barriers.

A crucial consideration is the choice of project and the choice of a single-case approach. As mentioned by Lund, selecting a case is not an easy task and reflections concerning why this case is selected out from the others need to be taken into account (Lund 2014: 227). The project DiC was selected due to the researcher's own affiliation and experience in the DHIP as a project intern. Furthermore, the researcher identified significant and unexplored potential of empowering Palestinian women through the project, as this is the only project in which the empowerment of women were explicitly mentioned as one of the aims for the project participants (Appendix I). However, limitations from this strategic choice are evident, as a single-case approach obstructs the

potential of comparing and assessing the potential and/or limitations in other projects (Yin 1994: 40ff, King 1994: 5) initiated by the DHIP concerning the potential of (dis)empowerment.

A pivotal acknowledgement and constraining aspect of this study is the researcher's affiliation with the field, which creates a complex relationship. As described previously in this chapter, the researcher is associated with the DHIP as a former project intern. Thus, Alvesson's (2013) concept of 'self-ethnography' has explanatory value. It is explained as: "a study and a text in which the researcher-author describes a cultural setting to which s/he has a "natural access"" (Alvesson 2013: 174). As personally involved in the context, hence the object of the study, the researcher faces some substantial difficulties such as the risk of staying native, hence not distance oneself from the researched by having biased assumptions. Furthermore, the researcher must be able to understand the cultural context without placing their own experiences in the center (Ibid.: 175, 189). This is something the researcher managed to do, and the case of DiC inspired and became point of departure in the study of understanding the dynamics of (dis)empowerment of women in the oPt through development. An opportune aspect of doing self-ethnography is the potential of gaining full insight and access to the field (Ibid.) In this study, the researcher gained full access to organizational documents and pertinent informants relevant to the case, which is a great advantage for the fieldwork process.

In terms of the research approach, which is qualitative, a limitation is the subjectivity of the study, meaning that it relies on the researcher's view on what is significant (Bryman 2012: 405). Hence, the unstructured approach demands the researcher to make a subjective choice of how to frame the data. In terms of the methodological choice of using key-informants' interviews it can be argued that there exists a personal and relational contact between the researcher and the staff members of the DHIP, which possibly affects the dialogue and answers in the interview. Further, time and resources had an impact on the empirical data outcome. It can be argued that due to the limitation of time in the oPt, this study could have been more encompassing and explanatory if the amount of time spent in the oPt was expanded.

It is important to mention that the interviewed experts who have extended theoretical and experiential knowledge about the development industry in the oPt, are both employed by development organization, respectively PWWSD and ASALA (see table 1). This makes a small issue concerning the credibility of the argumentation in the interviews as statements can be biased. However, both

informants should be considered in their role as experts as they have great experience and knowledge about development initiatives concerning women's empowerment and gender specific-programming in general.

Another limitation of the study is the interpretations of the theory and the key concept 'empowerment' as they are defined in a way that suits the analytical purpose for this specific study. It is very important to keep in mind that if the concepts were to be applied in a different context, the findings may substantially differ with the final result of this study. The argument here is that theory and concepts have been conceptualized different by other theorists, which is why they can have different meanings in different contexts.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the impact of using a feminist CDA as theoretical framework. Lazar specifies that the central focus of feminist CDA is discourses sustaining a patriarchal social order - discourses that privilege men over women (Lazar 2007: 145, Baxter 2008: 2ff). Baxter supports this argument, and further points to the fact that feminist CDA is political biased as it considers discourses from the perspective of gender differentiation; discourses of gender are the most pervasive discourses across several cultures due to the systemic power to discriminate according to gender and sexuality (Baxter 2008: 2). Somehow a feminist CDA takes for granted that power relations structure thoughts and the social world in oppositional pairs according to gender, a binary perception. A rigid feminist CDA has an inclination to overlook ambiguous and complex relations, and this is something the analysis of this study will seek to combat by grasping the complexity of subjective positions and changeable relations. Baxter calls for understanding the "fluctuate between subject positions on a matrix of powerfulness and powerlessness" (Ibid.: 3).

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The objective of the literature review is to discover pertinent theoretical and empirical perspectives on women's empowerment, gender relations and development in the oPt. The literature review will demonstrate two bodies of literature, divided into two chapters, utilized sufficiently to grasp the area of engagement; *Women, gender relations and donors in the oPt* and *Women empowerment: Liberal feminism and its critics*.

The first body of literature will have a thematic focus on the I) impact of the Israeli occupation on women and gender relations, II) patriarchy and gender relations within the Palestinian society, and III) the evolution of gender-based programming in the oPt since the Oslo accords. Thus, the thematics will all be placed in the contextual frame of the oPt and mainly be based on local empirical research.

The second body of literature will engage with women's empowerment and liberal feminism and its critics by looking at two thematics: I) framing women's empowerment. The section will focus on the emergence of women's empowerment in development and the debate and paradigmatic assumptions concerning it. II) Liberal feminism and its critics. This section will unfold how feminism has been debated in development studies especially in correlation with discourses on women from development countries. Thus, the second body of literature will demonstrate a theoretical and critical focus, by underscoring pertinent theories relevant for the study.

#### **3.1 First body of literature: Women, gender relations and donors in the oPt**

As mentioned in the introduction of the literature review, this chapter will be divided into three thematic areas to grasp the complexity of the field.

##### 3.1.1 Impact of Israeli occupation on women and gender relations

The prolonged occupation by Israel is a factor which affects women's chances to be empowered and can be deduced from the area research on women's empowerment in the oPt. Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2011) explains it as a colonial setting that infiltrates women's basic living conditions especially in terms of access to education (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2011: 49). In line with this, Richter-Devroe (2013)

substantiates how the occupation hinders women's physical mobilization and right to gain living spaces (Richter-Devroe 2013: 40).

These observations from the field are further supported by Kuttab (2006, 2010) in relation to the strained Palestinian economy. Kuttab argues that it is unavoidable to take the prolonged occupation by Israel into consideration, hence the dependency between the Israeli and Palestinian economy, which she explains as: "the structural relationship between colonizer and colonized (Kuttab 2006: 236). Thus, gender imbalances must be considered within the colonial setting (Ibid.). Kuttab argues that the Palestinian economy can be described as a "resistance economy" (Ibid.: 237) due to the colonial framework, which affects women's circumstances:

"women were occupationally segregated, concentrated in agriculture and services, marginally treated as reserves in times of need, and employed only in jobs that were compatible with their reproductive roles" (Ibid.).

### 3.1.2 Patriarchy and gender relations within the Palestinian society

The chance of empowering Palestinian women is challenged due to different factors, which will be extracted in this section. Kuttab argues that the potential of empowering Palestinian women depends on both individual and structural conditions to promote equality:

"Empowerment must not be confined to the empowerment of the individual; rather, it must make individual aspirations compatible with and integral to collective aspirations" (Kuttab 2008: 115).

As mentioned in the chapter above, Kuttab's argument is that due to the occupation, the limitation of human rights and the freedom to move, the empowerment of women will never be obtainable as long as the area is under colonial occupation. In addition to this, the patriarchal structures of the society that define gender roles need to be removed to create important change (Ibid.: 114). The existence of strong patriarchy in the oPt is an argument supported by Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Richter-Devroe and Ababneh (2014) and will now be elaborated.

Based on a comprehensive three-year study, Shalhoub-Kevorkian reveals how Palestinian female students identify their home, community and school as places where the potential of empowerment and resistance can be found, but also places for victimization, since the spheres are affected by



political violence, cultural repression and economic stagnation (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2011: 49ff, 53). In terms of Palestinian women's domestic spheres, the high degree of racism and sexism in public places turned the women's homes into safe places capable of empowering women. However, the domestic spheres are also considered to be places where patriarchal norms permeate the daily life, thus creating structural boundaries for women's empowerment (Ibid.: 56).

In line with Shalhoub-Kevorkian's research, which found women's multiple identities relevant to understanding women's position and the potential of empowering women, Richter-Devroe's ethnographic research argues for the importance of acknowledging women's hybrid subjectivity. Hence, oppressive structures such as patriarchy, class, nationalism and religion should be examined to understand if women accommodate or challenge them (Richter-Devroe 2013: 36). The research illustrates that the female informants find mobilization and the right to move crucial for personal empowerment. Patriarchal control and Palestinian power structures affect women's living, and from Richter-Devroe's research, she argues that women's opportunity to gain social power is restricted by the appearance of men:

“Women are not free to choose; their agency is still limited by different and contradictory resistance discourses which vary according to class, age, political party affiliation, the spatial categories of town-camp-village, as well as between local communities” (Ibid.: 43).

Thus, Palestinian women's empowerment and degree of social power crucially depend on the individual context (Richter-Devroe 2013: 42, Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2011: 58). An important point to add to this perspective, is the problematics of understanding women as a constructed category, which is emphasized by Ababneh. Ababneh's research illustrates that Palestinian women should be addressed in their capacities as mother, sister, wife etc. to grasp the complexity of women's needs (Ababneh 2014: 46). Thus, supporting the rationale extracted from Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Richter-Devroe's research that women's empowerment can only be generated if relational and individualistic capacities are accommodated.

Ababneh also zooms in on women's empowerment in the oPt and focuses on how religion, explicitly Islam, can be a catalyst for change. Ababneh's study outlines two sides of women's activism in Palestine; the religious-based interpretation of Hamas and the secular feminist women's rights

activists of Palestinian Women's Movement (PWM). One key argument from the study is that gender segregation is a way of empowering women in the Palestinian society, and that mixed spaces of gender can potentially exclude certain women, commonly women with conservative and low socio-economic backgrounds (Ababneh 2014: 39). By creating spaces where only women can access, such as the empirical example from the University of Birzeit and the Hamas associated study group, women's issues are prioritized exclusively:

“Women's only spaces” thus, have the ability to enable women from all backgrounds to participate in activities that might in practice only enable women from more open-minded and resource full families” (Ibid.).

Creating two equal spaces illustrates that segregation and Islamist thinking does not deprive women's freedom (Ababneh 2014: 48, 50). Furthermore, Ababneh argues that religious groups and the PWM have separate understandings of what is empowering to women. The PWM has: “the power of hegemonic discourses of the international sphere on its side” (Ibid.: 45), and the group associated with Hamas is: “supported by the power of the hegemonic discourse of Islam” (Ibid.: 49), and are furthermore representative of Palestinian women (Ibid.).

Conclusively, segregation of gender seems to have a positive impact on the prospects of empowering women, and by having spaces for women only, women's issues are being prioritized to an extended degree (Ibid.: 48, 50). However, Kuttab disagrees with this perception as her research demonstrates that women suffer under a traditional division of labor placing women in rural and/or domestic areas of work and mainly in the informal economy (Kuttab 2006: 237f). Though Kuttab explains the negative effects of the segregation of gender on the labor market, her research does support the tendency that women find domestic work to be more empowering and preferable as women avoid low wages and male discrimination (Ibid.).

### 3.1.3 Evolution of gender-based programing in the oPt since the Oslo Accords

The literature on the application of gender in development programs in the oPt simultaneously illustrates general observations about the engagement, which will be elaborated on in this section.

Kuttab explains how the new agenda on gender originated from the Beijing Platform for Action (composed in 1995 from the Fourth World Conference on Women initiated by the UN) and imposed

by international donors and agencies, became entangled in local Palestinian NGOs' work to fit the global culture of gender programs (Kuttab 2008: 109f, Chaney 2016: 327). This complex relationship is considered by several scholars, which all emphasize concerns about the intervention of international donors in local gender-concerned development agendas in the oPt (Hanafi & Tabar 2007, Kuttab 2008, 2010, Challand 2009, Chaney 2016). It is proclaimed that Palestinian NGOs are controlled by external agendas on gender, and that a mechanical relationship between global donors and local NGOs agendas is initiated in the oPt. This development has constructed elite movements within the women's organizations eliminating grassroots organizations and establishing unified and normative approaches to women's empowerment, which have created a competing environment among the Palestinian NGOs (Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 2, Kuttab 2008: 109f).

The scholars underline pertinent foci in terms of gender-based programming in the oPt initiated by foreign donors, which dominate the agenda; the Women in Development (WID) and the Good Governance agenda prioritizing gender mainstreaming. The WID program prioritizes to increase women's participation in the economy in the oPt by increasing their income through self-employment projects. Consequently, the focus on financial support neglects the social and political awareness of women's empowerment and overlooks gender as relational by focusing on women as solo-agents (Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 6f, 8f, Kuttab 2008: 112f). Good Governance agendas initiated by donor schemes have constituted many development initiatives in the oPt since the Oslo accords. This agenda imposed gender mainstreaming into the local NGOs, which have had different consequences for the empowerment of women (Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 12f). Gender mainstreaming created a strategic and top-down approach to women's empowerment, which does not prioritize practical women's interests (Ibid.: 5, 15). A problematic concern with gender mainstreaming is the potential of encumbering women with more work due to active participation in workshops, and not increasing their income or establishing them in the formal economy (Kuttab 2008: 112). The next section will go more into depth with WID programming, gender mainstreaming and finally GAD programming as those are considered to be the most prominent approaches in the oPt concerning gender-based programming.

The liberal feminist WID programs have dominated donors' approaches to women's empowerment in the oPt since the first Intifada initiated in 1987. Thus, organizations with explicit focus on women's empowerment, charitable societies and professional NGOs have participated in WID programs in cooperation with multilateral agencies, states and the UN (Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 7, 9). The priority

of the WID approach is to increase women's role in the economy and in development processes. Hence, the major focus lies on income-generating projects, which have potential of expanding credit and self-employment of women (Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 6f, Kuttab 2008: 112f). Specifically, in the oPt, the WID is criticized by Kuttab, Hanafi and Tabar for considering women as individual agents, thus neglecting gender as relational and the importance of focusing on women's collectives. Furthermore, class and the fact that women are part of different social classes, has never been recognized in the WID approach in projects. In line with this, the WID has been criticized for its large and dominating emphasis on financial expansion and self-employment, and therefore neglecting social and political awareness in the empowerment of Palestinian women (Kuttab 2008: 112f, Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 8f). Further, the WID is acknowledged for its success in promoting women's status explicitly in the agenda of development, however the WID did not challenge patriarchal power structures and gender stereotypes (Hirsman in Marchand & Parpart 1995: 52).

Hanafi and Tabar underline the change in donor programs, from the liberal feminist WID programming to the good governance agenda, which also gave rise to a neo-liberal paradigm. Thus, a shift in the approach to projects is identified:

“the neo-liberal paradigm has resulted in a changing role for Southern NGOs, away from providing services to marginalized groups, and towards ‘empowering’ them to change their own situation (...) a shift from services to workshops, training and advocacy” (Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 13).

Consequently, this entailed a change in projects available for women in the oPt, which had a renewed focus on gender trainings, awareness campaigns and lobbying (Ibid.). Kuttab, Hanafi and Tabar address the use of strategic activities, such as training in advocacy and in the awareness of gender in different activities. However, the initiatives have only increased the women's working hours while not generating income and establishing them in the formal economy (Kuttab 2008: 112). Hanafi and Tabar argue that the Good Governance approach, hence the implementation of gender mainstreaming in programs, created a strategic approach to gender equality, which had a top-down effect. This created units of women from above which focus on: “training women to lobby for their gender interests” (Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 15). An outcome of the implementation of gender mainstreaming is evident when it comes to avoiding discrimination of women in laws and legislations, while a pitfall is rural and marginal women's everyday life. The gender mainstreaming programs only support the

establishment of women's units in the ministries, advocated gender equality in decision-making structures and policy-making processes, however they overlooked practical interests related to the everyday life of Palestinian women (Ibid.: 14ff). Conclusively, gender mainstreaming donor programs have a conceptual dimension, which prioritize strategic interests more than practical interests (Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 21).

A newer focus in strategic gender programming is the normative post-modernist GAD approach, which moves away from the liberal feminist framework (Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 6, Rathgeber 1989: 13). The conceptual shift from WID to GAD illustrated a shift in thinking, from perceiving women as passive recipients of development to acknowledging the active and social potential of women as agents of change. In terms of patriarchy, GAD added the understanding to the development agenda that patriarchy operates in all classes with the purpose of oppressing women. Further, it acknowledged that women's position in society is dependent on gender roles (Rathgeber 1989: 13, Connelly et al. 2000: 62f). In the implementation of the GAD approach, the nexus of gender relations and the process of development is accommodated and the intersection of several identity marks such as class, race and gender is encountered in the analysis. Today, the majority of development agencies working to promote women's empowerment have implemented GAD in their programming (Connelly et al. 2000: 63).

Thus, the complex relationship between international donors and local NGOs has been accounted for. Chaney (2016) shifts focus to the disparity between state discourses and the civil society organizations (CSOs) agenda. Chaney's key argument is that in order to understand gender mainstreaming programs in the oPt, the analysis must contain a strong focus on the governmental perspective, hence the formation of policy implementation and the relationship and discourse between the state elite and the CSOs (Chaney 2016: 322).. There exists a disconnection between the discourse of the state and the civil society due to limited contributions and inputs from the CSOs in policy making processes, which has crucial consequences:

“such marginalization of civil society hampers progress towards the normative vision of gender equality set out by the United Nations. Not only do governments and CSOs have different issue prioritization, they also hold contrasting views on what frames are most important” (Ibid).

The gap between state and civil society discourses is evident in the agenda on the empowerment of women. CSOs encourage women to personally set the conditions for their empowerment through self-organization and mobilization, whereas the state discourses focus on “pre-determined government-led initiatives” (Chaney 2016: 322). Several laws and practices set by the Palestinian Authority (PA) is discriminatory to women, who experience discrimination in terms of property, water and land rights on an everyday basis (‘Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling report’ in Chaney 2016: 327). This argument is supported by Jad (Jad in Cornwall et al., 2007), who argues that Arab governments, explicitly the oPt, are not willing to reform and promote basic legislations in terms of women’s rights, since they are viewed as apolitical and not likely to concern politics (Ibid.: 187).

