

**Translating for Palestine as Self-development: A Translational Perspective on
Human Rights and International Development**

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Abstract

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This thesis examines the translational practices of Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs) in Palestine and their role in implementing human rights development projects. By conducting semi-structured interviews with representatives from various LNGOs and engaging in an interdisciplinary dialogue between Translation Studies and Development Studies, the research analyzes how these organizations translate and adapt international development concepts to align with local needs and values. This study critiques the conventional perception of translation as a solely linguistic transfer, which often presumes the universality of human rights concepts and overlooks the complexities of cultural and contextual differences. It argues for an expanded definition of translation that encompasses deeper engagement, negotiation, and reciprocity in intercultural exchanges.

This research positions translation as a critical epistemic paradigm for understanding and managing the flow of knowledge, values, and terms of references between different contexts, particularly in asymmetrical power dynamics characteristic of international development. By reconceptualizing translation as both an archetype or a perspective and an analytical tool, this study explores how LNGOs navigate tensions between donor expectations and local realities, often reframing human rights principles to resonate more effectively with the Palestinian context. This process extends beyond linguistic conversion to include broader discursive and strategic engagements, highlighting the agency of LNGOs in shaping development discourse.

The findings demonstrate that LNGOs' translational practices contribute to a more nuanced understanding of human rights and development, emphasizing the potential for translation as a broader concept to facilitate self-development and empowerment. This thesis explores an interdisciplinary approach that builds on the common assumptions and paradigms underlying both TS and DS to foster a participatory, context-sensitive development model. By centering local voices and perspectives, this model aims to support the self-determination of Palestinians and enhance the effectiveness of human rights initiatives.

Résumé

Traduire pour la Palestine comme Forme d'auto-développement: Une Perspective

Traductive sur les Droits Humains et le Development International.

Cette thèse examine les pratiques de traduction, au sens large, des organisations non gouvernementales locales (ONGL) en Palestine et leur rôle dans la mise en œuvre de projets de développement des droits de l'homme. En menant des entretiens semi-structurés avec des représentants de diverses ONG locales et en engageant un dialogue interdisciplinaire entre la traductologie et les études de développement, la présente recherche analyse la manière dont ces organisations traduisent et adaptent les concepts de développement international pour les aligner sur les valeurs, les termes de référence, et les besoins locaux. Cette étude critique la perception conventionnelle de traduction en tant que simple transfert linguistique, qui présume souvent de l'universalité des concepts des droits de l'homme et néglige les complexités des différences culturelles et contextuelles. Elle plaide en faveur d'une définition élargie de la traduction qui englobe un engagement, une négociation et une réciprocité plus profonds dans les échanges interculturels entre les bailleurs de fonds et les ONG locales.

Cette recherche positionne la traduction comme un paradigme épistémique critique pour comprendre et gérer le flux de connaissances et de valeurs entre les cultures, en particulier dans les dynamiques de pouvoir asymétriques qui caractérisent le développement international. En reconceptualisant la traduction comme une perspective et un outil d'analyse de l'action développementale, cette étude explore la manière dont les ONGL naviguent entre les attentes des donateurs et les réalités locales, en recadrant souvent les principes des droits de l'homme pour qu'ils résonnent plus efficacement dans le contexte palestinien. Ce processus va au-delà de la

conversion linguistique pour inclure des engagements discursifs et stratégiques plus larges, mettant en évidence l'agencéité des ONGL dans l'élaboration du discours sur le développement.

Les résultats démontrent que les pratiques de traduction des ONGL contribuent à une compréhension plus nuancée des droits de l'homme et du développement, soulignant le potentiel de la traduction pour faciliter l'auto-développement et l'autonomisation. Cette thèse explore une approche interdisciplinaire qui s'appuie sur les hypothèses et paradigmes communs sous-jacents à la traductologie et aux études de développement pour favoriser un modèle de développement participatif et sensible au contexte. En mettant l'accent sur les voix et les perspectives locales, ce modèle vise à soutenir l'autodétermination des Palestiniens et à améliorer l'efficacité des initiatives en matière de droits de l'homme.

To Peace

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List of Figures

Figure 1. The broadened definition of translation.....	23
Figure 2. Number of Official Palestinian Refugee Camps as Recognized by UNRWA by Country.....	95
Figure 3. Percentage Distribution of Palestinian Refugees by the Residential Country, 2017.....	95