A terminology which has been used to describe a development and tendency in the Middle East in general, in the oPt in particular, is Jad’s concept of ‘NGO-ization’. The terminology is used to:

“denote the process through which issues of collective concern are transformed into projects in isolation from the general context in which they are applied and without taking due consideration of the economic, social and political factors affecting them.” (Ibid.: 177).

In line with Hanfi, Tabar and Kuttab, Jad argues that the NGO elite determines which issues in relation to gender injustice that should be promoted (Ibid.: 178). The key argument is that NGOs can be limited in understanding and analyzing what the local population desire in terms of social change (Ibid.: 178). Jad criticizes NGOs for not linking their struggle for gender justice with the political, social and economic context they are placed in. She argues for a nuanced approach to civil society and explains how many Arab women’s NGOs do not attempt to understand and analyze the role of the state (Ibid.: 183). Conclusively, Jad mentions how NGOs in Arab countries face critique since they have a tendency to create dependency on the West (Ibid.: 177).

The literature on gender-based programming in the oPt concentrates on the normative WID and GAD approaches to development and gender mainstreaming programs. A strong statement extracted from the literature is the critique of the lack of contextual and relational awareness, which has a high impact on the outcome of the programs. Hanafi and Tabar provide a strong analysis of WID programs and gender mainstreaming initiatives, and the conclusion seems very sufficient as it relies on the analysis

of concrete gender-based program in the oPt, such as the USAID and UNDP programs (Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 14f). However, Kuttab mentions the women's movements as a whole and does not focus on a specific organizations and gender-based programs, which can be problematic for the validity of the study. Chaney argues for a stronger push towards using normative standards and conventions on gender equality formulated by the UN. Thus, a discrepancy occurs among the scholars. Jad, Hanafi, Tabar and Kuttab describe the unified and strategic approach in donor programs, built on normative standards on gender equality, as obstructing local needs and perceptions of what is empowering to women. This signifies a complex relationship described as the relation between Palestinian women's practical interest and strategic feminist interest (Kuttab 2008: 109f, Jad in Cornwall et al. 2007: 187, Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 5, 21). Furthermore, it is seen as a comprehensive risk to ignore local feminisms and the reality of the historical colonialism by adopting a universal women's rights approach in development (Jad in Cornwall et al. 2007: 187).

### **3.2 Second body of literature: Women's empowerment, liberal feminism and its critics**

This section will unfold empowerment as a contested and complex concept. The emergence of empowerment in development will be explained through the theoretical literature, and the complexities when conceptualizing empowerment. In addition to this, this section will discuss the critiques of liberal feminism, a significant approach in gender-based programming especially in WID, and how powerful discourses on women shape a standardized understanding of local women in developing countries.

#### 3.2.1 Framing women's empowerment

Women's empowerment in the oPt has been a recurring focus throughout the literature review due to the research foci. An extract of the first body of literature demonstrates researchers' focus on relational and individual capacities of empowerment to understand the potential of empowering Palestinian women (Ababneh 2014: 45, Richter-Devroe 2013: 42, Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2011: 58, Kuttab 2008: 115).

In the 1970s the concept of empowerment was adopted to frame the search for social justice and gender equality by transforming economic, social and political structures. A pertinent factor to the international agenda on women's empowerment is the actions created by the Beijing Platform for Action, which initiated a mechanical adoption of empowerment by local women's organization in

developing countries, and thus in the oPt (Kuttab 2010: 247). This is further described in the realm of the neo-liberal paradigm in development, which established a shift in the approach to projects and a change in Southern NGOs' role. Empowerment became a buzzword and it created a shift from providing marginalized groups with services to empowering people to change their life (Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 13). Today, empowerment is used to describe increased participation in decision-making processes, access to resources and an expanded choice for women on an individual basis (Kuttab 2010: 247). However, as the concept of empowerment has become an international standard, hence mainstreamed, the concept has lost potential of challenging oppressive social structures and relations (Mosedale 2014: 1115, Kuttab 2010: 247).

Mosedale discusses the issue of using and assessing empowerment as a development goal since no accepted method for measuring empowerment and its changes exists. Empowerment is a contested notion, containing different values for different people. From the literature on women's empowerment Mosedale has extracted four accepted aspects of the notion: Firstly, women who are being empowered must have been disempowered, secondly, the women who seek empowerment must actively claim it themselves, hence development organizations cannot empower women, only facilitate the process. Thirdly, empowerment circulates around decision making in terms of "reflection, analysis and action" (Mosedale 2005: 244) on what is important, which then constitutes the individual or collective process of empowerment. Finally, empowerment is not a product, but a process which is constantly ongoing (Ibid.).

The conceptual understanding of empowerment has been debated by several scholars. Kabeer (1999) provides a definition which is acknowledged by many scholars:

"the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them" (Kabeer, 1999: 437).

Hence, structural and individual changes are being targeted to grasp people's needs (Ibid.: 461). Kabeer is known for her conceptualization of empowerment by arguing that empowerment establishes an interdependence of individual and structural change. Structures can shape people's resources, agency and achievements, and individual change is crucial as it promotes people's interests so that defining their goals will reflect their social positioning and history (Ibid.). Thus, the individual



choice is affected by structural conditions, and choices have the ability to transform structural conditions, according to Kabeer.

Another, yet similar, conceptualization of empowerment is suggested by Mosedale (2005):

“the process by which women redefine and extend what is possible for them to be and do in situations where they have been restricted, compared to men, from being and doing. Alternatively, women’s empowerment is the process by which women redefine gender roles in ways which extend their possibilities for being and doing.” (Mosedale 2005: 252).

Mosedale moves away from Kabeer’s definition by focusing on the importance of gender in the disempowerment of women. Women’s identities are gendered, as well as men’s, which can disempower them in public and domestic spaces (Ibid.). Another significant difference, according to Mosedale, is her focus on how to expand possibilities and options for women, thus achieving change, compared to Kabeer who is more concerned about: “individuals acquiring an ability to choose” (Ibid.). Hence, a focus on change to increase options for not only themselves but women in general (Ibid.).

A common acknowledgement among the scholars presented in this review is that for empowerment to be comprehensive, it is dependent on a high degree of contextualization. Hence, to go beyond the tendency to explain empowerment in the mechanical institutional and neo-liberal paradigm (Kuttab 2010, Kabeer 1999, Mosedale 2005, 2014). Kuttab illustrates how three levels of empowerment in development can be identified from policies; ‘political’, ‘economic’ and ‘legal empowerment’. Political empowerment is linked to activities, which relates to the national political situation and struggle and to women’s participation in decision-making processes. Further, political empowerment is connected to women’s human rights, agency and leadership potential. Legal empowerment concerns different services available to women, such as social, psychological and legal services, and concerns education and legal rights. Economic empowerment is the concern of economic independence (Kuttab 2010: 250).

Development agencies concerned about women’s empowerment often focus mostly on the individual level of empowerment. Mosedale and Kuttab agree on the importance of women’s organizations focusing on both individual and collective empowerment to enhance the possibility of empowering

women through development. The women's organizations must move away from the neo-liberal paradigm of empowerment, as it only provides women with access to resources, but not power over them (Kuttab 2010: 252, Mosedale 2005: 244, 255). The global agenda on empowerment thus:

“has led to accommodating and substituting local priority issues, and employing traditional WID approach in ways that conform to reformative and instrumentalist rather than transformative and radical understandings of the term, and to individual instead of collective empowerment” (Kuttab 2010: 247).

Mosedale's conceptual framework for assessing empowerment through development will be utilized in chapter 6 due to its relevance as a key concept in this research.

### 3.2.2 Liberal feminism and its critics

The first body of literature illustrated how the liberal WID approach has dominated several development initiatives in the oPt (Hanafi & Tabar 2007). Liberal feminism and the modernization paradigm are manifested in the WID approach, thus reinforcing, what Chowdry argues as “colonial (discursive) representations of Third World women and the premises of the liberal discourse on markets.” (Chowdry in Marchand & Parpart 1995: 34). Furthermore, liberal feminists have then established the WID, which has further gender segregated development projects by fostering development projects for women only (Ibid.: 38). Lazar emphasizes how liberal notions of equality and freedom are built around a notion of ‘sameness’ and universalism meaning that women are considered ‘same as men’, and: “women therefore are required to fit into the prevailing androcentric structures.” (Lazar 2005: 16). Further, perceiving women as one category, a category historically established by Western, white, middle-class women, neglects and ignores the conditions and opinions from women with other backgrounds, such as women from the South (Ibid.).

The literature from postmodernist feminist scholarships concerning perceptions of women in development illustrates unified concerns about the problematic dominance of western feminism. The argument is based on the assumption that discourses at stake in the feminist theories manifest a western cultural and liberal autonomous understanding of feminism. Thus, neglecting structures and agencies, which are part of the historical, societal and political contexts to comprehend women's opportunities of empowerment on local ground. Furthermore, the development discourse is being criticized for standardizing women's identities and experience of women from developing countries,

hence creating a universal and singular approach which is imposed towards all women indifferent to their various life (Mohanty 1984, Razack 2007, Ahmed 1992, Marchand & Parpart 1995).

Mohanty (1984) represents a groundbreaking viewpoint as she discovers the discourses around the notion of “Third World women” and the West’s hegemonic position in development operations. Western feminist assumptions on women in the development world are based on a “privilege and ethnocentric universality” (Mohanty 1984: 335) and further build around a westernized dominating world view, thus the concept of power is significant in her analysis (Ibid.: 334f). Within western feminist writings several problematic assumptions occur. Firstly, the assumption that women are a constituted, monolithic and homogeneous group regardless of intersections such as class, ethnicity and race, implies a static, cross-cultural and universal notion of gender and patriarchy. Secondly, the noncritical use of methodologies when proving the validity of universality. Thirdly, the political tenet underlying methodologies and strategies being the power they imply and suggest. Thus, the assumptions produce what Mohanty names “an average third world woman” (Ibid.: 337). Critically, Mohanty reflects on the problematic use of women as a group and a category of analysis, since: “it assumes an ahistorical, universal unity between women based on a generalized notion of their subordination.” (Ibid.: 344). Mohanty argues that the western feminist discourse describes women from development countries as: “subjects outside of social relations, instead of looking at the way women are constituted as women through these very structures” (Ibid.: 351). Societal structures such as religion, economy and family are being judged by western standards and often described as “underdeveloped” (Ibid.).

Mohanty’s position and criticism of the representations of women from development countries is in line with Ahmed’s (1992) critique, which also focuses on discourses shaped on women and gender in Middle Eastern societies. Discourses, which according to Ahmed, are shaped by colonial domination (Ahmed 1992: 2, 151, 235). The interconnection of feminism and colonialism combines the issues of women, their oppression and male dominated cultures (Ibid.: 151). ‘Colonial feminism’ is defined as the practice of declaring concerns about women’s well-being with the purpose of increasing and promoting a colonial agenda. According to Ahmed:

“colonial feminism, or feminism as used against other cultures in the service of colonialism, was shaped into a variety of similar constructs, each tailored to fit the particular culture that was the immediate target of dominance” (Ibid.).

Thus, Ahmed argues for a feminism, which is self-critical and highly aware of historical, societal and political circumstances and not affected by discourses of western dominance. Progress relating to women's empowerment cannot be achieved by abandoning native cultures and traditions (Ibid.: 244, 247).

Razack (2007) supports Ahmed and Mohanty's argument by explaining how the theorization of western feminism underscores the normative standards of western feminism meaning: "the liberal autonomous individual of modernity" (Razack 2007: 3). Women who are outside this restricted category can be identified as undifferentiated 'other women', meaning women with a limited and restricted freedom. In terms of women with a Muslim background, there exists a common tendency to view them as vulnerable and oppressed by a patriarchal culture, considered as an anti-pole of modernity (Ibid.: 3, 7).

The notions 'other women' (Razack 2007) and 'colonial feminism' (Ahmed 1992) illustrate the tendency to look down on women from other parts of the world than the West, and to minimize these women's potential of being in a process of empowerment. 'Other women' is established as a constructed category for mainly women brought up in a patriarchal society, which established them as vulnerable and exposed having little opportunities of being empowered (Razack 2007: 3, 7). This perception is in line with Mohanty's notion of 'third world women', a constructed and homogeneous category created due to the hegemony of Western scholarship (Mohanty 1984: 336). According to Mohanty, Razack and Ahmed, women should be placed in the local context and studied as socio-economic political individuals and groups to avoid a simplistic analysis, cultural reductionism of men and women.

Overall, postmodernist feminist critics argue that development discourses, based on a western and liberal feminist ideology, construct a unified and standardized perception of women in developing countries, which is problematic since people's understanding of reality is subjective, impacted by context and time (Parpart & Marchand 1995: 3, Mohanty 1984: 351). There exists a hierarchical and dichotomous relationship between the knowledge of the local population and the agenda of the technocratic gender and development experts. This needs to change according to postmodern feminists' ideas of development. The explicit focus on power structures and the attempt to deconstruct

development discourses on women from developing countries demonstrates how there can be a western bias and are considered some of the great advantages of postmodern feminists (Chowdhry in Parpart & Marchand 1995: 38f).

Finally, feminist scholarship in the Middle East has been through different pivotal phases. Kandiyoti (1996) looks specifically at how the perception of women has developed through historical phases and introduces aspirations for the future feminist scholarship (Kandiyoti 1996: 2). Firstly, the post-colonial phase where women's position in society were established and explained through nationalism. Hence, women's position should affirm what was culturally accepted for women in the national agenda (Ibid.: 9). Secondly, the phase of development and modernization, where women were placed in the transition from a traditional society to modernity (Ibid.: 10). The rising of WID literature became pertinent for the perception of women as it contested the idea that modernization only provided women with more opportunities (Ibid.: 11). Thirdly, the phase of feminist dialogues established different constituencies of feminism and the agendas in the Middle East. This resulted in a great variation and perceptions of feminist theories into Middle Eastern studies (Ibid.: 13). Future aspirations for feminist scholars illustrate a shift in focus where the awareness of gender, instead of only focusing on women, is now being targeted. An increasing focus on institutions and the establishment and maintenance of gender hierarchies through these institutions has become the scope of analysis. The acknowledgement that social institutions are created by power structures and reproduce gender roles established by cultural structures is now on the forefront of the analysis in feminist scholarships (Ibid.: 17f).

In conclusion, the postmodernist feminists' critique of the modernity paradigm, Western hegemony, the deconstruction of colonial representations of women from developing countries, the extended focus on gender as relational, and the power of language in development are all considerations which are of great value for the analysis of this study and will be further discussed in chapter five.

## **4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter will present the theoretical framework and key concepts of the study. The aim of the analysis is to discover how development and gender, especially women and the perception of women in development in the oPt, are articulated throughout the data, thus in the case of DiC. An extended discourse analysis on gender representations in development will be conducted on the basis of the empirical data consisting of interviews with development actors from the project DiC, interviews with external experts from the field of gender and development in the oPt, and important legal documents, policy papers and program descriptions.

### **4.1 Critical discourse analysis combined with feminist critical discourse analysis**

Since CDA presents a great variety of different methodological approaches with theoretical parallels, it is possible to detach and select the most prominent for the analysis. The framework of this study is based on Fairclough's theory and the analytical concept of 'interdiscursivity' and Lazar's conceptual framework of feminist CDA in order to specifically embrace gender discourses. Fairclough has an interdisciplinary approach to CDA, and argues that in order to grasp the contextual social practice of the three-dimensional model, other theoretical tools from social science must be taken into account (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 69), which will be accommodated in this study by applying critical feminist theory and social theory.

#### 4.1.1 Interdiscursivity

Discourses are considered to be post-structural conceptions and socially constitutive practices which are embedded in language as a crucial part of "the social", hence discourse is: "a moment in social practices and as a form of social production" (Chouliaraki and Fairclough cited in Lazar 2005: 183). Fairclough explains discourses from three dimensions of communicative events: the text, which can be written words, the discourse practice and the socio-cultural practice (Fairclough 1995: 57). The text focuses on linguistic features to grasp discourses and genres articulated textually. The discursive practice becomes a mediating dimension between the textual and the social practice and outlines aspects of the production and consumption of the text. The social practice is considered to be the contextual dimension established around the formal text (Ibid.: 133).

This study's theoretical focus is on 'interdiscursivity' in discourses on gender and development in DiC. 'Interdiscursivity' is considered to be "inherent in all social uses of language" (Fairclough and Chouliaraki cited in Lazar 2005: 183). Socio-historical circumstances create stability and consistency but also new ways of articulating language and practice:

"An instance of interdiscursivity in gender discourse is the co-existence of a traditional discourse which constitutes women's identities in the private sphere (the home) and new gender discourses in which women identify themselves with work and politics" (Magalhaes in Lazar 2005: 183f).

The study will focus on 'interdiscursivity' in gender and development in the case of DiC. The concept provides the possibility of capturing complexity of actors' positions by focusing on interaction between discourses within different orders of discourses (Fairclough 1995: 188, Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 73f). When analyzing different discourse in the same social arena, an order of discourses can be described, discourses which can either be in conflict or in accordance with one another, which in turn makes contradictory discourses emerge (Magalhaes in Lazar 2005: 183, Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 57). Conventional discourses can indicate a stable and dominant order of discourses, hence a dominant social order. Power becomes an important concept to engage as the possibility of change in the order of discourses is limited by power relations (Fairclough 1995: 56, Fairclough in Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 93). This key argument that social change can only happen if constituted discourses are decomposed, makes the focus on 'interdiscursivity' fruitful for this analysis.

#### 4.1.2 Gender in the center of CDA

The theoretical argument is that language constitutes social relations and the social identity, hence the relationship between discourses and "the social" is dialectically represented in ideologies (Fairclough cited in Lazar 2005: 5). However, Fairclough, as well as other key theorists of CDA (e.g. Van Dijk) have not occupied themselves with a particular focus on gender in discourses, which is why feminist CDA will be applied in this study. CDA understands social practice as reflected and constituted by discourses, and by adding a feminist perspective, the importance of understanding social practice as gendered is emphasized (Lazar 2007: 145). In feminist CDA, gender becomes an interpretive category, which enables actors in a specific context to structure and make sense of the social practices in which they are embedded. Thus, gender constitutes social relations and activities (Lazar 2007: 145). The main focus of feminist CDA is to approach and criticize sustained patriarchal

structures of social order which put men in a position of privilege and disempower women, and to demonstrate that social practices are gendered (Lazar 2005, Lazar 2007). Within feminist CDA the postmodernist idea of gender as performance is articulated and the interrelation between gender, power, ideology and discourses is approached. Thus, it becomes a tool to analyze the political perspective on gender, which is applicable to the study of texts and speech and uses semiotic modalities and language to comprehend the analysis (Lazar 2007: 151).

The conception of gender is understood as a structure based on an ideology, which divides men and women into two categories and creates a hierarchical relation of men as dominators. Thus, a social dichotomy of labor and human traits is imposed on men and women, producing, maintaining and reproducing archetypes of masculinity and femininity, which in turn creates an ideological structure of gender that favors men in relation to economic, political and social capacity (Lazar 2005: 147). Applying a feminist CDA, the focus is directly on gender ideologies and power relations within gender and how these are produced, reproduced, negotiated and contested in the representations of social practices.

The analysis will use ‘hegemonic gender ideology’ and ‘categorical thinking’ as indicators to comprehend how discourses on gender and women’s empowerment are embedded in the empirical data, and thus the case study.

#### 4.1.3 Hegemonic gender ideology: The nexus of gender and power relations

The analysis will apply the conceptual notion of ‘hegemony’, extracted from Antonio F. Gramsci’s theory from 1971 on power relations, combined with ideologically founded gender perceptions. Power relations can be described as:

“the struggle over interest, which are exercised, reflected, maintained and resisted through a variety of modalities, extents and degrees of explicitness” (Lazar 2005: 9).

Distinct gender asymmetry, as Lazar explains it, remains the great reality for women in different societies, and can be explained from the notion of ‘hegemony’ (Ibid.). Lazar explains how hegemony is mainly cognitive based and in charge of (re)producing gender norms, which are acted out continuously in textual representations and gendered social practice (Ibid.: 10). Thus, gendered



assumptions and hegemonic power relations are frequently taken for granted. Lazar explains ideologies as representations of practices formed from perspectives, which seek to maintain unequal power relations and dominance. Feminist CDA understands the conception of gender as an ideological structure, which divides men and women in two binary categories and thus, maintains a male dominant power structure:

“Gender ideology is hegemonic in that it often does not appear as domination at all, appearing instead as largely consensual and acceptable to most in a community.” (Lazar 2007: 147).

Women may deviate from the archetype of femininity which is incisive for a community or social group, however it occurs against the ideological structures of gender which favors men in terms of access to capital of economic, social, political and symbolic value (Lazar 2005: 7). Thus, hegemonic gender ideology is opportune for the purpose of accessing gendered discourse in the development project DiC as it can unfold power structures and the perception of women’s status in development.

#### 4.1.4 Categorical thinking: Conceptualizing ‘gender’

In the data collected on DiC, the interest centers on the disparities between women and men as two separately constituted groups. This is based on Connell’s (2011) observation that policy documents concerning gender create fixed groups of men and women, thus an example of ‘categorical thinking’ (Connell 2011, 2012) about gender. According to Connell, categorical thinking is a dichotomous classification of gender as completed categories, and thus, neglects diversity in gender categories (Connell 2012: 1676). Gender is constructed as two binary categories, which Connell criticizes since it becomes difficult to grasp differences and establishes a categorical thinking of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ (Ibid.: 1675f). Extracted from policy and programs, Connell argues how categorical thinking targets women as one group and distinctively separates them from men, hence ‘men’ are considered a more privileged category in the data. Further, the policy documents that focus explicitly on women, do not see men and women in an active relation, thus men are not considered as actors of change (Ibid.: 1676). Categorical thinking does not interpret gender dynamics, historical processes, and development of gender relations, e.g. how gender inequalities are established and challenged. Connell understands gender as produced from powerful discourses and the ruling dichotomy of what constitutes ‘women’ and ‘men’ is an effect of discourses:

“Gender identities are not expressions of an inner truth but are subject positions in discourses - which are open to change” (Ibid.).

Relying on feminist CDA to examine gender discourses at stake in the development project DiC, this study will emphasize the importance of recognizing multiple ways gender is constituted in development projects depending on different dynamics of gender. It will be discovered how development in this specific case study is gendered, and the effect it has on development actors and policies will be analyzed.

#### 4.1.5 The linguistics of development

From perspectives of feminist CDA, the analysis will incorporate de Sardan’s focus on the linguistics of development, hence distinguishing between the language of the developpee (local language) and the language of the developer (development language) (de Sardan 2005: 178). De Sardan is concerned about the interaction between those two languages and what occurs when they come into contact with each other (de Sardan 2005: 179). The concept of ‘project language’ is used to describe a language system within these development projects, which should be able to communicate with the local language - the language of the developpee (Ibid.). De Sardan explains in terms of development projects, how:

“A project is therefore the smallest locus in which the development language is spoken, and represents the final rung on the ladder of public speeches addressed to the people. Even NGO-type projects (...) with a strong emphasis on participation, relapse willy-nilly into standard official language when it comes to addressing themselves to peasant assemblies in the local language” (Ibid.: 181).

The project language becomes the personality of the project for the benefit of the donors, and has an essential function in terms of the reproduction of the project (Ibid.: 182). De Sardan’s conceptual understanding of ‘project language’ is a beneficial addition to the analysis when understanding different discourses in the single case of DiC. It recognizes the importance of understanding the interactions between development actors embedded in a project (Ibid.: 12).

## **4.2 Accessing empowerment in development**

‘Empowerment’ is a very contested notion and it has been addressed by several scholars within development studies (Mosedale 2005, Kabeer 1999, Kuttan 2010, Hanafi & Tabar 2007). It is

important to be very distinct about the use of the notion to address just what kind of empowerment is being addressed in DiC. As a significant part of the UN's Millennium Development Goals, and further emphasized in the Sustainable Development Goals, 'women's empowerment' is considered to be a central goal of international development. This section will list some central observations when working with empowerment as a conceptual strategy in development and suggest, based on Mosedale's theory (Mosedale 2005: 252ff), how to adequately operationalize the concept to discover the limitations and/or potential of empowering the project participants in DiC.

To incorporate empowerment on the agenda and in development programming in organizations, it is crucial to look at the actors involved in the initiative and comprehend their take on empowerment. There exists, according to Mosedale, a lack of collective agreement concerning empowerment in development projects, which leaves the staff without guidelines to master empowerment in the context they work in (Mosedale 2014: 1120). Likewise, it is important to work with both men and women to promote change, and be aware of the fact that neither category in the categorical division of 'men' and 'women' is a homogeneous group, however indicators of empowerment rely on both the individual context and the structural societal conditions (Mosedale 2014: 1122). Finally, linking together women's groups within the same country who agitate change is productive, especially if women from the same class or caste are linked (Mosedale 2005: 253). These three recognitions when operationalizing empowerment will be taken into account in the analysis in order to grasp how the case of DiC can create a project environment open to positive change.

Mosedale recognizes power relations as a central focus when doing development programming and in policy-making. Even though development organizations are claimed to be apolitical, they are still embedded in structures of power. Those defining the problems and the obstacle to women's empowerment are not local grassroots feminist organizations but development agencies who decide who and what to work with, which can deviate from the actual need of the local women. This is therefore to be considered as empowerment from a top-down point of view (Mosedale 2014: 1123). In relation to empowerment, Mosedale argues for putting power back into the concept and the use of the notion in development operations by focusing on the connection between 'individual consciousness' and 'collective mobilization' (Ibid.: 1124).

With these important observations of empowerment in mind, this section will now unfold Mosedale's conceptual framework for assessing empowerment and link it to the analysis of DiC and how to operationalize empowerment in the development project through the following three aspects:

I) Identify constraints to action: which is to define and map how power relations are gendered as a baseline, thus by repeating this process it becomes possible to identify if power structures have changed. Furthermore, it constitutes an understanding among the involved women that they are discriminated because of their gender (Mosedale 2005: 252f). To comprehend these constraints, the analysis must look at the 'three faces of power' ('power over', 'power within' and 'power with') to consider:

“constraints which are not consciously imposed by any identifiable agent but which are imposed through generally understood norms and ideas of social propriety.” (Ibid.: 254).

In relation to this study, which focuses on women's chances of empowerment through increasing and advancing their working skills and access to labor market, the identification of constraints and the 'three faces of power' (Mosedale 2005: 252) will be accounted for and identified in the arena of Palestinian women's access to the labor market in the oPt. It will also be approached in chapter 6 in this study.

II) Identify how women's agency has developed: this is considered a mirror image to grasp the constraints, based on the assumption that if constraints are loosened it will increase the possibilities of action and agency. The focus is not only on the possibilities for action but more importantly, whether action is actually taken (Ibid.: 255). Thus, women's agency must be considered on both individual and collective levels. In relation to this study, the following questions, inspired by Mosedale's outline (Ibid.), will be answered:

- Have the project participants developed or improved their self-confidence and potential after participating in the project?
- How have the project participants worked together to achieve change?
- Did external assistance support the change in the project participants' agency?

III) Identify how women's agency changed constraints to action: This aspect will identify if the possibly improved change is a result of women's action or external factors. According to Mosedale, it is considered a "straight forward example of empowerment", if women's own action provided change and the expansion of possibilities for them (Ibid.: 256). The main concern is to discover if the change in power relations for the betterment of women is a result of women's own action, hence empowerment, or other factors, which do not constitute empowerment. Again, these actions can both be individual and/or collective (Ibid.). Extracted from Mosedale (Ibid.), The following questions need to be investigated to analyze this complex aspect:

- What collective and/or individual action did the project participants take to challenge constraints to action?
- How did the project participants learn from each other's actions?

In sum, the purpose of the theory and key concepts is to have a comprehensive and solid framework that connects the analysis of discourses with the key concepts 'hegemonic gender ideology' and 'categorical thinking'. This is to substantiate discourses on gender and development from the perspective of feminist CDA, hence the first analytical chapter. The discourses will be used as indicators in the second analytical chapter to understand how the conceptualization and operationalization of 'empowerment' can be interpreted in the single case of DHIP.

## **5. ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDING CONCERNING DISCOURSES ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter will critically examine the discourses articulated around gender and development in respectively key informants interviews, project documents from the DHIP and finally, policy and country program documents from DANIDA related to DiC. The analysis will look at the interests the discourses reflect and the broader social implications they possibly hold. The intention of the inquiry is to uncover blurred assumptions, gender representations, ideologies and power relations, which shape DiC's understanding towards gender and development. Applying a feminist CDA to the study of representations of gender and development operations in the oPt in this specific case where DiC constitutes the arena of development, enables a fruitful theorization of the relationship between social practice and structures of discourses. Further, the analysis provides an insightful focus on power structures, systemic inequalities and social oppression, which are of crucial interest when assessing the potential of (dis)empowering the local Palestinian women engaged in DiC.

The purpose of this chapter is first to apply a feminist CDA to understand discourses on gender and development to examine to what degree DiC encounters cultural relativism and how DiC is concerned with dominating gender norms and relations. Secondly, to grasp how DiC can be placed in the arena of development interventions in the oPt, to approach if the organization operates in accordance with other gender-specific programs in the oPt. Hence, the research questions identified in the section

*1.1 Statement of problem and research questions.*

The data in this analytical chapter is based on fieldwork and secondary data, which has been discussed in chapter two. Before outlining the analysis, the chapter will present three levels of data entwined in the analysis.

### **5.1 Three levels of data**

The data consists of qualitative key informants interviews from field work in the oPt and secondary documents selected from different development actors, which are considered to have a concrete impact on DiC.

From a sociological perspective, a development project becomes a system of power, which should be discussed in the realm of relational and institutional power. In the arena of the development project, these types of power are constituted and unfolded in different ways according to actors' functions (de Sardan 2005: 185f). These concerns will be taken into account to comprehend the position and influence of the informants such as project related actors, experts on gender and development, policy papers and legal documents from the research. Table 4 presents an overview that divides and inserts the empirical data in three systemic levels: I) Institutional/governmental level, II) Organizational level, and III) Operational level. This is based on the assumption that different logics exist around a development project, which creates gaps and dissonance among the actors embedded (Ibid.). The systemic and rather rigid arrangement of the three levels of data seeks to make the complex development setting of DiC more tangible for the following analysis. It is, however, very important to be aware of the correlation between the three levels, as actors, strategies and policies are brought into direct and indirect relationship with each other.

An example of the flexibility of the levels can be demonstrated by looking at the position of DHIP's Development Manager, Doha Jabr. The interview is placed at the organizational level but has potential to be allocated at the operational level, as Jabr is in direct contact with the project participants and practically involved in the implementation of DiC. The interview with Jabr focuses on the strategic and organizational angle of DiC, which is why it is pertinent to grasp discourses at the organizational level. Another noteworthy example of this fluidity between the levels is the position of DANIDA, and the two documents authored by them. The documents can be considered organizational documents, however they reflect the strategy and perspective from the Danish foreign and politically biased interest, hence a governmental initiative. In closing, all three levels become interconnected and will of course come in continuity with one another as discourses in language and meanings trickle down from one level to another. This can be explained as the confrontation between many structures of collective action and more organized action, which constitutes a development project (Ibid.).

## **5.2 Discourses on gender and development**

The first analytical chapter will contain a comprehensive analysis of levels of interdiscursivity in the data on all three levels, and determine if gendered power structures and the concept of 'categorical thinking' of gender form part of the data.

To encapsulate the discourses articulated between the development actors engaged in DiC and place them in theory from development studies, this chapter will finally focus on what de Sardan calls ‘the development language’ (de Sardan 2005: 178). This focus will enable the analysis to comprehend how social actors are engaged with different agendas, thus grasping how their patterns of behavior are regulated by several and sometimes deviating logics within the frame of a development project (Ibid.: 137).

### 5.2.1 A feminist CDA of the institutional and governmental level

The search for interdiscursivity in the data can be identified within the three levels of data, and it articulates fragments and parts of different discourses. This analytical section will focus on empirical data situated on the institutional and governmental level. Thus, the *Palestine Country Programme* (2016) and the *DK-Palestine Country Policy Paper 2016-2020* (2016) issued by DANIDA, the PA’s strategy on gender in the oPt (UNWOMEN/ PA MoWA, 2011) and finally conducted interviews with external experts from the field of gender and development will be addressed.

The two legal documents from DANIDA, *Denmark-Palestine Country Policy Paper 2016-2020* and *Palestine Country Programme 2016-2020*, showcase how gender and women’s status is a strategic priority for the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ initiative in the oPt. In the documents, women are mentioned in line with other groups, which are described as “marginalized” and/or “vulnerable” (DK-Palestine Country Policy Paper 2016: 12, 14, Palestine Country Programme 2016, 10), such as youths and Bedouins without the mentioning of men (Ibid.). This discourse on women as being vulnerable could showcase what Razack and Mohanty have addressed as “other women” or “third world women” (Razack 2007: 3, Mohanty 1984: 336), as explained in the chapter 3.2.2 *Liberal feminism and its critics*. However, it can be argued that the *Palestine Country Programme 2016-2020* seems more gender inclusive in terms of the inclusion of ‘men’ where ‘women’ are mentioned (Palestine Country Programme 2016: 8f, 11, 22, 25). Thus, it becomes a matter of creating engagement and inclusion of men to empower and promote women’s status in society.

Lazar argues that one major concern of feminist CDA is the “global neo-liberal discourse of post-feminism” (Lazar 2004 cited in Lazar 2005: 17), which is a discourse that considers equality



indicators, such as educational access and labor participation, as main priorities of feminism in development operations. Lazar finds this discourse limited:

“Although the discourse tends to be particularly associated with developed industrialized societies of the West, the dichotomous framing in terms of the global west/north versus east/south is quite misleading” (Ibid.).

The categorical mentioning of ‘women’ is almost exclusively in connection with the notion ‘empowerment’, where economic, political and educational empowerment are specific targeted priorities (DK-Palestine Country Policy Paper 2016: 12, 21, Palestine Country Programme 2016: 18). The PA’s strategy, *Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy: Promoting Gender Equality and Equity 2011-2013* from 2011, provides valuable insight into how gender representations and strategies are considered in the oPt. The strategic objectives in terms of gender and the expansion of women’s opportunities in the oPt focus on similar priorities as DANIDA’s initiative in the oPt, which are education, women’s participation on the labor market and the mainstreaming of gender in political bodies (UNWOMEN/ PA MoWA 2011: 35-38).

From the two strategic and country-specific documents from DANIDA and the PA’s strategy it can be argued that the neo-liberal discourse of post-feminism becomes prevalent. The premise for women’s empowerment relies on selected equality indicators, which focus on increasing women’s political participation, educational progress and economic participation (DK-Palestine Country Policy Paper 2016: 21). An example of the detected neo-liberal discourse is evident from the *Palestine Country Programme 2016-2020* (2016). Here, the promotion of economic development has the strategic objective of creating employment opportunities for women, thus access to the labor market, but not power over resources as central concern (Palestine Country Programme 2016: 9). However, this program also emphasizes the importance of community participation and the inclusion of women on the governmental level (Ibid.: 10). The explanation of the initiative is somehow vague and imprecise as it forgets to address current structural barriers and power systems in favor of men.

Further, it is evident from the two DANIDA documents (2016, 2016) and the PA’s *Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy* (UNWOMEN/ PA MoWA, 2011) that gender is not considered a hybrid. In terms of the focus on women’s empowerment, ‘women’ is fixed and constructed categorically without focusing on the interconnected nature of social categories, e.g. class, race, culture, age and so forth.