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Theoretical Grounding of the Research.....	5
1.2 Aim of the Research.....	17
1.3 Hypotheses and Assumptions.....	17
1.4 General Methods	18
1.5 Contribution to Knowledge	21
1.6 Thesis Structure	23
Chapter 2: Literature Review	24
2.1 Introduction	24
2.2 International Development Meaning, Theories, Origin, and Discourse.	25
2.2.1 International development meaning and theories.....	26
2.2.2 How is development measured?.....	36
2.2.3 Development as a discourse.....	43
2.3 Human Rights	52
2.3.1 The universality versus relativism of human rights.....	56
2.3.2 The interpretation and localization of human rights.....	59
2.4 International Development and Human Rights	61
2.5 Translation Studies and International Development Studies	64
Chapter 3: International Development in Palestine as a Context for Translation	73
3.1 The Importance of Context in Translation Research.....	74
3.2 Palestine as a Context for Development.....	75
3.2.1 The historical context.....	75
3.2.2 Existence: Current situation	77
3.2.3 The Palestinian society: Population, culture, and education	79
3.3 Hopes: What do Palestinians Want?	80
3.4 Research on International Development in Palestine.....	84
3.5 Human Rights Context in West Bank and Gaza.....	89
3.6 Human Rights Non-Governmental Organizations	96
3.7 Human and Human Women's Rights NGOs in Palestine	99
Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework	103
4.1 Introduction and Roadmap	103
4.2 Problematizing Linguistic Translation Based on Natural Equivalence	105

4.2.1 The need for a broadened concept of translation (studies)	110
4.3 Broadening the Concept of Translation and the Scope of TS.....	118
4.3.1 Turns in Translation Studies TS.....	123
4.3.2 Translation as a model and an analytical category	129
4.3.3 Translation as a heuristic tool.....	136
4.3.4 Translation for epistemic justice	140
4.3.5 Translation as an ethical responsible action	146
4.4 Interdisciplinarity and Translation Studies (TS)	148
4.5 Disciplinary Common Ground between TS and DS.....	153
4.6 Conceptualizing Translation as Viewed by This Research.....	165
4.7 Translation as Self-development.....	169
4.8 The Appropriateness of the Broadened Meaning of Translation to the International Development Context.....	171
Chapter 5: Data and Methodology	173
5.1 Research Methodology	173
5.2 Data Collection.....	176
5.3 Challenges and Limitations	178
5.4 Data Analysis	182
Chapter 6: Presenting the Findings.....	187
6.1 Thematic Presentation of the Findings	187
6.2. Answering Research Questions	210
Chapter 7: Discussion, Conclusion, and Further Steps	226
7.1 Introduction	226
7.2 Discussion and Conclusions.....	228
7.3 Lessons Learned.....	237
7.4 Further Steps.....	238
Appendices.....	240
Appendix 1: Certificate of Ethics Approval	240
Appendix 2: Consent Form.....	241
Appendix 3: Interview Questions	244
Appendix 4: The list of interviewed LNGOs	245
Appendix 5: The Historical Context	247
References	253

Chapter 1: Introduction

My doctoral research is deeply rooted in both personal and professional experiences. On a personal level, my attention to international aid began in childhood as I walked home from school each day, passing through the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank and frequently observing people queuing for aid packages from UNRWA trucks. Many kind women would often hand me a small can of cheese. Back then, my father, who served as the physician of the UNRWA camp clinic, consistently expressed his frustration at seeing Palestinians reliant on aid for over forty years. As I pen this thesis, the dependence of Palestinians on aid from UNRWA and other donors persists more than ever before. Professionally, my experience was shaped by over fifteen years of work as a translator within international development initiatives in Palestine. My primary responsibilities included translating project proposals between Arabic, English, and German to support local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs) in securing development funding.

The impetus for my research emerged when I observed a clear difference among LNGOs within the proposals I translated. While some strategically embraced development-specific concepts and arguments stipulated by donors' call for proposals to enhance the prospects of acceptance and funding, others worked on modifying translations to make them more adept to the Palestinian context. This divergence was evident in instances where LNGOs opted to transform concepts such as "empowerment of Women" to "empowerment of women under occupation" or entirely alter fundamental ideas, exemplified by the shift from "gender equality" to "inclusion of all society". Accordingly, many LNGOs lead efforts and actions among the local government institutions, translators, beneficiaries, and donors to navigate these nuanced linguistic and conceptual alterations, requiring intricate negotiations to align donor cultural a priori with local cultural context and terminology to communicate the nuanced developmental aspirations of the

Palestinian populace. These negotiations often failed to convey mutually agreed-upon concepts and ideas, resulting in LNGOs refusing funds from specific donors or encountering fund denial due to incongruities in expressed donors' development targets—whether consciously or not.

As a translator, I have identified two key issues in negotiating meanings within development project proposals, particularly human rights-related ones. Firstly, relying solely on linguistic translation—even when it seeks culturally equivalent expressions—often fails to adequately convey Human Rights (HR) concepts in ways that align with or gain acceptance in local frameworks. This approach risks presenting these concepts as universally acknowledged while neglecting the critical differences between languages, cultures, and contexts. Secondly, the process of linguistic translation and the ensuing tensions and work done around it shed significant light on the different perspectives among the international and local partners of international development, elucidating aspects of culture but mostly the challenges and aspirations of the local populace and context.