Thus, it is not clear how different identity markers can become interdependent in terms of discrimination and constraints. Thus, it can be argued that the perception of women's reality applies to a unified and normative interpretation of the category 'women'. The binary construction of men and women informs and separates these two gender categories, which underscores Connell's argument that policy papers do not always understand men and women relationally and neglect the importance of cross-classifying gender categories (Cornell 2006: 1676). This is arguably an important concern, which should be addressed as policy papers are considered as normative constitutions, which authorize action (Ibid.).

Another interesting view that stems from the institutional/governmental level can be extracted from the conducted interviews with the external experts professionalized in the field of gender and development. The interviews with actors from Palestinian Businesswomen's Association (ASALA) and Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWSD) provide strong inputs on how local Palestinian women are placed in the nexus of development and gender in the oPt. Extracted from these interviews is the way 'women' and 'women's empowerment' are articulated, which establish consistent characteristics. Nisrine Swailim from ASALA argues for the importance of focusing on individual aspects of women's identities to grasp the complex task of creating empowerment:

“Actually the first thing we have to do is to differentiate between women. (...) women, specifically, go through many different levels in their lives. So my opinion is to take into consideration the needs of women in each stage, and the need financially and socially.”<sup>1</sup>

This argument is backed up by Sandie Hanna, Human Rights Advisor at PWWSD, who emphasizes that in terms of NGOs:

“Nobody actually look for this differentiation or personal life for women, because they are dealing with it as projects and not as people and women.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Nisrine Swailim from ASALA

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Sandie Hanna, Human Rights Advisor at PWWSD

The experts acknowledge the importance of grasping women's many identity markers and a "chain of discourses" (Fairclough 1995: 77ff) around women and development emerges from the interviews. The discourse moves away from the assumption of 'women' as a conform and homogeneous category, and thus away from 'categorical thinking'. Both experts draw on feminist post-modernist critique of development interventions. They challenge the paradigmatic assumptions of Western hegemony concerning biased gender assumptions and cultural reductionism in development projects and advocate for not standardizing women's identity. From the interviews it becomes evident that women's identities are manifold and open to constantly change:

"There is different needs, different cultures, different also personal needs because every human is special and has its own needs, so we can't do just the one project for all, one thing for all, because what fits me, does not fit you. My needs are different."<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, a chain of discourses is embedded in the two DANIDA documents and the gender strategy from the UNWomen/ PA, which illustrates a rather global neo-liberal development discourse of post-feminism and a gender discourse, which tends to view 'men' and 'women' as static and categorically divided. However, the interviews with the external experts from the field of gender and development in the oPt inform a nuanced and complex view on women in development projects, thus providing a feminist post-modernist critique of development projects.

### 5.2.2 A feminist CDA of the organizational level

In this section gender and development discourses will be discussed in the context of the DHIP, as a constituted organization, and the project DiC. The analysis will draw on empirical data such as key informants' interviews with staff members of the DHIP and strategic program documents concerning DiC. This instruction is built on the assumption that the DHIP is considered a social environment where certain behaviors and activities are associated with particular perspectives on gender and perspectives on how to do development.

The DHIP's *Project Description of DiC* (Appendix I) and *Final Evaluation Report - DiC* (Appendix II) are project focused documents specifically concerned with DiC. Through enhancing the skills and

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Sandie Hanna, Human Rights Advisor at PWWSD

techniques of the participants within embroidery to develop small-scale businesses based on the project participants' own needs, DiC's purpose is to:

“empower the participants to be able to build their own businesses free from international donor support and interference and thus address one of the stigmas of the NGO-world and place the decision-making and power in the hands of the Palestinians themselves.” (Appendix I).

The project is dedicated to enable capacity building based on local needs and by supporting individuals in making self-sustainable development. The feeling of ownership of the project among the participants is essential in DiC. The attempt to enhance project participants in every aspect of the project cycle and to create development on the premises of the targeted group, is a prominent focus throughout both project documents from the DHIP:

“this project is aiming to develop many aspect of skills for the participating ladies, so it was very important that they are part of the decision making, this helps a lot with the commitment from the ladies towards the project (...) Brainstorming sessions took place before each period of implementing the project, the ladies were the major component of these meetings since they are the core stone of this project.” (Appendix II).

It seems adequate to argue that there exists a strong discourse around DiC concerning development, which places the project participants in the local Palestinian context, and focuses on socio-economic individuality:

“As such the mentoring and training the participants receive will be directly applicable to the context in which they work i.e. market analysis will be based on the actual market that the participants chose to sell their products in.”  
(Appendix I).

This project specifically seeks to diminish the possibility of a hierarchical and dichotomous relationship between the knowledge of the local participants and the agenda of the seemingly technocratic gender and development industry. Just as it was detected from the interviews with external experts from the field of gender and development, the emergence of a sensitive postmodern feminist discourse on development and gender constitutes interdiscursivity in the data. This rather postmodern feminist approach to development argues for conceptualization and moves away from the WID paradigm, which viewed women in Southern development as vulnerable and fragile as they

were subjected to Northern hegemony of gender standards (Chowdry in Marchand & Parpart 1995: 34).

The conducted key informant interview with Lone Bildsoe, Director of the DHIP, further applies to this strong postmodern feminist discourse as she argues that the organization's mandate first of all is based on the needs and wants of the project participants and beneficiaries with whom they engage. Bildsoe emphasizes that local ownership is one of the keys to ensure sustainability in the DHIP's development projects:

“So we don't come with a particular strategy of .. with particular goals developed in Denmark. Everything we do is based on what Palestinians determined is the most important thing to do (...) we honor the beneficiaries. They are the ones who determined what we are doing.”<sup>4</sup>

This study focuses explicitly on discourses related to power structures and gender ideologies in the case of DiC. Equality challenges, gender relations and unequal power structures are not considered strategic objectives in the DHIP's projects and program planning. However, DiC becomes the only project which explicitly targets women's empowerment, as Doha, project manager at the DHIP explains. Further, DiC focuses only on capacity building in terms of improving professional skills, skills in business management and attempts to make small-scale businesses for the involved participants, and does not endeavor to address gender norms and unequal hegemonic power relations. This could be considered an obstacle to the empowerment of the project beneficiaries - the Palestinian craftswomen.

The data illustrates how DiC has an extended and unique focus on women's empowerment through enhancing and increasing women's access to the labor market. It can be argued that by engaging solely with embroidery, which is considered to be a handicraft dominated by women<sup>5</sup>, it indirectly becomes a precondition that the participants are women. Hence, they potentially exclude the partition of men. Bildsoe explains how gender is interpreted in the DHIP's projects:

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Lone Bildsoe, Director of the DHIP

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Lone Bildsoe, Director if the DHIP

“For us, we target everybody, we target women, and men, and children, youth and handicapped and what not. Everybody. But we did have a little bit of a gender issue, because we have had this project with women in particular, we developed our sports project for men.”<sup>6</sup>

The quote showcases an example of categorical division of gender, and a binary construct of men and women, connecting embroidery to women and sports to men. DiC becomes a women-specific project as it engages with an area within a handicraft considered to be dominated mainly by women. Thus, this constructs a categorical dividing line of projects for women and projects for men.

It seems fruitful for projects focusing on women’s empowerment that these manage to challenge the reasons behind inequality and the low empowerment of women, by addressing hegemonic societal power relations affected by patriarchy. It can be argued that DiC risks not acknowledging the importance of understanding the gendered power relations at stake, hence the relationship with men; husbands, brothers and uncles, which is crucial when focusing on women’s empowerment in development (Kuttab 2008: 112f, Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 8f).

The tendency to distinguish gender categorically on the organizational level leaves food for thought concerning the articulation of gender ideologies within the project sphere; Is the DHIP creating a space where gender roles can be rethought and repositioned? Maybe the organization is, and especially if one considers the traditional gender roles dominated by patriarchy, which permeate some more conservative communities in the oPt (UNWomen 2017: 198, Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2011: 56). Even though DiC does not address ideological power structures intentionally, improving professional skills and the potential of self-sustaining women entrepreneurs at the Palestinian labor market can possibly allow for the project participants to enter a dominated men’s sphere, which the labor market is considered to be (Kuttab 2006: 237f). Thus, DiC challenges hegemonic gender ideologies prevalent in the Palestinian context. The order of discourse on the organizational level provides a unique picture of the women, the project beneficiaries, as strong and operative agents in charge of their own existence, and further able to access the labor market regardless of their gender.

Discourses on gender and development can be structurally substantiated on an institutionalized and organizational level and further reinforced by practical activity of the actors (Lazar 2007: 147). The

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Lone Bildsoe, Director of the DHIP

link between the organizational level and the operational level becomes an interesting concern for the analysis when grasping the interdiscursivity of gender and development discourses. This relationship will be expanded upon in the next analytical section, which focuses on the experiences of the project participants.

### 5.2.3 A feminist CDA of the operational level

This analytical section will extract discourses emerging on the operational level, thus the project participants who are considered the main beneficiaries in DiC (Appendix I). The empirical data is embedded in key informants' interviews with two of the project participants who were an essential part of the project in the five years project period from 2012 through 2017. The purpose of the analysis is to identify lines of discourses concerning gender and development.

Within a feminist CDA, the concept of 'gender relationality' constitutes an important focus when unfolding discourses embedded in texts and talks. 'Gender relationality' focuses on the discursive co-constitution of different ways of being a women and a man, different ways of doing gender in particular communities of practice. The concept seems interesting to work with on the operational level of this analysis, as it has an explanatory effect concerning gender orders by creating awareness regarding relations among women (Lazar 2005: 12). Further, it is praxis-oriented and seeks to understand structures of gender oppression, attitudinal change and social transformation, which will be expanded upon in this section.

The interviews with the Palestinian craftswomen, Sara Hasasneh and Samiha Rabaya, who were embedded in the project, showcase individual gendered narratives about their interpretations of being a women in the oPt. Focusing on the discourse production and interpretation within the interviews, it becomes distinct how Samiha and Sara consider Palestinian women as active agents of change, entrepreneurial and identifiable with working in the labor market:

“The house and the husband should be supportive and encourage the women. If a women is strong and has the tendency to be a challenging women that is what makes a women powerful. The more a women integrate in society, the more she will be empowered. It is about ambitions, power, and the tendency to challenge the system.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Sara Hasasneh, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

“I think that the women should be exactly like the man. A man drives a car and then a women should do it, too. A man is head of a company and the women should have the same opportunity.”<sup>8</sup>

Perceptions concerning the potential and the prospects for Palestinian women emerge from the interviews. Arguably, it can be considered as a form of “attitudinal change” (Lazar 2005: 12), as they move away from a traditional discourse, which constitutes women at home. The traditional and current perception of gender roles, hence Palestinian women’s position as caretaker and responsible for housework, is extracted and documented in the recent report on gender inequality from the UN Women and the research institute, Promundo (2017). 80% of men and 60% of women believe that the most important jobs for women are related to nurturing and housework (UNWomen/Promundo 2017: 208). From the interviews, the line of discourses concerning women’s position in society constitutes a self-awareness among the two project participants, which moves away from a traditional way of thinking of women in the oPt. This is interesting, as the women strongly suggest that joining and participating in DiC improved not only their professional skills within embroidery, but also their self-reliance and -confidence:

“I feel very different now, I became social active and now I have social relations to many people all around Palestine and in foreign countries due to this project. I changed a lot.”<sup>9</sup>

Discourses on men are influenced by words such as “masculinity”, “male oppression” and “power”, and can be extracted from both interviews. Samiha emphasizes how masculine ideals and the oppression of women permeate the Palestinian society. The acceptance from husbands, brothers and uncles is considered a great obstacle to women’s liberation, since the majority of women are not allowed to enter the labor market:

“A lot of men do have a permit to go and work in Jerusalem, but women need other reasons and it is problematic. It is a way of emphasizing the masculine power structure.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Samiha Rabaya, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Sara Hasasneh, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Sara Hasasneh, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen



Traditional custom and men's perceptions of women are indeed considered obstacles to women's empowerment and emancipation. Sara and Samiha both reaffirm how social practice in Palestinian communities constructs a gendered discourse that associates women with home and children, men with power and work. Thus, establishing societal gender ideologies that place men in a position of privilege. In line with the focus of feminist CDA, gender appears as an interpretive category in both interviews; the project participants interpret men and women's position from a specific experiential context to structure and make sense of the social arena in which they are embedded.

The interviews further focus on relations among women within development, and here a more diverse picture emerges, as the project participants have different foci. Samiha is very concerned about the negative influence women can have on chances of reaching gender equality. She argues that women can be an obstacle to create equality, as they support their husband's opinion: "Some women have a similar ideology as the oppressive male."<sup>11</sup>. Sara, however, argues in terms of relations among women for the importance of creating women's professional collectives and networks across geographical distance as it becomes empowering for women.

In summary, interdiscursivity is manifested through several statements about women and development extracted from both interviews. It paints a picture of women as capable of being strong entrepreneurs through self-sustained business, which talks directly into the DiC's project objective. It is reasonable to argue that the two project participants interviewed in this case study challenge the gender realities in the local context they live in, since they have experienced a social transformation that could have been supported and upheld by active participation in DiC. Thus, a progressive and egalitarian gender discourse can be detected on the operational level.

### **5.3 The linguistics of development - a contribution to the feminist CDA**

From the analysis of gender and development representations, it is reasonable to argue that there exist different development languages, in de Sardan's terminology (de Sardan 2005: 178), between the social actors embedded in the DiC. The encounter of these languages can also be explained as the heterogeneity of discourses. In continuation of these observations, it is valuable for the analysis of gender and development representations in DiC to focus on the potential of communication and

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Samiha Rabaya, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

aligned discourses between the ‘project language’ and the language of the ‘developee’ (Ibid.: 137), which this section will address. Furthermore, this section will approach if the project participants have experienced behavioral change and how their experience of “change” is compatible with what is actually found evident in the data. This is interesting as it has explanatory value in terms of seeking to understand the potential and/or limitations of empowering the participants through DiC, which the next analytical chapter will address.

The project language of DiC is organized and formalized through words and sentences such as “small-scale self-sustainable business”, “marketable products”, “production of local marketing plan”, “professional skills”, “workshop”, “business mentor networks” and “empower women and collectives of women” (Appendix I). This is not only evident from the project-related documents but emphasized in interviews with the DHIP staff members. Furthermore, DiC has a significant appearance at the DHIP office, as textile products produced from the project participants and pictures taken from workshops are illustrated at the office in Ramallah, the oPt.<sup>12</sup> These visuals are embedded in the DHIP’s expression, and it seems likely to argue that DiC becomes an integrated part of the DHIP’s identity.

According to de Sardan, a ‘project language’ often faces the issue of not being applicable in the local context the project becomes embedded in. The ‘project language’ can then be nonexistent among the locals. Discrepancy can arise, which entails constraints and limitations in terms of the coherence of the development project (de Sardan 2005: 180). In case of DiC, the particular strategy is explicitly focused on participation through increasing skills and creating self-sustainability, a “participationist ideology” (Ibid.). Hence the communication with the DiC and the project beneficiaries is arguably essential for a successful process. The empirical data extracted from the field provides a very limited opportunity to analyze this issue as it only can rely on the interviews with the project participants and beneficiaries, and field notes from the day the interviews were conducted. With that observation in mind, the project participants Sara and Samiha very clearly talk within the project frame. This is evident from interview quotes such as: “Now we can organize our work and think more

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<sup>12</sup> Field notes October 29th 2017, Ramallah, the oPt.

professionally.”<sup>13</sup>, “We work very accurate now”<sup>14</sup>, “The more a women integrate in society the more she will be empowered. It is about ambitions, power, the tendency to challenge the system.”<sup>15</sup>, and “the DHIP gave us a lot of workshops that made us work in an untraditional way.”<sup>16</sup>. In summary, the quotes illustrate how the project participants, the developpees, somehow talk into the project language. This makes the project coherent. However, understanding how the local communities who came in touch with DiC understand and articulate the project is impossible to analyze from the data of this study.

The ‘project language’ is somehow aligned with parts of the language of the developpees as explained above, and ‘behavioral change’ (de Sardan 2005: 137ff) will now be discussed briefly. DiC is organized as a cultural development project, which engages with activities to increase the participants’ skills and create possibilities for the building of knowledge. Interviews with staff members from the DHIP and interviews with the project participants emphasize change in behavior:

“They were really committed and did a lot. They were like .. everyone of them changed. I think it is really a successful story.”<sup>17</sup>

From this rather vague description of “change”, it is distinct also from the interviews with the project participants that they changed at a professional level through expanding techniques and developing new and more marketable products. They argued that they changed at a social level as they obtained a professional position; they now work full-time in the workshop, hence not committed to do only domestic work, and they have a large network with other women by whom they get inspired<sup>18</sup>. The evaluation report documents that the project participants felt empowered, and that they improved their technical skills and obtained knowledge-building in terms of marketing and business planning (Appendix II).

In closing, it is possible to detect some kind of change on a professional and social level among the interviewed participants, as they developed collectives of craftswomen across the oPt. Some became

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Samiha Rabaya, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Samiha Rabaya, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Sara Hasasneh, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Sara Hasasneh, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Doha Jabr, project manager of the DHIP

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Sara Hasasneh, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

financially independent from their husbands, they established workshops for production and became more aware of business and marketing administration. In all, the two craftswomen Sara and Samiha address themselves as breadwinners. This is a very fine and interesting accomplishment, however, to improve women's access to the labor market, ideological and hegemonic patriarchal power structures counter to women's empowerment, and institutional and legislative boundaries to the very same must be challenged and modified to accommodate structural and long-term change. Thus, to achieve behavioral change among the project participants in DiC, systemic inequalities must be challenged, which is something DiC does not address directly. However, it is possible to argue that the data manifests a social transformation among the interviewed craftswomen, which participating in DiC somehow supported.

#### **5.4 Sub-conclusion**

By applying a combined approach from CDA and feminist CDA, this analytical chapter has analyzed discourses on gender and development from the defined case of DiC.

The discourses extracted from the data articulate how social actors in DiC are engaged with different agendas. At the institutional/governmental level it was quite distinct how two discourses on development came in contiguity with each other. DANIDA's agenda on development interventions in the oPt documented a roughly global neo-liberal development discourse. However, external experts on women's empowerment and gender-specific programming in development appointed how women should be considered from their personal background and manifold identities to acknowledge limitations and potentials. Thus, two dual hegemonic development discourses dominated the institutional/governmental level. At the organizational level this feminist postmodernist discourse was reaffirmed by the developers from the DHIP and the DiC project documents; a discourse that insists on accommodating individuality and the local contexts, hence rejecting Western ideals of essentialism of especially women's position and potential in society in developing countries. Finally, the operational level appointed a strong discourse among the two Palestinian craftswomen who participated in DiC, which draws on women's entrepreneurship, empowerment and self-sustainability that can be considered to challenge the gender realities, systemic inequality and patriarchal power structures in which they both are embedded.

The case of DiC proves how a development project is a system of relational and institutional power structure embedded in discourses. The key argument in this analytical chapter is that through DiC, the DHIP deviates from the conviction extracted in the literature review of this study. The conviction being the fact that NGOs determine issues to prioritize in terms of women's empowerment. DiC is a project which ensures local ownership and active participation through decision-making initiatives from the project participants involved. DiC has an extended focus on cultural relativism by understanding the context they enter and the local population's desire in terms of social change. DiC can be placed in the arena of development in the oPt as a project which deviates from other gender-specific programs.

The discourses have explanatory potential in terms of understanding the potential and/or limitations of empowering the participants through DiC, which the next analytical chapter will go into depth with.

## **6. ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS CONCERNING THE DYNAMICS OF EMPOWERMENT**

### **6.0 Introduction**

As mentioned in the introduction of this study, the period after the Oslo peace process, which officially ended in 1995, created a landmark for Palestinian development programs and multilateral aid. Especially increasing the focus on ‘women’s empowerment’ as an instrument in development became important. Thus, ‘women’s empowerment’ became a part of the donor-driven strategic interest embedded in a liberal feminist agenda (Challand 2009: 11, 59, Kuttab 2008: 106, Kuttab 2006: 232, Hanafi & Tabar 2007: 7, 9, 12).

This second analytical chapter will assess the potential and/or limitations of the project DiC to empower women through ‘empowerment’ as a certain development initiative. This will be done by applying a conceptual framework for assessing empowerment, which mainly focuses on the following three steps: defining power relations, action taken and change in power relations for the betterment of women. Thus, this chapter seeks to grasp how the concept can be operationalized in the case of DiC. Further, this chapter will consider contradictions in DiC in terms of the concept of ‘empowerment’ that can occur when development organizations tries to create ‘women’s empowerment’. This will be examined to understand what kind of notion of ‘empowerment’ informs the development actors, the developer and the developpee (de Sardan 2005: 137), perceptions and to analyze the dynamics of empowerment and disempowerment at stake in DiC.

The analysis will draw on the *Final Evaluation Report - DiC* (appendix II) and *Project Description of DiC* (appendix I), interviews with project participants and staff members of the DHIP that already have been included in the first analytical chapter in this study. Further, this analysis will incorporate key findings from the feminist CDA devised in the first analytical chapter. Thus, these extracted discourses will be analyzed to grasp relations and power structures in the data. Once again, the analysis is limited due to the restricted and selective approach to the primary data, as this analytical chapter only relies on four interviews.

## **6.1 Operationalizing ‘empowerment’**

The endeavor of looking into ‘empowerment’ as a conceptual notion ingrained in the vocabulary of the development industry is a subtle and challenging task. ‘Empowerment’ can be operationalized and understood as “a process” initiated in a development project. This is assessed by focusing on the capacity of the organization or participation of certain groups in both project design, management and evaluation of the activities. However, ‘empowerment’ can also be described as “an aim or an outcome” in a specific project that focuses on strengthening economic capacity and increasing the access to financial resources (Luttrell & Quiroz 2009: 5).

Mosedale’s conceptual framework of empowerment is an attempt to operationalize ‘empowerment’ in development programming and projects (Mosedale 2005: 253). Since these two distinctions made by Luttrell and Quiroz are considered to have an impact on the operational aspect of a development project, it will be considered in the following analysis of empowerment.

### 6.1.1 Defining power relations: Constraints to action

The first dimension of Mosedale’s conceptual framework of assessing empowerment in development is very interesting, as it identifies the state of gendered power relations before action is taken. It is crucial since it can organize understandings among the project participants in DiC, regarding how they are discriminated against due to their gender (Mosedale 2005: 253). DiC’s objectives are to expand the participants’ professional skills in terms of qualifying their embroidery skills and increasing knowledge of marketing and business planning with the purpose and aim to:

“bring the decision making “back” to the crafts women and enable them to be responsible for their income on a long-term scale and thus make them independent of international donors/organisations.” (appendix I).

The focus is on the possibility of making the participants autonomous in terms of income and self-employment., and thus to increase access to the Palestinian labor market. To grasp the potential of reaching this project aim, Mosedale argues for the importance of acknowledging the ‘three faces of power’ (Mosedale 2005: 254). The first face, ‘power over’, seeks to answer if there is an open and/or ongoing conflict. Further, powerful actors of social mores prevent the participants of becoming financially independent and being decision makers in their own life.

“Traditions are very problematic many places here. Some people choose to follow the old habits and traditions and that is an issue.(...). A lot of men would not allow women to do this. We represent a minority.”<sup>19</sup>

The data that so far has framed this case provides valuable insight when identifying ‘power over’. From the personal opinions extracted from the interviews with the project participants to the strategic policy paper, research and national strategies on gender, the overriding issue seem to be patriarchal, and thus ideological, power structures, which are carried out in legislations and traditional gender norms in terms of division of labor (UNWOMEN/ PA MoWA 2011: 23, 28, UNWomen/Promundo 2017: 226). More concretely, women’s participation in higher education and access to paid labor market has in fact increased, but the development has not been followed by fundamental change in the dynamics of the household (UNWomen/ Promundo 2017: 226). Thus, institutional structures and social barriers hinder women’s access to the paid labor market and hinder the chances of becoming financially independent.

Another contextual limitation to women’s empowerment and a form of ‘power over’ is the prolonged occupation by Israel that hinders economic and political development related to gender equality, mobilization and compliance with human rights (Kuttab 2010, 2008, Hanafi & Tabar 2007). In terms of conducting workshops and exhibitions, the occupation is considered to be the main obstacle to this:

“For women the occupation is even more harsh in handling women. They will ask: “Why do you want to go to Jerusalem?”. A lot of men do have a permit to go and work in Jerusalem, but women need other reasons and it is problematic.”<sup>20</sup>

In line with this, almost all development projects are considered within the framework of the occupation, according to both the DHIP and the collaborator, the Dalia Association:

“So much of the areas we focus on is probably a result of the occupation, and we try to develop systems and activities within communities to sustain themselves under occupation.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Sara Hasasneh, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Sara Hasasneh, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Aisha Mansour, Executive Director at the Dalia Association



The second face of power is called ‘power within’ and it approaches the needs in terms of what the project participants require to, in this specific case, pursue access to the labor market and financial independence. According to Mosedale, one must look at assets in terms of self-esteem and self-confidence, which are important qualities to obtain before anything can be achieved (Mosedale 2005: 259). The analysis of this can only draw on the interviews with the project participants, as the emphasis is on psychological and personal insight. The feminist CDA acknowledged accelerated in the first analytical chapter provides crucial insight to this matter, as it explained something about the participants’ self-image. It was argued that the interviews reveal a strong self-image of the project participants as capable of being strong entrepreneurs and self-sustained. Furthermore, they reveal that being a part of DiC improved both their social and professional skills. Traditional gender norms were put aside in the craftswomen’s pursuit of becoming strong decision makers and financially independent from their husbands. It is, however, crucial to bear in mind that this strong self-image that appears among two of the project participants appears after DiC was finalized. Thus, the data framing in this case does not tell anything about the attitudes towards ‘power within’ before DiC was initialized in 2012.

Following Mosedale’s ‘three faces of power’, the final face seeks to understand the proportion of potential in terms of increasing the participants’ access to the labor market and thus, financial independence by grasping the face of ‘power to’ (Ibid.: 251). Again, leaning on the feminist CDA conducted in the first analytical chapter, the analysis showcased how the two project participants felt personally independent to expand their business and labor market opportunities. This is due to the acceptance from family members, explicitly the husbands who allow for the women to work: “We are very thankful to have understanding husbands who let us go out and get a job.”<sup>22</sup> Further, potential can be found in the importance of craftswomen’s collectives, which confirm that other women are interested in the same professional and social development - a perspective which is extracted from the conducted interviews with the participants and the staff members of the DHIP.

#### 6.1.2 Action taken: How women’s agency has developed

This second stage of Mosedale’s conceptual framework of empowerment engages with the possibility for action and most importantly, if action is actually taken (Ibid.: 255). To address women’s agency

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Samiha Rabaya, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

and how it has developed or changed throughout the project period, requires the analysis to go in depth with individual and collective aspects of empowerment. That is something the data of this study is not capable of doing sufficiently. This is due to the fact that the data is limited in terms of understanding the total impact of DiC in terms of women's empowerment as only two women from the project were interviewed. However, there is no doubt that the possibility for action has increased throughout the project period. This is documented in *Final Evaluation Report - DiC* (appendix II) and supported by statements from the staff members of the DHIP and finally, and most importantly, argued by the two project participants. The participants became engaged in workshops and business classes, participated in meetings with women's business groups and established women's groups or networks of craftswomen across the oPt to increase cooperation and sustainability.

The three listed questions identified in section 4.2 *Assessing empowerment in development* of this study will now be accommodated. To answer if the project participants developed or improved self-confidence and personal potential after participating in DiC, an understanding of the participants' social and individualistic backgrounds is important. The interviews with Sara and Samiha cannot answer this question comprehensively, but the interviews showcase personal perspectives, which can have an explanatory effect. The improvement of professional skills and development of a strong self-confidence is evident from both interviews. DiC integrated them in the society as they became socially active and established professional networks:

“Through the DHIP we connected with other women from different cities in Palestine were women work in the same kind of way. That was excellent to exchange ideas and led to the inclusion of new designs.”<sup>23</sup>

Interviews with the participants and the *Final Evaluation Report - DiC* (appendix II) prove how an alliance of women's collectives and cooperation between craftswomen all over the oPt unified the participants. Action was actually taken in terms of having the participants working together to achieve change, hence question two.

The third and last question; if external assistance supported change in the participants' agency, can also only be partially answered from the data set. *Final Evaluation report - DiC* (appendix II)

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Sara Hasasneh, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

manifests how the participants became connected with women's business networks and supportive organizations to help them improve business knowledge, sustainability, access to small loans and other projects. However, the impact of this initiative is unknown.

### 6.1.3 Change in power relations: How women's agency changed constraints to action

'Empowerment' can only be the right term when change in power relations are results of women's own action and not external factors. Thus, the main interest in this final stage of the conceptual framework for assessing empowerment is the ability of women's action. (Mosedale 2005: 256). Guided by the two listed questions in *4.2 Accessing empowerment in development*, this section will address if action taken by participants in DiC contributed to empowerment.

Firstly, what collective and/or individual action did the project participants take to challenge constraints to action? A top-down approach driven by donor agendas cannot be detected in the case of DiC. Women's collectives and professional networks were facilitated by the DHIP but socially established by the craftswomen engaged in DiC, as documented in *Final Evaluation Report - DiC* (appendix II) and in the interviews with the participants. Training in business administration and design workshops improved the participants' knowledge and technical skills due to the interest from the project participants themselves. Further, the DHIP had an assistant role by creating a supportive environment where the participants could unfold their ambitions:

“The way the DHIP worked was to take us on trips and asking us to make new patterns, new designs and new ideas. This gave us support and ambitions to work. That was empowering.”<sup>24</sup>

Secondly, how did the project participants learn from each other's actions? This question has been answered throughout the analysis of the three stages of the conceptual framework of empowerment. The project participants established, through support by the DHIP, great professional collectives. Further, by working intensely together with the Danish Designers and other craftswomen in trainings, design workshops and exhibitions, the participants created a strong support and social network of women with similar aspirations and in same circumstances.

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Sara Hasasneh, project participant and Palestinian craftswomen

It is a significant element of the empowerment approach in development that the organizations implement projects on a grassroots level and seek to empower women by expanding the collective capacity towards self-sustainability and self-reliance (Marchand & Parpart 1995: 38). This is something DiC endeavors to do, and it seems fruitful for the participants engaged. It can be argued that through DiC, some kind of redistribution of power is occurring on a personal level among some of the participants. The action taken by the participants somehow changed personal constraints and created a space for the participants to control and influence their own life. Thus, the direction of the development was guided by the actual participants: The craftswomen.

## **6.2 Dynamics of (dis)empowerment in ‘Design in Context’**

This analytical section addresses contradictions when applying ‘empowerment’ in development projects. Extracted from pertinent literature about the nexus of women’s empowerment and development, this section will discuss and summarize how the DHIP’s project DiC can be placed in the nexus.

Mosedale suggests increasing the focus on collective sense making amongst the actors embedded in empowerment projects, to grasp the coherence of a project (Mosedale 2014: 1120). The term ‘empowerment’ is not defined in the DHIP’s project documents, and only used vaguely to explain a process of change:

“anything you learn from any output of a project is empowering. It will empower you skills, your way of thinking, or your attitude. Yes, in all the aspects. I think all our projects will have this small element of empower even if it is not main goal of this project. The cultural exchange itself is empowerment.”<sup>25</sup>

Doha Jabr’s conception of empowerment becomes merely common sense and does not pose a threat to the current power structures and the distribution of power. Further, Lone Bildsoe, Director of the DHIP at the time, argues that in terms of ‘women’s empowerment’, this is not at all something which the DHIP targets specifically<sup>26</sup> as other women’s organizations are dedicated and more experienced in doing this. Bildsoe’s argument goes directly against the aim of the DiC, which is to: “empower crafts producers and design graduates which in general are women” (Appendix I). It can be argued

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Doha Jabr, Project Manager in the DHIP

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Lone Bildsoe, Director of the DHIP

that the staff in the DHIP are in need a better “compass” (Mosedale 2014: 1120) to explore what ‘empowerment’ means in the organizations use of it, thus a lack of collective sense making can be extracted from the data.

Mosedale argues for the importance of addressing men and gender hierarchies in ‘women’s empowerment’ as relations in families and communities influence women’s chances of empowerment (Mosedale 2014: 1122). DiC does not address this matter strategically, which can result in the acceptance of current power structures and gender relations, which are inequitable and in favor of men.

The focus on economic empowerment can be extracted from the strategic focus in DiC, and this initiative has been criticized especially by Kuttab. Economic empowerment through micro-credit institutions has the disadvantage of only reducing poverty instead of creating empowerment for women. This is considered an issue, as it only leads to individual empowerment and not collective empowerment, according to Kuttab (Kuttab 2010: 251). In the case of DiC, different aspects of individual and collective empowerment have been identified sufficiently in the analysis. DiC focuses on individual empowerment by increasing each participant’s individual skills and creating access to micro-credit loans through women’s business organizations, which are instrumentalist initiatives to empowerment. Collective empowerment has also been detected in DiC through the establishment of women’s collective and professional networks, which, in Kuttab’s terminology, is considered a transformative approach to empowerment (Ibid.).

Thus, the DiC can be considered a development project, which supports the expansion of self-reliance and social capital by active participation of the Palestinian craftswomen in decision-making and professional developing processes. DiC is capable of grasping and incorporating the participants’ personal background and existence, in terms of professional skills and desires, into the narrative of the project, by relying strongly on each participant’s capabilities. However, the main critique of DiC in terms of its ambition to sustain and empower women professionally and financially is that the project does not challenge structural and institutional barriers to women’s empowerment. The components of neo-liberal empowerment are limited, interpreted as increasing access to resources and the expansion of choices, and is somehow not sufficient for the empowerment of women in terms

of economic and political structures. Further, DiC only engaged twelve craftswomen in the project cycle, which is a very narrow and limited development initiative.

### **6.3 Sub-conclusion**

From the analysis of the levels of empowerment, the participants, through DiC, increased their professional skills and marketing skills, opened a workshop to develop products, became financially independent from their husbands and even felt integrated in the society by becoming socially active. By increasing professional skills and educational attainment, the participants became in control of labor and finances, which increased their mobility in the public space and integrated them in the Palestinian society, all of which can be considered agency-related and relational achievements.

In the case of DiC, 'women's empowerment' becomes both a dynamic process as well as an aim of development, even though there exists a vague and inconsistent definition of the term in the organizations' use of it. Aspects of disempowerment can also be detected, as the increased focus on economic empowerment holds some challenging elements as it only relies on individual empowerment. This is, however, balanced by DiC's extended focus on women's collectives as a way to create professional and social networks. Another disempowering aspect is DiC's lack in commitment in terms of challenging gendered power structures and economic as well as political structural barriers to women's empowerment.

From the analysis of the primary data it has been argued that DiC constitutes development from the perspective of the local needs and women's practical interests. This statement is, however, based on the narrow and limiting interviews with only two project participants as well as the interests reflected from the interviews with staff members from the DHIP. To underpin this argument, sufficient and hard data is needed to back up this claim, which is something this study is not capable of providing.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study aimed at discovering the potential of empowering women socially and professionally through the development project Design in Context. First, by appointing representations of gender and discourses on development and women in the data centered around the single case of DiC. Second, by assessing the concept of ‘empowerment’ as a development goal and an active process of development.