The study area, which is the focus of this research, is usually referred to as the occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), which is an area that is hard to define politically or geographically. However, should we refer to the United Nations definitions and related resolutions, politically, Palestine is a “Permanent Observer State”¹ at the UN. The OPT is neither a state nor a fragile state in the traditional sense, making the application of international aid principles complex (Ibrahim & Beaudet, 2012). Geographically, it can be defined as East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Authority (PA) hopes to establish a universally recognized state in these

¹ Right now, Palestine is a “Permanent Observer State” at the UN, enjoying the status that allows it to participate in all of the Organization's proceedings, except for voting on draft resolutions and decisions in its main organs and bodies, from the [Security Council](https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148351) to the General Assembly and its six main committees. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148351>

areas. Currently, these areas are “occupied” (controlled) in various ways by the Israelis (Webb, 2015, p. 123). Palestinians need permits from the Israeli authorities to move between them. The Oslo Accords (1993) between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Israelis led to the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which had limited administrative responsibilities but lacked core state functions such as control over land and borders (Ibrahim & Beaudet, 2012). Since Oslo, the OPT has received significant international aid, becoming one of the largest recipients per capita in the world. International goals emphasize aid effectiveness, state-building, and conflict prevention (Ibrahim & Beaudet, 2012). Currently, the establishment of a Palestinian state appears to be an increasingly distant goal, with the conflict escalating to unprecedented levels.

Consequently, this study argues that the challenges inherent in the development landscape in Palestine, as a stateless colonized territory, impel a broader array of translators and cultural mediators’ roles to fulfill their objectives and duties within the milieu of international development and in such a complex landscape. Central inquiries revolve around these objectives: articulating and translating international development concepts congruously with the target context and collectively endorsed by local development partners. Furthermore, as a field that engages not only diverse cultures, religions, and knowledge systems but also different ways of seeing the Palestinian issue, translation and the efforts of cultural mediators, specifically Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGO), to adapt or modify development tools and contents, are expected to offer valuable insights. These insights may help understand and analyze various challenges and actions related to translating and implementing development, providing perspectives for international development practices. Examining the actions of LNGOs in translating development initiatives can provide valuable insights and strategies for leveraging local knowledge to enhance

development solutions and initiatives, hopefully informing the donors' practices in international development. I hope to contribute to making local knowledge and struggles emerge, as articulated by Santos in 'The Sociology of Absences and the Sociology of Emergences' in various works, including his publications (Santos, 2002; 2005; 2014; 2016, 2018; 2020; 2023).

Therefore, this study argues for a broadened understanding of the concept and practices of translation to work as a perspective and practice capable of fostering self-development or, in other words, supporting the locals in transitioning from traditional forms of development to supported self-development. This inclusive view of translation can extend to cultural exchange, intercultural communication, and the negotiations of differences between diverse contexts where transferring knowledge into local contexts is seen from a translational perspective. Implicit in this proposition is the assertion that translation, construed as a lens, a heuristic (Basalamah, 2020), and an analytical tool (Bachmann-Medick, 2009, 2013), can furnish insights crucial to the realm of international development, thereby contributing to a more nuanced and locally resonant development aligned with the perspectives and aspirations of the local populace. Thus, development, in this sense, is construed as an act of solidarity with targeted cultures, representing a form of empowerment of countries to perform self-development. Translating for Palestine as self-development, as indicated in the title of this thesis, is a translation that conveys a development that makes sense to the local development partners. This perspective emphasizes the role of translation in fostering self-reliance, local empowerment, and sustainable development. Consequently, any subsequent reference to translation in this thesis pertains to the suggested broader sense, encompassing both a perspective and a practice that extends beyond (but does not exclude) linguistic translation unless otherwise specified.

Hence, the impetus for this thesis is rooted in an ambition to explore the actions undertaken by LNGOs to translate human rights development projects into the local context and how these translations contribute to rendering an international development that is more attuned to the preferences and requirements of the local populace. This exploration is led by illuminating the challenges and tensions inherent in these translation dynamics within the Palestinian developmental context and the actions undertaken by the stakeholders, especially the LNGOs, to face these challenges. International development is a context that affects and triggers the practiced translations. Thus, the intended exploration cannot be done without seeing translation and development as interacting and working together or against each other to shape the outcomes of development endeavors. A more detailed definition of translation, as argued by this study, will be elaborated in the next theoretical grounding section.

To furnish a comprehensive delineation of the research undertaken in this doctoral thesis, the following sections of this introduction will explain the epistemological foundations of the theoretical ground for the proposed concept of translation that will be used in this thesis. Subsequently, an exposition of the principal research inquiries, hypotheses, overarching methodologies, and the thesis's contribution to extant knowledge will ensue. This introductory chapter culminates by furnishing a concise recapitulation encompassing an outline of the forthcoming chapters within this thesis.