The dual discourses on women and development embedded in the three levels of data became indicative of a social space where friction occurred. Friction produced between the rather rigid institutional/governmental level that considered women’s empowerment from equality indicators, and the critical feminist post-structuralist discourse that rejected the simplification of women’s realities extracted from the organizational and operational level. However, the perception of women was largely defined by a categorical notion of gender. Gender became a dichotomous classification, and binary constructions of ‘men’ and ‘women’ were constituted throughout all three levels of the data. The disparities between men and women manifested a solid gender discourse among the social actors in the case study of the DiC. However, the Palestinian craftswomen challenged this discourse as gendered idioms provided a narrative of changing power relations – at least at the domestic, individual level for the two Palestinian craftswomen’s reality.

The analysis looked at the relationship between actors in development and thus, the relationship between the developer, the DHIP, and the developpees, the Palestinian crafts women. This became a supplement to the feminist CDA and illustrated how important linguistics are for the constitution of social practice.

Women’s empowerment became both a dynamic process and an aim, and by increasing professional skills and educational attainment, the Palestinian craftswomen became in control of labor and finances. This increased their mobility in the public space and integrated them in the Palestinian society – all of which can be considered agency-related and relational achievements. However, disempowering aspects emerged throughout the analysis as DiC did not challenge gendered power structures decisively, which is pivotal when addressing empowerment in development. DiC became a facilitator of development that organized a development framework that seems free to interpret by the participants, the beneficiaries, involved. The project encouraged the participants to set their own

conditions for empowerment through self-organization and mobilization by acknowledging Palestinian women's practical interests. This interpretation of needs relies on contextualization and understanding of relational and personal circumstances, but it is also important to acknowledge that a development project never is unbound and free to accommodate every single aspect of the participants life. A development project is thus bound to the strategical and organizational foci since policy documents and international agendas dictate and repeat the way gender and women's empowerment should be instrumental.

This study is an example of how women's empowerment has to be developed by women within their society. It is an example of how important it is to understand power structures, and the potential of changing power structures, as they are particularly socially constructed and therefore changeable.



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## APPENDICES

DHIP 2015

**DESIGN IN CONTEXT II 2015-2018**

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## Project Description

**NB:** This project description describes the continuation of the already implemented project Design In Context (from 2012-2014) during the period 2015 and 2016-2018. The project was initially implemented in 2012-2014 and in the final evaluation a needs analysis based on interviews with the trainers as well as participants established the basis for a continuation of the project.

The project phases will be mentioned in the below concept note as follows:

- Design In Context 2012-2014 = DIC 2014
- Design In Context 2015 = DIC 2015
- Design In Context 2016-2018 = DIC 2018

**SUMMARY**

The project Design In Context II is based on the project Design in Context which was implemented by DHIP in 2012-2014 as a two-year design project supported by KVINFO and in partnership with Dalia Association and the Fashion and Textile institute in Beit Sahour as well as the Royal Danish School of Design in Copenhagen. The project aimed at energizing the field of design in Palestine and facilitated an exchange of expertise and experience between Danish and Palestinian design professionals, who conducted workshops for Palestinian design students and craftswomen. The project results were shown in an exhibition of embroidered shirts including a display of the creative design process of each participant.

The project brought together modern design practices and traditional embroidery techniques in an attempt to rethink the use of traditional Palestinian embroidery and the possibility of utilizing it in a contemporary context with a possibly broader appeal and a potential for generating income. The project aimed to build relationships between design practitioners in Palestine and Palestinian craftswomen hoping that they could use each other in the future.

The evaluation following the project conclusion proved that the project had been successful for the participants in general. They felt empowered and appreciated learning how to work creatively and following their own ideas. They appreciated the mix of modern and traditional and how that inspired them. Two main needs that were not sufficiently covered in the project, were, however, expressed by the participants:

- 1) **a need to further improve skills of production focussing mainly on know-how on finishing a product, and**
- 2) **a need to be able to start and run a small-scale business that could provide a sustainable income for the participants.**

Those two needs expressed by the participants are the basis for the continuation of Design In Context and the following project description is founded in those two needs.

**BACKGROUND**

Creative designs in Palestine have huge potentials given the rich cultural heritage manifested in jewellery, embroidery, textile, woodwork, tiles, mother of pearl, pottery and much more. All these forms of popular arts and culture hold prospects for developing and

modernizing in order to re-introduce it both as usable products in daily life and as precious artefacts.

It is essential to identify synergies and potential partnerships and collaborations with the tourism sector in Palestine with the creative design. Tourism is a major support for the Palestinian economy and holds great potentials for incorporating creative design in diverse manners among which are; access to markets of tourists, promoting the creative designs locally and internationally, celebrating Palestinian contemporary creative culture through regional and international tourism forum.

In Palestinian culture and cultural heritage is a critical area of interest due to its exceptionally multifaceted nature. In addition to exceptionally rich traditions, lifestyles, popular culture and heritage, it encompasses renowned historical and natural sites as well as contemporary culture manifested in diverse productions. However, years of conflict, dispersal and fragmentation have had a significant impact on Palestinian cultural life and its development and made the topic of history, heritage and art a sensitive, ideological and political matter. In the fragmented and complex Palestinian context, culture and cultural heritage stand as a priority sector for development and investment considering its potentials for development and capacity to establish change for a better life. Culture is also effective tool for realizing, expressing and strengthening individual and collective identities as contributes to maturing sense of belonging. It is an essential tool for debate, dialogue and free expression.

Support initiatives of cultural industries encompassing support for and building of capacities of young designers and entrepreneurs (equally from both genders with special focus given to women), such that they are able to develop small income generating businesses that support their financial independency. The capacity building would be on aspects of business management, finance, marketing skills, branding and on technical development of their designs. A crucial aspect would be to link actors in cultural industries with the economic sector. The aim is to find synergies and mutual interests mainly by accessing relevant markets, which could be local, regional or international. In addition to the private sector, it is essential to establish linkages between cultural industries and the tourism sector, given the importance of this sector for the Palestinian economy.

Cultural industries would include any product developed for commercial purposes on basis of creative designs; music, film, handicrafts, jewellery, fashion design and product design. Special interest would be given to industries focusing on the modernization and development of traditional handicrafts such as embroidery, pottery and woodwork due to their special role in Palestinian heritage and the DHIP's previous experience in this field.

There are several projects aimed at design and redesign in Palestine. The projects aim differently but many of them fall into the donor funded reproduction. This means that donors support a group of women asking them to reproduce a design made by a designer (either from outside of Palestine or a Palestinian). Many of these projects run for two years where the women only learn to reproduce one item and are then it is shut down. The projects are good for income generation but the women have very little to say in terms of what is produced and how it is produced.

There is also a growing segment of young Palestinians who are interested in using the traditional heritage as fashion statements. These include e.g. Nadya H ([www.nadyah.com](http://www.nadyah.com)) who is located in Bethlehem. The market for these items is generally in the main Palestinian cities and also in the Palestinian Diaspora.

One of the most successful projects on rethinking traditional design is Sunbula which is an NGO based in Jerusalem. Sunbula uses a Palestinian designer Hamada Atallah who redesign traditional crafts e.g. Embroidery and weaving and then works with women groups to ensure that his redesigns are made with high quality and can be sold in Sunbula's shop in Jerusalem.



Sunbula works with groups in all of historic Palestine including women and blind in Gaza and Bedouins in the Negev.

**PURPOSE AND MOTIVATION**

This project aims to build on the outcome of the Design in Context project implemented by DHIP from 2012-2014. This project focused on reproduction of the traditional Palestinian embroidery in a modern context and created a space for meetings between traditional craftswomen specialized in embroidery and design students as well as Danish designers. The project evaluations found that there is a need amongst the participants for a continuation of the skills and capacities that they gained in project and apply those skills in a more practical manner aimed at enabling them to start their own businesses.

The continuation of the project will build on this needs assessment and focus on how these women and design graduates can use their skills and capacities in a commercial context.

Many projects aimed at traditional productions focus on only short-term results e.g. producing a pre-designed item for sale through another organisation. This creates an instant income for the participating designers/crafts women, but it also has a short-term focus and the participants thus have a continuing need for new projects that can create income for them. Also, as the products are often pre-designed, the design process and thus the decision making does not lie with the craftswomen but with e.g. professional designers and/or international organisations. This project aims to bring the decision making “back” to the crafts women and enable them to be responsible for their income on a long-term scale and thus make them independent of international donors/organisations.

This project aims to create connections between the Danish design industry and history and the Palestinian traditional handicrafts industry and production in order to ensure financial sustainability for Palestinian crafts producers through. As mentioned in the previous sections, there are several initiatives aimed at supporting Palestinian crafts producers – primarily women – through targeted productions and financial support. This project will empower the participants to be able to build their own businesses free from international donor support and interference and thus address one of the stigmas of the NGO-world and place the decision-making and power in the hands of the Palestinians themselves.

The focus of the initial DIC 2014 was fashion design, which will also be the focus of this project. The focus will first and foremost be on Palestinian aesthetics and the subsequent Palestinian market. Secondly, the final products will be presented to a Danish market and if there is interest from Danish buyers, the products can be sold in a Danish context as well.

**EXPECTED RESULTS**

It is the clear aim of this project to address the two main needs expressed by the participants of the DIC 2014 project namely 1) Know-how on how to make a finished product that can be sold both in terms of design and finishing, and 2) Building a business and making a steady income.

Below is an overview of the expected results through the DIC 2015 and DIC 2018:

Main needs following DIC 2014:	DIC 2015	DIC 2018	Expected results after full implementation:
Need 1: Know-how on how to make a finished product that can be	Addresses Need 1: - Workshops on design and finishing.	Addresses Need 1: Continuing workshops on design and finishing	- Finished products - Professional skills in design and finishing

<p>sold both in terms of design and finishing.</p>	<p>- The workshop goals are to follow up on skills acquired in DIC 2014 and build on those and develop products that can be finalised and sold.</p>	<p>but focussing on presenting products for potential partners, buyers, etc. The workshop goals are to make the participants able to produce for profit-making i.e. follow through the design process from idea to finished product.</p>	<p>- Presentation skills acquired</p>
<p>Need 2: Building a business and making a steady income</p>	<p>Addresses Need 2: - Establishing a network of business mentors - Workshops initializing a business plan and establishing a business/es The goal of these activities is to be the basis for the establishing of a business plan etc in DIC 2018.</p>	<p>Addresses Need 2: - Workshops on Business development, plans, etc. by business experts The goal of these activities is to establish a small-scale self-sustainable business based on participants and mentored by business mentors.</p>	<p>- Establishment of a small-scale self-sustainable business - Business plan developed and implemented - Empowered women and collectives - Support network and mentoring plan established and running</p>

**OBJECTIVES**

This project complies strongly with the priorities defined in the DHIP strategy document, as well as with key DANIDA documents and Palestinian National Plan 2011-2013. Culture, cultural heritage and creative productions can be perceived as national wealth and a strong aspect for investment. Amidst a deteriorating economic and political situation, cultural production can be investment areas with products that have the possibility to transcend borders while unite in a divided reality.

In DHIP’s strategic program document one of the overall objectives is:

**Objective 4:**

*Enhancing, enriching and Supporting Palestinian Cultural life and strengthening the DHIP profile as a local active civil society organization and a contributor to the cultural life in Palestine; through programs that are locally based, community oriented, collaborative and relevant to the Palestinian context and audience.*

Through this project DHIP aims to participate in the support of the Palestinian cultural life, outside of Ramallah, and contribute to the cultural life in Palestine through a project that is locally based, community oriented and relevant to the Palestinian context. This means that DHIP through this project seeks to create sustainable support and mentoring to a select group of cultural producers focusing on engaging entrepreneurship initiatives of cultural industries with actors in the commercial sector and support their capacities and opportunities to develop income-generating projects based on creative product design. The

project will look to develop the designers' capacities; techniques, marketing and business skills and knowledge such that it would contribute to the development of an income-generating art form. The project seeks to contribute to opening access to market, business tools and encourage entrepreneurship.

The main objectives of the project are

OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS
Enhance the skills and techniques of the participants in the areas of embroidery, clothing design and clothing production to be at highest quality possible.	Skills and techniques are enhanced. The products produced by the participants are compatible with high quality in the market in general.
Develop marketable products that encompass both their Palestinian heritage and modern design needs.	A number of high-quality products are produced by participants.
Develop small-scale, self-sustainable business (es) based on the participants needs and wants.	One or more businesses are established by participants.
Establish a business mentor network to support and guide the establishment of small-scale businesses by participants.	A business mentor network is established and business mentors are carrying out workshops throughout project.
Enhance the skills of the participants in business management, finance and marketing.	Skills are enhanced.
Produce a local marketing campaign to promote the products and businesses of the participants.	A campaign is produced and implemented.

### MEASURING TOOLS

Prior to the implementation of the project the participants are asked to assess their own skills in the areas of design and craftsmanship as well as business management and development. These assessments will be used to compare the progress of the participants throughout the project. And the participants will be asked semi-annually to assess themselves and their progress.

Through continuous evaluations the DHIP coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the project is headed in the right way and that the expected results and objectives are obtained. The DHIP coordinator will evaluate each workshop through questionnaires and interviews with the participants. The coordinator will also through regular mentor and trainer network meetings evaluate the direction of the project and ensure that proper adjustments are carried out to ensure that the objectives are met.

DHIP will hire an external consultant to produce written assessments on project progress and development.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project comes in continuation of DHIP's previous project Design in Context (DIC 2014). It aims at developing and building upon the success and achievements in this project to establish a continuation and seek to maximize the possibilities and benefits for the partners

and participants. This project builds a bridge to further develop the DIC 2014 into a self-sustainable mentoring and business network developed in the project DIC 2018.

DIC 2015 will be focusing on moving a step forward from the design process to actually producing a final product that holds an authentic local identity, a modern edge, a commercial nature and a strong marketing element.

Adding to that the participants will be taking part in the establishment of their own business with the guidance of business mentors. The establishment of the businesses will be the main component of the continuation of the DIC 2015 into DIC 2018. Through the establishment of the business and the business mentor network in DIC 2015 and the implementation and workshops throughout DIC 2018 the participants will receive training in small business management while also building their own business based on the skills acquired in design and finishing of products. The establishment of the business will be fully participatory, as the participants themselves have to define the business based on trainings and workshops by experts and mentors. Throughout the project the participants will also receive workshops in design and fashion production to ensure that the products are of high quality in both finishing and design.

DIC 2018 comes in continuation of DIC 2015. It builds on the assumption that DIC 2015 was finished successfully and that the expected results were obtained.

The project will focus on mentoring and supporting the participants into establishing and building their own business while they are participating in the project. As such the mentoring and training the participants receive will be directly applicable to the context in which they work i.e. market analysis will be based on the actual market that the participants chose to sell their products in. The focus will be on the actual development of a business and the participants will have the final say in all decisions although they will be guided by their mentors and trainers.

The project will draw upon expertise from small business owners in Palestine and Denmark, business developments experts from Denmark and Palestine as well as designers.

**ACTIVITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

ACTIVITY	CONTENT	RESULTS
<p><b>ACTIVITY 1:</b>  <b>Participatory brainstorming session</b>                      Participants: All crafts women, DHIP coordinator, Dalia Coordinator, Mrs Khawla Khateeb (designing trainer)                      Number: 2                      Project phase: DIC 2015                      Responsible for content: DHIP coordinator</p>	<p>Decision-making sessions where the specific needs, wants and desires of the participants are described in detail.                      1: Skills and techniques needed by participants are described and discussed. What skills are present in the group already, what is needed, etc.                      2: Design focus is presented and discussed based on DIC 2014 results and lessons learned.                      3: Business development idea is presented and participants are asked to describe how they wish to establish their businesses e.g. one shared</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Detailed descriptions of needs, wants and desires from the participants</li> <li>- Detailed descriptions of skills and techniques available in the group of participants</li> <li>- Decision is made on design focus of the project, what is to be produced and how</li> <li>- Decision is made on the establishment of a business and how</li> <li>- From the above the business mentors can be recruited</li> </ul>

	business per collective or one shared business in total	
<p><b>ACTIVITY 2:</b>  <b>Design and production workshops</b>  Participants: All crafts women, DHIP coordinator, Dalia Coordinator  Number: 1 for 14 days in 2015  Project phase: DIC 2015  Responsible for content: Palestinian designer/trainer Mrs. Khawla Al Khateeb</p>	<p>Follow up on DIC 2014 and based on ACTIVITY 1 brainstorming session about design focus, the design and production workshops will focus on the actual production of garments/accessories to be sold by the end of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Final products finished and ready for market</li> <li>- Participants acquired necessary skills to finish a product as well as an understanding of what the market requires in terms of quality, style and fashion</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACTIVITY 3:</b>  <b>Business workshops</b>  Participants: All crafts women, DHIP coordinator, Dalia coordinator, business mentors  Number: 1 for 5 days in 2015  Project phase: DIC 2015  Responsible for content: Business mentors Mr. Mahmoud Jabr</p>	<p>During these workshops the business mentor is responsible for guiding the participants through the actual establishment of their business. The workshops will go through all steps i.e. idea phase, financial issues, market analysis, marketing. It is important that these workshops are participatory so that the participants themselves are involved in the decision making. The business mentors are educators and guide the participants through the process.</p> <p>Also the workshops will result in the actual establishment of a business/or businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A business plan is developed by the participants under the guidance of the business mentors</li> <li>- Participants are familiar with all aspects of establishing a business</li> <li>- actual business(es) are established</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACTIVITY 4:</b>  <b>Exhibitions</b>  Participants: All crafts women, DHIP coordinator (photographer throughout the entire project will document the project)  Number: 2  Project phase: DIC 2016  Responsible for content: DHIP coordinator</p>	<p>In order to sustain a public focus on the project two exhibitions are organised. The exhibitions will display the progress of the participants and will display the products being produced. It will showcase both the design and craftsmanship of the participants as well as the development of their own business.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two exhibitions organised and held in Palestine</li> <li>- Project is documented from beginning to end with photos, texts about the participants and the development of their businesses</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACTIVITY 5:</b>  <b>Designing workshop</b></p>	<p>The women will learn how to stand out as a designer and have their own 'design DNA' in</p>	<p>High quality products ready for the market  Women will learn how</p>