1.1 Theoretical Grounding of the Research

The central focus of this doctoral thesis is the dynamic relationship between translation and international development. It explores what international development as a context does to translation and what translation, as defined by this thesis, can contribute to international development. Hence, this is an interdisciplinary research exploring the cooperation between

Translation Studies (TS) and Development Studies (DS). The intricate interplay between these two disciplines sheds light on their mutual influence and interaction. Both disciplines are interdisciplinary, where TS draws on disciplines such as linguistics, literature, sociology, and history. However, as elaborated in this research, TS has been receiving more than importing insights from other disciplines. Economics, sociology, political sciences, and philosophical theories inform Development Studies. Yet, translation, as shown in the literature review chapter, is not traditionally perceived as a developmental practice or a significant factor in the success or failure of international developmental endeavors. Therefore, this research will thoroughly discuss this interdisciplinary relationship and the bearing of translation as defined here. However, I will briefly overview the relationship between these two disciplines to introduce my topic.

International development is a contact zone where languages, cultures, and ideas intersect within asymmetric power relations and differences. Santos (2014) defines contact zones of intercultural encounters as “zones in which rival normative ideas, knowledges, power forms, symbolic universes, and agencies meet in usually unequal conditions and resist, reject, assimilate, imitate, translate, and subvert each other, thus giving rise to hybrid cultural constellations in which the inequality of exchanges may be either reinforced or reduced” (p. 218). These zones are dynamic spaces where different cultures and power structures come in contact. They may provide opportunities to influence and deliver new meanings or dominate each other. Sometimes, inequalities are reinforced or reduced. Santos’s definition of contact zones can be relevant to development contexts because he explains that only specific cultural differences become applicable in these contact zones. These differences are not fixed but instead shaped by the particular time, place, and circumstances: “The contact zone may involve selected and partial cultural differences, the ones that in a given time-space find themselves in competition to provide

meaning for a given course of action” (ibid). Therefore, this research examines specific differences in a given time, space, and circumstances.

While a linguistic translation can facilitate communication and knowledge transfer between the international and the local in international development, this research contends that an exclusively linguistic translation can be problematic if it transmits development ideas and discourse into new societies while preserving their original cultural imprints. This may result in imposing accompanying meanings, concepts, and values onto the targeted societies as if they were universally applicable. In addition, Pym’s (2014) discussion of the natural equivalence paradigm highlights the potential for deception and the concealment of imperialism when new ideas are seamlessly integrated into target cultures through linguistic translation.

Human rights are inherently value-laden constructs; thus, their translation involves more than a linguistic conversion from one language to another. This process necessitates a comprehensive translational effort to address the complexities of integrating these values within a different societal context. In addition, cultural interactions in development can be based on insufficient knowledge of the local context and are believed to be affected by the mechanisms of power relations between the local and the international. In her article, *Menschenrechte als Uebersetzung*, [Translating Human Rights], Bachmann-Medick (2012a) critiques the idea of pursuing a harmonistic approach to intercultural dialogue within the context of human rights discourse since it overlooks inherent differences between cultures and contexts. Therefore, Bachmann-Medick suggests that translating human rights must be recognized as problematic. Moreover, she agrees with the insights of Boaventura de Sousa Santos and James Clifford that in these circumstances, “scientific, cultural analyses, but also cultural knowledge itself, are inevitably selective, incomplete, location-bound and interspersed with power” (Bachmann-Medick, 2012a,

P.345). Therefore, Bachmann-Medick refuses to treat human rights concepts as “traveling concepts” that go through linguistic or cultural translation while skipping differences. At the same time, and by recognizing the idea of “partial translation,” Bachmann-Medick considers the translation of human rights concepts as a never-completed process that goes through continuous negotiations, debates, and mediation actions. This process allows for a more dynamic and inclusive approach to dialogue and action within the framework of human rights, where diverse cultural perspectives can contribute to the ongoing reinterpretation and evolution of these concepts,

Here, too, cultural differences - it could be argued - could be kept open, especially through partial translations, to stimulate action. In any case, they could become a gateway for a deliberately "unfaithful" appropriation behavior vis-à-vis the "original" ("faithless appropriation"), which would allow for the productive reinterpretation of the original (ibid).

Translating human rights into different contexts is a continuous reinterpretation that triggers actions and discussions. It is simultaneously a process that is intentionally unfaithful to a concept's original meaning or form. Societies can adapt them to their own cultural context, thereby using new perspectives and practices. Basalamah (2019) maintains that, through translation, knowledge is not only transferred but also transformed since translating involves interpretation, which can lead to new insights and perspectives that enrich the original material.

Therefore, this research project sees that translating in international development cannot be confined or restricted to inter-lingual translation or “translation proper” because an exclusively linguistic or even intercultural translation that skips the inherent differences between contexts and does not consider the power relations controlling the process of translation cannot help the local and international to implement a development that makes sense to the local people. Hence, this research argues that development can be foreignized or localized, negotiated or imposed, an action of solidarity or hegemony, fostering dependency or sustainability depending on many factors,

including the way it is introduced and translated into the target context and depending on the nature and properties of the development context.

Consequently, Bachmann-Medick argues that “translation is opened up to a transnational cultural practice that in no way remains restricted to binary relationships between national languages, national literatures or national cultures” (2009, p.2). Therefore, she discusses the “possibility to elaborate translation as a social and (inter) cultural **practice** and thus to **concretize** it: as mediation or negotiation, as shifting of meaning and transformation into new contexts” (Bachmann-Medick, 2012a, p. 331, my translation, my emphasis). She also points out that there is a tendency within the humanities to use the category of translation “as a new analytical category and as a category of the action itself,” and she considered this phenomenon as a potential advent of the “translational turn” in the humanities (2009, p.2). This means that the concept of translation is increasingly used as a tool to analyze and understand different cultural occurrences. In this context, translational actions are employed to examine how ideas, values, and practices move across cultures and contexts, facilitating or hindering the translation of development.

The terms ‘translational actions’ and ‘translational actions’ have predominantly been employed in TS within the framework of functionalist approaches mainly to emphasize the expanded role of the translator beyond mere textual translation or the quality of the translated texts (Pym, 2014). This thesis applies the term to describe translators' and cultural mediators' specific actions and efforts in managing intercultural and interknowledge complexities. These actions encompass negotiation and mediation and may also involve struggles and resistance. By focusing on these actions, this study aims to analyze the contexts in which they occur and facilitate a deeper understanding of intercultural dynamics. The framework chapter will explore the distinction between this thesis's use of “translational actions” and other prevalent definitions.

As an analytical category, translation helps to reveal how meanings change, adapt, or even resist transformation when they confront different cultural settings. This can shed light on the dynamics of cultural exchange, power relations, and the construction of knowledge. Translation as a category of action refers to recognizing translation as an active process that involves negotiation, mediation, and transformation through mutual learning. In this view, translation is an action undertaken by individuals and groups to make sense of, adapt, or resist external ideas and practices within their own cultural context. As a category of action, translation emphasizes the practical and interactive aspects of how human rights principles, for example, are implemented and interpreted in different societies. It highlights the agency of translators (broadly defined) in shaping how ideas are received and understood.

Combining these two perspectives, Bachmann-Medick (2012a) suggests that translation is a powerful framework for examining how human rights and other universal concepts are negotiated in diverse cultural landscapes. It is both a lens for analysis and a description of the processes through which cultural and social interactions occur. This dual role of translation helps to unpack the complexities of cultural transfer and adaptation, making it a valuable concept in the humanities.

Accordingly, translation, in this research, will be used as a category of analysis and a framework of reference through which the development context and the related translational actions in this context can be viewed and explained. In this sense, Basalamah (2020) suggests that:

Translation is moving toward a paradigm that would be encompassing enough to consider translation not only as an object of study beyond language and culture but, more importantly, as a paradigm itself (Ricoeur 1996; 2006) to serve as a lens to look through and study various transformative phenomena (p.1).

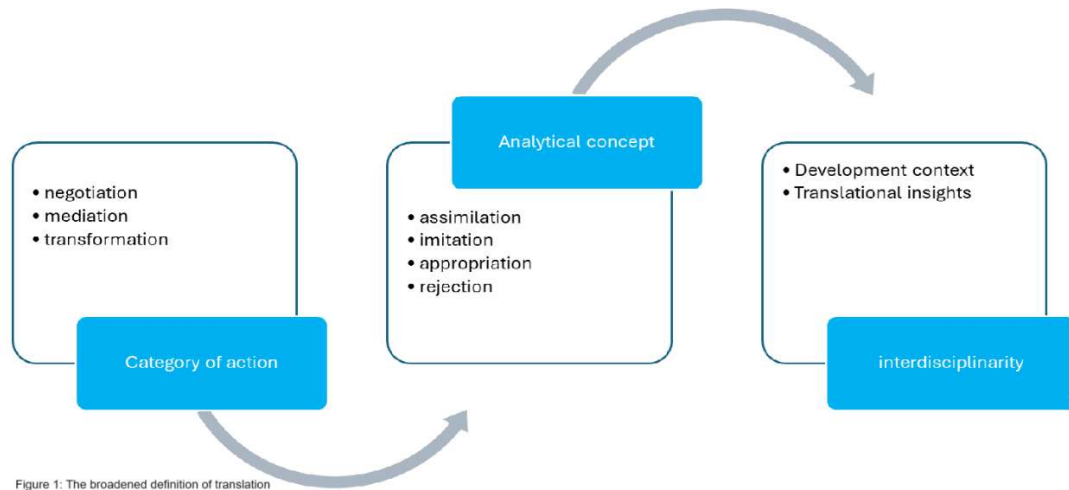
Translation as a paradigm, and as clarified by Basalamah, is inspired by the work of (Ricœur, 1996, 2006), where the act of translating languages is viewed as “a two-way ethical paradigm for action, in which the existence of the other must be acknowledged in the form of respect for how the other expresses him/herself” (Scott-Baumann, 2010, p. 72). Ricœur viewed translation as a form of linguistic hospitality, where the translator welcomes the foreign into their language while preserving the uniqueness of the original text. This is not just a linguistic challenge but an ethical one, demanding openness to the "Other" and respect for the inherent differences in meaning and cultural context. However, as expressed in his 1996 reflection on the ethos of Europe, just as translation involves welcoming the foreign language into one's own, European cultures must welcome each other's memories, pains, and narratives into their respective identity fabric. Thus, Ricœur extended the meaning of translation to include the ethos of accepting difference and engaging in dialogues within Europe to find common ground between existential aspects of cultural belonging beyond language (Ricœur, 1996). Ricoeur's translation philosophy serves as a paradigm for democratic dialogue in Europe to build up its unification: just as translation requires negotiation and respect for difference, European democracies must accommodate the diverse voices, opinions, and cultural backgrounds that constitute its identity beyond language differences. This democratic process is ongoing, much like translation, and involves both conflict and compromise.