<p>Participants: All crafts women, Danish Designers, DHIP coordinator, Dalia's coordinator</p> <p>Project phase: DIC 2016</p> <p>Responsible for content: Designing Trainers, Tine and Josefine</p>	<p>order to be interesting/ sellable to a given market. They will also learn how to develop designs that are modern but keep their Palestinian spirit and traditions - but in new ways.</p>	<p>present their products and how to sell it.</p>
<p><b>ACTIVITY 6:</b></p> <p><b>Investor meetings</b></p> <p>Participants: All crafts women, business mentors, investors, DHIP coordinator</p> <p>Number: as needed</p> <p>Project phase: DIC 2016</p> <p>Responsible for content: Business mentors</p>	<p>These meetings are to be held at the end of the 2016. As the businesses are progressing and the products are ready for market, the participants will meet with potential investors and present their idea. These meetings will be set up by the business mentors who will also attend the meetings.</p>	<p>- Investment in the newly established businesses secured (to ensure long-term sustainability of the businesses)</p> <p>- Participants gain insight into how they can make their business financially sustainable</p>
<p><b>ACTIVITY 7:</b></p> <p><b>Coaching</b></p> <p>Participants: All crafts women , DHIP coordinator, business mentors, Danish and Palestinian designers/trainers</p> <p>Project phase: DIC 2016+ DIC 2018</p> <p>Responsible for content: Business Mentor, Danish Designers</p>	<p>This activity will extend for two years where the business mentor and the Danish Designers will follow up with the participants on the development of their projects.</p>	<p>Give the support and help to the participants so they develop their own business. Try to start sending their products to Denmark</p>
<p><b>ACTIVITY 8:</b></p> <p><b>Designing workshop</b></p> <p>Participants: All crafts women , DHIP coordinator, Danish designer</p> <p>Project phase: DIC 2016</p> <p>Responsible for content: DHIP coordinator, Danish Mentor designer</p>	<p>This activity could take place during the year of 2016 where a well-known Danish designer can help the women develop their products and maybe give them the chance to send their products to the Danish Market</p>	<p>Ensure to produce high quality products that women can send to the international market</p>
<p><b>ACTIVITY 9:</b></p>	<p>This is a loan box where crafts women can take money out of</p>	<p>Ensure a small amount of money that the</p>

<p><b>Revolving Business Box</b>          Participants: All crafts women , DHIP, Dalia          Project phase: DIC 2017          Responsible for content: DHIP, Dalia</p>	<p>it as a loan and then give it back with no interests and then other ladies can use it again and again.          An internal system will be performed so that we make sure that everything works smoothly and through a system</p>	<p>craftswomen can uses for their small business</p>
<p><b>ACTIVITY 10: Evaluations</b>          Participants: All crafts women , DHIP coordinator, business mentors, Danish and Palestinian designers/trainers,          Number: 2 per year          Project phase: DIC 2015 + DIC 2018          Responsible for content: DHIP coordinator</p>	<p>The project will be evaluated continuously through the trainer and mentor network meetings and through questionnaires to the participants after each workshop.          There will, however, be two main evaluations per year, where the DHIP coordinator will collect all the above mentioned information and compile it into a report to the DHIP program responsible as well as to the trainers and mentors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure proper evaluations are produced and easy to access by DHIP, DRO and mentors/trainers</li> <li>- Ensure that all information is continuously collected and processed.</li> </ul>





## APPENDIX I

Time frame for the 2015, and January 2016

Activity	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
Prepare the Budget	1						
Contacting the partners		16					
Contacting the participants			15				
Signing MoU's			25				
Select Danish Mentors			30				
Select Palestinian trainers			30				
Brain storm session			30	26			
14 days of Design and Production workshop					7,10,12,14,15,17,19,21,24,26,28	1,3,5	
Design workshop Evaluation						5	
5 days of Business workshops						12,15,17,19,22	
Business workshop Evaluation						22	
Exhibition in Ramallah							23
Exhibition in Bethlehem							30



## TARGET GROUPS

As the project is a continuation of DIC 2014, the main target group is already defined. It is, though, important to emphasize that the aim of the project is to empower crafts producers and design graduates which in general are women. As a general rule, DHIP emphasizes gender equality among beneficiaries and partners throughout the programmes, projects, and activities. DHIP is also committed to pay attention to marginalized communities and peripheral areas.

The main target group of the project is the participants from DIC 2014. These are Palestinian crafts women from women collectives in Jericho, Bethlehem and Hebron. The aim for this project is to engage the same number of participants for the entire period from 2015-2018.

The main target group is The Palestinian crafts women come from women collectives in the West Bank i.e. Jericho, Bethlehem and Hebron. They are mainly skilled in traditional embroidery and crafts production and are in many cases responsible for providing vital income for female-headed households in villages and rural areas.

The project also aims to target investors who could be interested in investing financially in the project.

Finally, the project aims to target possible markets where the products of the project can be sold. As the project first and foremost targets Palestinian aesthetics and design, the natural market is Palestine and the Palestinian Diaspora. However, Danish investors will also be approached and as thus opening up the possibility of engaging with the Danish market.

Disclaimer: There are many projects that aim at rethinking and redesigning Palestinian embroidery and crafts. This project aims to reach a group of designers/graduates that is often overlooked in this context namely designers outside of the cultural elite of Ramallah and Jerusalem. The design graduates participating in this project do not come from a privileged background but from rural and traditional backgrounds.

## MEDIA PLAN

The project will be followed throughout by a photographer/videographer who will ensure visual documentation. This material must be high quality to be able to attract media and to be used in communications materials.

DHIP will use the documentation for their own media portfolio (website, social media and prints) as well as pitch stories about the project to relevant media in Denmark and Palestine.

The project will be “on display” twice through exhibitions in Denmark and Palestine which will showcase product samples, photos and stories of the participants and the development of the small scale business. For each of the exhibitions a separate media plan will be developed to ensure media interest.

The exhibitions will also be the basis for the production of a coffee table book about Palestinian design, which will focus on DIC. The photos and stories collected for the exhibitions will be reproduced in the coffee table book.

## PARTICIPANTS/PARTNERS

The participants will be the “graduates” from DIC 2014. These are 1) women from women collectives in Hebron, Bethlehem and Jericho all working with traditional crafts mainly embroidery.

The designers/trainers will be the designers that participated in DIC 2014; Tine Winther, Josefine Gilbert.

The business mentors will be found through the Business Women Forum in Ramallah as well as through DHIP contacts in Denmark. These will include small-business owners, established

designers. These will be found during DIC 2015 based on the needs and wants of the participants (see ACTIVITY 1).

### **PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY**

The aim of the project is that it will continue after the end of the project period. This will be ensured through the framework of the project where a network of mentors and trainers is established to support the participants and ensure sustainability. The participants will have to present their business plans including finalised products to professional investors and in that way obtain financial support for their business. This will be done to test the sustainability of the business plans and products while also ensuring that the project takes place in reality and thus that the outcome of the project will be that the businesses are able to continue after the end of the project.

In order to document this DHIP will follow up with the participants and the network semi-annually five years after the end of the project (in 2018).

### **RISKS AND CHALLENGES**

Working in the Palestinian context holds major challenges. The on-going Israeli occupation and political conflict bring an array of limitations and restrictions, which can influence the implementation of projects and activities. The unstable political situation can lead to sudden surge in violence and cause unexpected restrictions in movement and accessibility. This significantly complicates logistical procedures, including access to equipment and risk of denial of entry for participants from outside. These risks differ in level of intensity depending on the geographic area, the nature of the project and the timing. Some of the major risks and challenges for this project have been described below.

**Visa/permit Delays or Denials:** This could apply to both Palestinians and Danes who might be involved in exchange projects that require travelling. It is important to maintain enough time for visa and permit requests such that delays and denials can be overcome without the need to cancel the activity.

**Personal obstacles:** The previous project DIC 2014 had varied experiences with participants not showing up due to work or family issues. As the commitment of the participants is crucial for this project this should be addressed early on and commitment from participants should be secured through agreements, and a 'plan B' should be thought-out and articulated providing alternative solutions in cases where people withdraw for any given reason. It is essential to immediately start discussions with them and weigh the possibilities, such that a different scenario can be prepared in case the project cannot continue with its previous participants.

**Differentiation:** Although the idea of modernizing the design approach and introducing traditional embroidery as a base for it is rather new, the Palestinian community encompasses numerous initiatives that seek to develop traditional and heritage crafts into an income generating small businesses ideas. It is essential that this project establish its differentiation among other initiatives that might be perceived rather similar.

**Reaching markets:** Access to local, regional and international markets is a complicated and hard task. It is important to define reasonable goals and expectation and to define the right partners. Borders, mobility and customs stay a risk in such a project.

## Design in Context

### Evaluation Report – Design in Context 2015-2017

#### Executive Summary

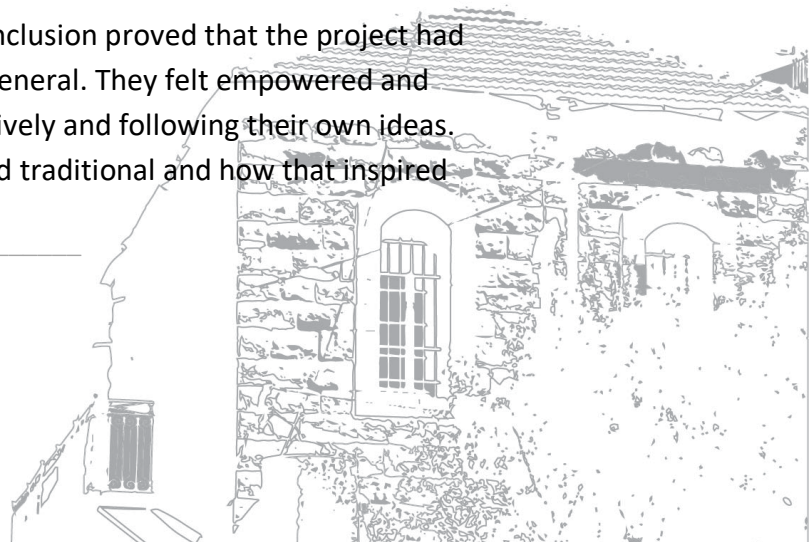
The project Design In Context II is based on the project Design in Context which was implemented by DHIP between 2012-2014 as a two-year design project supported by KVINFO and in partnership with Dalia Association and the Fashion and Textile institute in Beit Sahour as well as the Royal Danish School of Design in Copenhagen. The project aimed at energizing the field of design in Palestine and facilitated an exchange of expertise and experience between Danish and Palestinian design professionals, who conducted workshops for Palestinian design students and craftswomen. The project results were shown in an exhibition of embroidered shirts including a display of the creative design process of each participant.

The project brought together modern design practices and traditional embroidery techniques in an attempt to rethink the use of traditional Palestinian embroidery and the possibility of utilizing it in a contemporary context with a possibly broader appeal and a potential for generating income. The project aimed to build relationships between design practitioners in Palestine and Palestinian craftswomen hoping that they could use each other in the future.

The evaluation following the project conclusion proved that the project had been successful for the participants in general. They felt empowered and appreciated learning how to work creatively and following their own ideas. They appreciated the mix of modern and traditional and how that inspired

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them. Two main needs that were not sufficiently covered in the project, were, however, expressed by the participants:

- 1) a need to further improve skills of production focusing mainly on know-how on finishing a product, and
- 2) a need to be able to start and run a small-scale business that could provide a sustainable income for the participants.

Those two needs expressed by the participants are the basis for the continuation of Design In Context II, and the following project description is founded in those two needs.

**Findings:**

**2015:**

- Several brainstorming sessions with the participating ladies and Dalia organization
- One design workshop with a local designer Khawla Al Khateeb
- One business training was held
- 

**2016:**

- 2 exhibitions for the ladies products
- Several meetings with organizations that give small loans.
- Two designing workshops were held in Bethlehem with the Danish designers Tine Winther and Josefine Giblert.

**2017:**

- A final exhibition in Denmark

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## **Preparation**

Since this is a continuation project preparation started early 2015, it started with writing the project description, and it continued with the brainstorming sessions with the participating ladies and Dalia organization, these sessions led to formulating the sequence of implementing the project, and what are the things that the ladies would like to continue learning and working on.

- **Brain storming sessions:** (through the implementation of the whole project)

These sessions took place before every milestone in the project, during the preparation period, it was very useful for the project since this project is aiming to develop many aspect of skills for the participating ladies, so it was very important that they are part of the decision making, this helps a lot with the commitment from the ladies towards the project, and also in making the participants enjoy being part of the project. And since we are working on the sustainability of this project it was very important to involve the ladies of what they want to learn and work on

Brainstorming sessions took place before each period of implementing the project, the ladies were the major component of these meetings since they are the core stone of this project.

Theses meeting were milestones in implementing the project so the participating ladies have the right to decide what they want from the project and not force them to do things that they are not interested in or can't work on, so it was important to merge them in all the aspects of the preparation.

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## Recommendations

It is recommended to include the participants in the project in the preparation cycle so they participate in the decision making, which will affect the project a lot, and affect the commitment of the participants.

- **The desing workshop with Khalwla Al Khateeb November 2015**

This design workshop was very important for the process of the project since the participating ladies learned a lot from it, they learned a lot about new stiches and new designs that helped them develop their embroidery skills, the workshop ended with 2 exhibitions held in Ramallah and Bethlehem, which was the first step for them to start thinking of their own business.

- **Business training with Mahmoud Jabr December 2015**

5 days of basic business training with the trainer Mahmud Jabr took place in Bethlehem with the ladies, they learned the very basic things on how to start your own business and what are the major things that they need to know in order to be able to start their small business.

They also learned basics about the financial issues and dealing with the receipts and financial papers, how to work on a small budget, how to calculate the profit for their products and then how to do the marketing to sell the products.

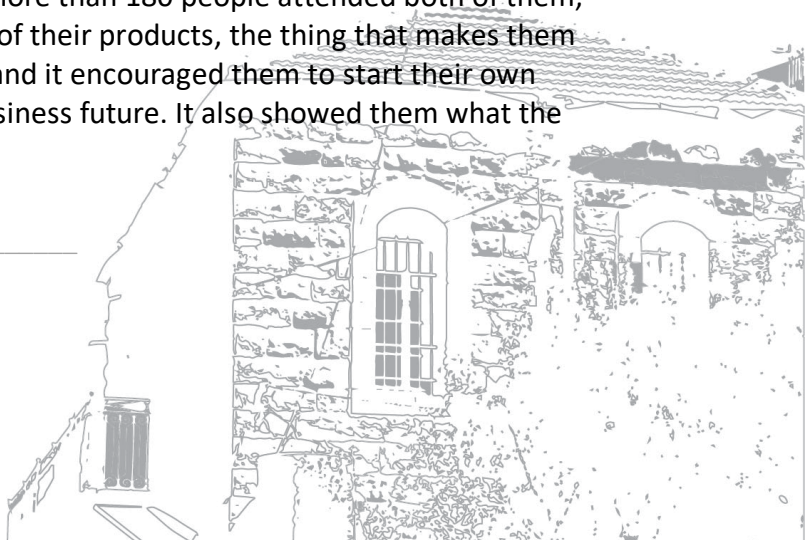
- **Exhibitions January 2016**

2 exhibitions were held to show the products of the ladies, one in Ramallah and one in Bethlehem, after they finished the training with Khawla Al Khateeb, they took some time and everyone worked on preparing some production that qualified them to be part of the exhibitions.

The 2 exhibitions were very successful more than 180 people attended both of them, and all the ladies managed to sell some of their products, the thing that makes them feel proud and happy about their work and it encouraged them to start their own business, and do something for their business future. It also showed them what the

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things that have the most demand in the market, and what people like and prefer to buy.

- **The design workshop with Tine and Josefine February 2016**

This 5 days' workshop took the ladies to another type of thinking, they started the workshop with the very basic Palestinian patterns, that the ladies think they are very traditional Palestinian, then they worked with Tine and Josefine on developing the patterns and transform them into a modern patterns with Danish touch in the patterns and the colors, each one of the ladies worked on a special design for a tote bag (which is now very common and modern), with a little bit of embroidery, which will make the bag more modern and fashionable with a Palestinian and Danish touch. They worked very hard on the detailed finish for their product and they learned that when they want to copy the product it has to be very exact, so they can reach a high quality production, which will qualify them to reach a point where they can sell their products in the international market.

- **Meeting with ACAD September 2016**

The ladies had the chance to meet the Arab Center for Agricultural Development in Ramallah, which is a center specialized in financing small enterprises. The Center identified its general objectives in developing the agricultural sector and helping small farmers through financing, marketing and technical support, but also helping all sectors of investments and small business.

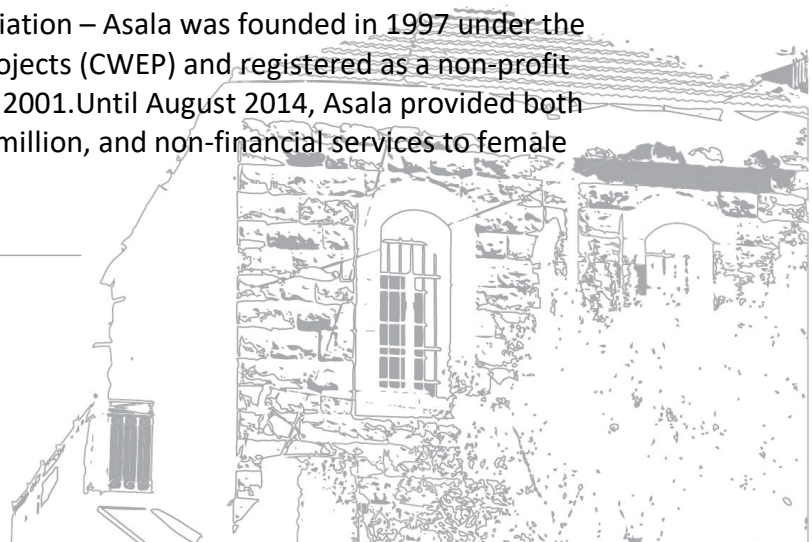
They had the chance to know more about the center and what they offer, and the loan system that they have.