Moreover, Bachmann-Medick (2006) calls for the ethnography of cultural encounters to “investigate how Western concepts, ideas of society, or even models of practice are translated into the modernization and transformation process of non-European cultures” (p. 37). Therefore, development can be considered a transformer of societies through the ideas, concepts, and practices that enter societies through translation due to the international development process.

Human rights do not travel by themselves as a "traveling concept" but are always "translated" by actors into local circumstances and imaginary worlds (Bachmann-Medick, 2012a, p. 336).

Consequently, Bachmann Medick (2012b) defines translation as an analytical tool that allows action-analytical examination of complicated social issues, cultural ties, conflicts, and transitions across contexts. A detailed investigation of the intricate relationships among the persons involved focuses on their integration through communication and mediation, their different systems of reference, their views, and their strategies for handling divergences.

This research examines the translational actions that occur when purportedly "universal" or Western concepts are introduced into local societies through international development programs while identifying the challenges that impede or obstruct these translational efforts. These challenges are expected to be triggered by the international development context, including practices informed by many development theories and assumptions. The interaction between translation and development is at the conceptual and practical levels. Therefore, this thesis will also discuss this interaction and mutual influence of TS and DS through an interdisciplinary dialogue between the two disciplines that focuses on finding the common and competing theories and assumptions that inform the practices of both disciplines. Figure (1) is how I illustrate the broadened definition of translation as a category of action that includes negotiation, mediation, and transformation. This action may inform translational actions such as the assimilation, imitation, or rejection of development concepts. Translational actions can be used as an analytical tool that sheds light on the development context. The result is a dialogue between TS and DS on how they influence each other conceptually and in practice.



More importantly, this research explores how cultural mediators navigate and adapt cultural and contextual understandings to articulate their aspirations and achieve their developmental goals. Boaventura De Sousa Santos (2005) sees translation as a deep intellectual and democratic process that aims to shape diverse ideas about liberating societies. This definition of translation is deemed suitable for this research as it addresses issues of international development in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT).

In this context, the application and translation of human rights can serve as a tool for liberation, as elaborated in the context and framework chapters. This approach recognizes the need for a deeper engagement with the socio-political realities of the occupied territories to ensure that human rights principles are understood and operationalized as instruments of empowerment and resistance to colonization and injustices. By acknowledging the Palestinian people's distinct perspectives and experiences, this translation approach is referred to as self-development since it fosters a more meaningful and respectful exchange of knowledge, allowing for a more accurate and nuanced understanding of their developmental needs and aspirations. This method avoids imposing external, one-size-fits-all solutions and instead supports development initiatives

sensitive to local contexts and resistant to oversimplified universal approaches. As Santos (2005) explains, it deviates from the belief in an “automatic”, predefined “social emancipation” or improvement characteristic of modernist thinking (p. 21), something that development and human rights discourse may still convey, as will be elaborated in the literature review chapter.

Moreover, acknowledging and understanding the experiences of the Palestinians, their knowledge of their context, and their aspirations can be framed through Santos’s ideas of “the sociologies of the South”, which focus on producing and validating knowledge rooted in the experiences of social groups who have faced systemic injustice and oppression under capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy (Santos, 2018). The goal of the epistemologies of the South is to empower these groups “to represent the world as their own and in their own terms, for only thus will they be able to change it according to their own aspirations” (Santos, 2018, p. 1). The epistemologies of the South provide a theoretical foundation for valuing diverse knowledges. At the same time, Santos’s sociology of absences and sociology of emergences offer concrete methodologies for revealing, fostering, and legitimizing marginalized knowledge and experiences often rendered invisible by dominant models. The sociology of absences seeks to highlight what has been systematically excluded, while the sociology of emergences centers around identifying and fostering new possibilities and alternative knowledges within these contexts.

Through this lens, the lived realities and future aspirations of the Palestinians can be better comprehended and hopefully acknowledged. Santos (2014) maintains that “the two main procedures underlying the epistemologies of the South are ecologies of knowledges and intercultural translation” (p. 212). The concept of ecologies of knowledges recognizes the inherent incompleteness of different types of knowledge. Understanding this mutual incompleteness is essential for achieving cognitive justice: “At the core of ecologies of knowledges is the idea that

different types of knowledge are incomplete in different ways and that raising the consciousness of such reciprocal incompleteness (rather than looking for completeness) will be a precondition for achieving cognitive justice” (ibid). Intercultural translation offers an “alternative both to the abstract universalism that grounds Western-centric general theories and to the idea of incommensurability between cultures” (ibid). This understanding develops a balanced way of thinking about oneself and the other, where each culture seeks to bridge differences by finding common ground and mutual understanding rather than imposing a single universal framework or assuming that cultural differences cannot be reconciled.

I have chosen to work on the translations of human rights projects for three reasons; first, as human rights are by nature referred to and acknowledged as universal, so I wanted to investigate the actions undertaken by the LNGOs to translate them in the Palestinian context and the effect of context on these translations. Second, implementing human rights is problematic because different cultures can have different views and interpretations of human rights. Third, the application of human rights is already an issue in the Palestinian context, given that we are talking about occupied territories that struggle with human rights issues, as explained in the context chapter. Giacca & Nohle (2019) clarify that “military occupation can have detrimental effects on an occupied population’s enjoyment of economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights. Especially, a protracted occupation can lead to stagnation of all aspects of civilian life, including economic, political, social and cultural development” (p. 491). In addition, what human rights apply to this region and how they are translated is a highly controversial issue. Bachman-Medick (2012a) argues that human rights are not static concepts but undergo translation into local contexts. Beyond their practical implementation, there's a persistent dispute regarding their transcultural interpretation, which spans global discourse, encompassing not only reasoned arguments but also complex dynamics in

how human rights ideas are transferred and applied (Bachman-Medick, 2012a). Therefore, Bachman-Medick (2012a) discusses that viewing human rights discourse and debates through the lens of translation can provide new insights into how human rights are translated, displaced, negotiated, and revised when adopted in a non-European context (p. 336).

Accordingly, this research aims to explore the actions performed by the cultural mediators of HR projects triggered by the development context in Palestine and how they may contribute to an ethical process that frees societies and leads to mutual understanding and solidarity between the international and local and eventually as a means to achieve self-development.

This thesis draws on the research that introduces and conceptualizes translation as a paradigm, a lens, a framework, a category of analysis, and a concrete transformative practice or action to tackle differences in the contact zones of different epistemes (Basalamah, 2001, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2019, 2020; Santos, 2005, 2006, 2014, 2018, 2020; Bachman-Medick, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2013). It also draws on the interdisciplinary research of Gambier and Van Doorslaer, 2016, Menken and Kestra, 2016, and Post et al., 2020. Consequently, this project will attempt to answer the following research questions:

How can the perspective of translation as a paradigmatic lens impact the donors' practices of development in the field of human rights?

- a. What acts of translation, triggered by international development, are undertaken by local NGOs in Palestine to address local challenges associated with translating human rights, and how does the development context impact these translation efforts?

- b. When considered through the lens of translation as self-development, are the current human rights development practices translated in a way that aligns with local contexts and aspirations?

1.2 Aim of the Research

This research aims to improve the international donors' practices of international development in the field of human rights in Palestine by exploring the translations carried out by the LNGOs to make development more adept to the local needs and ambitions of the Palestinian people. Thus, this research aims to find how the translation concept can contribute to clarifying and scrutinizing the development process and whether adopting translation as a perspective and practice can contribute to international development programs that make more sense to the local NGO partners. Translation as a paradigm and a practice that promotes dialogue and reciprocal understanding, thus contributing to freeing societies, is believed here to bring to the fore an additional conceptual tool for solidarity, cooperation, and sustainability to international development.

1.3 Hypotheses and Assumptions

For the sake of aligning human rights development initiatives with the aspiration of the Palestinian people, this research suggests that Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs) engage in translation efforts that extend beyond (while not excluding) linguistic conversions, encompassing the negotiations and mediation of development concepts, practices, discourse, and more. By delving into the examination of the possibilities of extending the work of translation to be a developmental practice, this study expects these translational efforts to contribute to improving development outcomes. Simultaneously, this study posits that if the translation process

is conducted to promote self-development and self-empowerment, it has the potential to result in a form of development that is defined, determined, and recognized by local development partners.

Furthermore, while this research is grounded in the premise that the application of translation as a privileged perspective and an analytical tool can equip international development initiatives with an expanded toolkit, rendering them more supportive and meaningful to local stakeholders, it is also anticipating that translation will unveil the inherent tensions and struggles that permeate the translation processes occurring within the context of development, where local and international actors meet.

1.4 General Methods

To demonstrate the sought-after objectives, this research examines the translational processes instigated by the development context of Palestine, addressing the challenges inherent in translating human rights concepts and values. It further investigates the impact of the development context on the acts of translation. Additionally, this study explores the application of translation as a theoretical perspective and a practical methodology, thereby contributing to the transition from international development to self-development. Self-development is conceptualized as a form of development defined and determined by local stakeholders.