- **Meeting with ASALA September 2016**

The Palestinian Businesswomen's Association – Asala was founded in 1997 under the name Center for Women's Economic Projects (CWEP) and registered as a non-profit organization under the current name in 2001. Until August 2014, Asala provided both small loans, totaling more than USD 35 million, and non-financial services to female micro-entrepreneurs.

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The ladies also had the chance to meet with Asala, to know more about their loans system and the help they offer to small business

- **Business women Forum registration**

DHIP managed to introduce the ladies to the Business Women Forum, and they have been registered in the organization, which will give them the possibility to participate in lots of trainings in different fields (business, designing, marketing, packaging, and many others), this will give them the chance also to participate in all the exhibitions (local and international) that BWF conduct every year.

- **Fabric hunting December 2016**

Doha – the coordinator of the project- and Josefine –the Danish designer- went on a fabric hunting trip in Ramallah and Nablus to look for Denim fabric similar to the fabric that Josefine find in Denmark and that the ladies worked on in the first workshop, and will work on in the second workshop, we managed to find similar fabric in Nablus, and the ladies used it for the tote bags and the new products early 2017.

- **Seconded Design workshop with Josefine, December 2016**

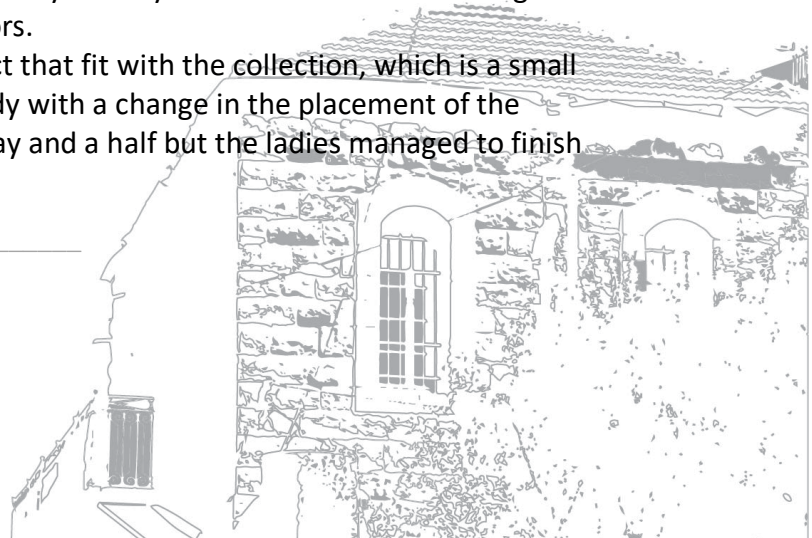
This was a continuation workshop for the first design workshop that took place early 2016, the ladies continued working on the same design for the tote bags, with a change in the color palette, so it is more narrow, with less colors, and more coherent, within the collection.

The ladies were ready for the change in the colors, and they already produced in the first days of the workshop a new tote bags on a new kind of fabric, with the new colors, they kept the same motives that they already worked on in the first design workshop, but with a change in the colors.

The ladies also worked on a new product that fit with the collection, which is a small purse with the same motive for each lady with a change in the placement of the embroidery. This was on the very last day and a half but the ladies managed to finish their products.

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- **The Exhibition in Denmark (March 2017):**

The ladies worked on copying the 2 products that they developed in the designing workshops in 2016, each lady produced 4 small purses, 6 tote bags, which was sent to Denmark to be exhibit in the last event for Design in context which is the final exhibition.

All in all, the feedback was very positive form the people who attended the exhibition. It was good that the collection had a broad selection of designs and that they were different but still in the same color tones. Many people liked the idea of mixing old techniques with the 'new' fabric and they also thought that the collection fitted well into the Danish market.

Tine and Josefine managed to work and organize this exhibition in a place called VESS in Copenhagen, the 2 days exhibition managed to draw the attention of 100 people, who visited the exhibition and bough lots of bags, and knew about the project and about the ladies individually through a small booklet that was produced.

In addition to the positive comments about the bags and about the project, there were also some criticism, and some of the products were more popular than others, these comments and details were taken into consideration and were sent to the ladies to develop their work more, it was more of a pilot for the Danish House, Tine and Josefine, and the ladies for any similar activities, and it was also something that the ladies learned more about the international market, the needs, the quality, the designs, colors,,, etc.

More than half of the bags were sold and the money was sent to the ladies, which is one of the major objectives of this project, to help the ladies establish their own business, and manage to sell their products.

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**Sustainability plan:**

The design in context project has been running since 2012, and finished early 2017, which means that DHIP will leave the participants after almost 5 years, and to leave them with no sustainability plan means that all the work that DHIP have done for them will collapse, so there should be a sustainability plan to leave the ladies with, and there are several tips that DHIP did to ensure that the ladies continue their work:

- I. DHIP have registered the 8 ladies at the Business Women Forum, this Forum will ensure the sustainability of the trainings and exhibitions, and will also open some doors for the ladies to apply for grants, loans and projects, which will ensure the development of the ladies in their work and production.
- II. DHIP have introduced the ladies to ACAD (Arab Center for Agricultural Development), this organization's main scoop is to help small business owners to develop their projects, and they can help them with some trainings and will open the door for them also to be able to apply for small loans that can help develop their projects.
- III. DHIP have introduced the ladies to Asala, a Palestinian NGO that helps women in developing their projects through small loans.
- IV. DHIP will try to help the ladies with any connections that can be done in order to make sure that the participating ladies are continuing their projects and develop it.
- V. The 2 last products that the ladies worked on in 2016, will also hopefully continue to produce, DHIP will help the ladies to send these products to the Danish market, DHIP will try to keep the connection between the ladies and the Danish designers and the Danish market.
- VI. DHIP have introduced the ladies to some of the stores in Palestine so we make sure that they have places to exhibit their products in.

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## **Appendix table 1: Organization and detailed profile description of informants**

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I) Project participants and beneficiaries: Two Palestinian crafts women and two Danish designers who participated in the DHIP project Design in Context from the very beginning of the project start in 2012 until the finalization in 2017.

*Sara Hasasneh* is a Palestinian project participant, hence beneficiary, in Design in Context and crafts women. She was a part of the project from the beginning in 2012 until the finalization in 2017. She works at a workshop in the city al-Ubeidiya, which she is managing together with two other women. Sara and her partner Samiha, which will be introduced in the following section, became a part of the project due to their engagement in a project funded by the UN (initiated in 2006), and their affiliation to the development organization Dalia Association.

*Samiha Rabaya* from al-Ubeidiya has the same structural background as Sara and became a part of Design in Context because of her acquaintance with Sara. They established their workshop while they were engaged with the project and works on a everyday basis to provide handmade designer goods for local shops and sometimes international organizations.

*Josefine Gilbers* is a Danish fashion designer and engaged herself in the project in 2012 due to a request from a teacher from the Danish Design School. Josefine is an educated textile designer, works and lives in Copenhagen where her workshop is located. Josefine is an entrepreneurial self-employed designer who started her own business some years ago.

*Tine Winther* is also an educated fashion designer from the Danish Design School, and she was engaged in the Design in Context due to the same reason as Josefine. Today, Tine works for a Danish knit company at their main office in Copenhagen where she also lives.

II) Staff members of the DHIP

Interviews with two staff members from the DHIP who played a key role in the project and took part in initiating, monitoring and finalizing the project. As mentioned in the introduction of this study, the independent, non-profit organization the DHIP works on a cultural mandate to promote and ensure cultural exchange and dialogue between Palestinian and Danish individuals, organizations and companies on all societal levels (dhip.ps).

*Doha Jabr* is a Project Manager at the DHIP and was directly responsible for the implementation, evaluation and finalization of Design in Context throughout the project period of five years. Her position in DHIP requires her to take part of every aspects and processes of the cultural projects she is responsible for. She has been engaged in several cultural projects in DHIP since she became employed in 2012.

*Lone Bildsøe Lassen* is the Director of the DHIP and has been since 2015. Lone is overall accountable for all the cultural project of the DHIP, financial sustainability of the organization and the group of Palestinian and Danish staff members. Finally, she answers directly to the board of directors.

### III) Cooperation partners

The following section presents the profile of two informants from respectively the Dalia Association (DA) and the Business Women Forum (BWF). Both organizations are collaborators with the DHIP and has an advanced focus on women and development in the oPt.

*Aisha Mansour* is the Executive Director at the DA and has been working for the organization in seven years. She has fifteen years of experience within the field of development and especially health policy and public administration. The DA is a local NGO determined to mobilize and utilize resources which can empower and establish an independent and strong civil society in the oPt. Further, the DA works on women's programmes to create local engagement and entrepreneurial sustainable initiatives in local Palestinian communities (dalia.ps). The DA assisted the Palestinian project participants from Design in Context with workshops and supervision throughout the project period.

*Jumana Salous* is Programme Manager at the BWF, which is a national and non-profit Palestinian women's NGO established in 2006. BWF is seeking to strengthen business women's leadership in the

Palestinian economy by building up capacity and encourage women to be entrepreneurs. They target women to join their business plan programme for women-owned SME's and to help promote and develop their skills within local handicrafts (bwf.ps). The BWF supported the project Design in Context with supervision and counseling concerning legal rights of business for the Palestinian project participants.

#### IV) Experts from central organizations in the field of gender and development in the oPt

Interviews with two pertinent informants from local Palestinian organizations, which explicitly focus on the empowerment of local Palestinian women through different development operations.

*Sandie Hanna* is Project Coordinator at the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWSO) and has been working for the organization since September 2017. She has professional experiences with development operations with a human rights-based approach. The PWWSO was established in 1981 as a union for Palestinian working women, today the organization is a non-profit NGO working to promote women's rights as an integral part of human rights and builds its mandate around several international UN conventions such as the CEDAW. The PWWSOs objectives are to ensure women's participation and involvement in all societal levels, and to strengthen self-sustainability through advocacy and trainings (pwwsd.org).

*Nisrine Swailim* is the Business Development and Quality Assurance Manager at Palestinian Businesswomen's Association (ASALA). She has been working for the organization since 2010 and thus, experienced a change in the organizational structure when the request from the Palestinian National Authority (PA) demanded the organization to register as a financial institution instead of a NGO to ensure its survival. Thus, ASALA established a sister organization called ASALA - Palestinian Business Women's Association to ensure the work with women's empowerment and development. ASALA works with Palestinian women who have limited financial and social resources to realize their legal and social rights. Thus, ASALA provides services to women micro-entrepreneurs and needs-based services to marginalized women by focusing on capacity building and access to market (asala-pal.org).

**Appendix table 2: Overview of informants sociological profile**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Insight hoped to gain from interview</b>
Samiha Rabaya	52	F	Craftswomen	Participants of Design in Context	How the project affected Samiha's livelihood and created potentials of empowerment
Sara Hasasneh	56	F	Craftswomen	Participants of Design in Context	How the project affected Sara's livelihood and created potentials of empowerment.
Tine Winther	28	F	Designer at Danish company	Participants of Design in Context	How the project affected Tine's livelihood and created potentials of empowerment.
Josefine Gilbers	30	F	Self-employed Designer	Participants of Design in Context	How the project affected Josefine's



					livelihood and created potentials of empowerment.
Doha Jabra	34	F	Project manager at the DHIP	Staff / DHIP	Assumptions on gender in the DHIPs project, and the DHIPs strategical engagement with gender and international norms.
Lone Bildsoe Lassen	54	F	Director at the DHIP	Staff / DHIP	Assumptions on gender in the DHIPs project, and the DHIPs strategical engagement with gender and international norms.
Aisha Mansour	42	F	Executive Director The Dalia Association (DA)	Partner / DHIP	Discover the potential of empowering women through development and local NGOs

Jumana Salous	32	F	Programme advisor at Business Women Forum Women Palestine (BWF)	Partner / DHIP	Discover the potential of empowering through development.
Sandie Hanna	29	F	Advisor at Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWSD)	Expert from the field of gender and development in the oPt.	Discover the potential of empowering women through development.
Nisrine Swailim	31	F	Business Development and Quality Assurance Manager at Asala	Expert from the field of gender and development in the oPt.	Discover the potential of empowering women through development.

### Appendix table 3: Semi-structured interview questions

Project participants and beneficiaries (Palestinian project participants)

CATEGORY	QUESTIONS
<b>Background and identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Describe your private background: Where did you grow up and what do you do?</li><li>- How do you consider your role in your family?</li></ul>
<b>Association with NGO work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-How did you become engage in development work?</li><li>-What is your opinion about NGOs in Palestine?</li></ul>
<b>The DHIP project 'Design in Context'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Describe your role in the project Design in Context</li><li>- How will you describe the synergy between you and the two Danish Designers?</li><li>- After the project was finalized, how can you employ the experiences from the project period i your current work?</li></ul>
<b>Potential of empowering women through the project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Did the project change your livelihood and living conditions in any way?</li><li>- What kind of obstacle are you facing on a daily basis concerning your work?</li></ul>
<b>Gender equality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What kind of issues are women struggling with on a local and a national level?</li></ul> <p>What do you think of the current situation in terms of gender equality in Palestine?</p>

Project participants and beneficiaries (Danish designers)

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**CATEGORY**

**QUESTIONS**

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**Background**

-Describe your private background: Where did you grow up and what do you do?

**Association with NGO work**

-How did you become engage in development work?

**The DHIP project  
'Design in Context'**

-Describe your role in the project Design in Context  
- How will you describe the synergy between you and the two Danish Designers?  
-After the project was finalized, how can you employ the experiences from the project period i your current work?

**Potential of empowering  
women through the  
project**

-Did the project change your livelihood and living conditions in any way?  
-What kind of opportunities and future prospects did the project provide for you and the Palestinian project participants?

Staff members from the DHIP

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**CATEGORY**

**QUESTIONS**

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**The DHIP project  
'Design in Context'**

- Describe your role in the project Design in Context?
- Why was the project initiated? What are the thoughts behind The project?
- Can you explain the relationship between the DHIP and the Dalia Association?

**Potential of empowering women through the project**

- What kind of business opportunities did the project provide for the Danish and Palestinian participants?
- How can the DHIP promote and ensure women's empowerment through projects?
- To which extent does the DHIP take universal human rights norms and standards into consideration in programming?
- How did the DHIP ensure sustainability and capacity building after the project was finalized?

**Gender equality**

- What do you think of the current situation in terms of gender equality in Palestine?
- How can NGO's participate in promoting gender justice in Palestine?
- Do you see any similarities between the struggle for gender equality in a Danish context and in a Palestinian context?

The DHIP project partners (Dalia Association and Business Women Forum-Palestine)

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**CATEGORY****QUESTIONS**

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**The Dalia Association**

-What kind of work does the Dalia Association/BWF engage in?

**/BWF**

-What is the relationship between the DHIP and the Dalia Association?

**The DHIP project  
'Design in Context'**

-Why did the Dalia Association/BWF decide to engage in this project?

-How does the Dalia Association/BWF ensure sustainability and capacity building after a project is finalized?

**Potential of empowering  
women through the  
project**

-What kind of business opportunities did the project provide for the Danish and Palestinian participants?

-How can the Dalia Association promote and ensure change through projects?

-Do you consider the DHIP as an organization providing women in general with empowering tools to change their reality?

**Gender equality**

-What do you think of the current situation in terms of gender equality in Palestine?

-How can NGO's participate in promoting gender justice in Palestine?

-In what way does the Dalia Association engage in promoting opportunities for Palestinian women?

External experts in the field of gender and development in the oPt.

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**CATEGORY****QUESTIONS**

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**Local NGOs and the  
Relationship with  
International donors**

-Explain the relationship between local NGOs and int. donors?  
-What kind of obstacles/potential do you identify in this  
nexus?

**The potential of  
empowering women  
through development  
initiatives**

-What is the potential of empowering women through dev.?  
-Explain the relationship between local Palestinian women  
and NGOs, which focuses on the empowerment of women  
-How do normative standards on gender equality affect the  
work on NGOs?

**Gender equality**

-What kind of issues are women struggling with on a local and  
a national level?  
-Do you think more needs to be done in terms of gender  
equality in Palestine?  
-In terms of intersectionality, how do you think gender  
intersect with other inequalities in Palestine?

**Appendix table 4: Three levels of data**

<b>I) Institutional/governmental level</b>	<b>II) Organizational level</b>	<b>III) Operational level</b>
UNWomen/PAs <i>Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy: Promoting Gender Equality and Equity 2011-2013</i> (2011)	The DHIPs <i>Project Description of Design in Context</i> (2015)	Interview I, <i>Project participant and beneficiary, Palestinian crafts women</i> (2017)
DANIDAs <i>Palestine Country Programme 2016-2020</i> (2016)	The DHIPs <i>Final Evaluation Report - Design in Context</i> (2017)	Interview II, <i>Project participant and beneficiary, Palestinian crafts women</i> (2017)
DANIDAs <i>Denmark-Palestine Country Policy Paper 2016-2020</i> (2016)	Interview V, <i>The DHIP staff member</i> (2017)	
Interview VIII, <i>External expert in Development and Gender, ASALA</i> (2017)	Interview VI, <i>The DHIP staff members (Director)</i> (2017)	
Interview X, <i>External expert in Development and Gender, PWWSD</i> (2017)	Interview VII, <i>Cooperation partner, Dalia Association</i> (2017)	
	Interview IX, <i>Cooperation partner, BWFP</i> (2017)	