In line with the above-mentioned main research question, this research also aims to answer the following two research sub-questions:

- a. What acts of translation, triggered by international development, are undertaken by local NGOs in Palestine to address local challenges associated with translating human rights, and how does the development context impact these translation efforts?**

To address this first sub-question, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from 20 local NGOs (LNGOs) in the West Bank and Gaza. These LNGOs play a crucial role in implementing a significant portion of international development projects, acting as intermediaries between international donors and local beneficiaries. Given their intimate knowledge of the local context and its specific challenges, LNGOs are instrumental in translating and implementing development ideas and objectives within Palestinian society.

The interviewees were asked about their translation and localization efforts in the context of HR projects. Specifically, they were queried on how they apply or adapt, if at all, new or universal HR ideas introduced by development initiatives. Additionally, the interviews explored the challenges faced during translating project concepts and ideas, including any resistance or pushback encountered and the impact of the development context in which they operate.

The goal of these interviews was to understand the extent to which new project ideas proposed by donors were considered contentious, whether these ideas were accepted as is or transformed and adapted by the receiving stakeholders. Furthermore, the interviews sought to gauge the degree of freedom provided by donors for localizing human rights concepts. The responses to these questions are expected to shed light on the influence of the development context on translation efforts and identify the specific acts of translation triggered as a result.

Additionally, the interviewed representatives of LNGOs were requested to furnish instances from their routine operations delineating the execution of developmental concepts within the Palestinian landscape. Furthermore, they were prompted to expound upon the specific adaptations they are permitted to enact and the rationale underpinning the developmental translations. Understanding the acts of translation serves as an analytical tool to explore the

challenges of integrating new concepts through international development. By examining the actions of LNGOs, insights are gained into how they navigate and reconcile local knowledge with universal concepts. This knowledge allows us to recognize and learn from LNGOs' strategies and methods to merge local and global perspectives effectively.

b. When considered through the lens of translation as self-development, are the current human rights development practices translated in a way that aligns with local contexts and aspirations?

Translation, envisioned as both a perspective and a practice within this study, is anticipated to offer an alternative cognitive and operational approach within international development. Consequently, this inquiry aims to explicate the intricate conceptualization of translation as both a framework and a perspective through which development processes are perceived, thereby bridging diverse ideas and knowledge sources. Subsequently, the analysis of interview findings seeks to ascertain the extent to which the conceptualized translation, as delineated in this research, is fostered within the studied milieu and its potential to foster self-development. To this end, the concept of self-development was defined and deconstructed into some core components. Based on these components, interview questions were formulated.

Addressing the two sub-questions is expected to contribute to answering the following main research question:

How can the perspective of translation as a paradigmatic lens impact the donors' practices of development in the field of human rights?

To answer the main question, an interdisciplinary investigation is made between TS and DS based on discussing how TS and DS can cooperate towards achieving development goals. Thus, how can development be an empowering and enabling context to foster self-development, and how can translation, as a perspective and extended concept, impact this process? This cooperation is done by finding shared or divergent paradigms and assumptions between the two disciplines. This method is inspired by Menken and Kestra (2016) and Post et al. (2020), who explain how to conduct interdisciplinary research by integrating assumptions and theories from different disciplines to solve a real-world problem. This framework was adopted for two reasons. First, it is because of my conviction that for translation, as reconceptualized by this thesis, to impact international development practices, it needs to be supported by development studies assumptions and paradigms. Development practices are informed by a set of assumptions and theories. When disciplines work together to solve a problem, one of the most significant challenges is that their epistemological foundations and assumptions could be conflicting (Gambier and Van Doorslaer, 2016, Post et al., 2020). Therefore, this research discusses the theories and assumptions shared between TS and DS to find common ground. I highlight these common assumptions as we go through the DS literature review and the theoretical framework chapters that discuss the conceptualization of translation. The second reason for adopting this framework is my conviction that by identifying common goals, TS and DS can work together and may recognize each other's key concepts as factors that can inform each other's respective practices.

1.5 Contribution to Knowledge

This research builds on the interdisciplinary research that studies the interaction between translation and development. I aim to shed more light on translation's contribution as a broader (non-exclusively linguistic) practice and perspective in the contact zones between differences such

as international development. By offering fresh theoretical interdisciplinary perspectives on the combination and interaction between the concepts of translation and development, this study hopes to contribute to advancing both respective fields: TS and DS.

We also hope that more information can be obtained about how the LNGOs can appropriate development since “in development studies, few people have analyzed the transformations and appropriations of development discourse by subjects in the South” (Ziai, 2016, p.216). Therefore, this research will contribute to showing whether the LNGOs could transform and appropriate development ideas, knowledge, and discourse in “one’s own terms”, as Basalamah (2020, p. 5) puts it.

In addition, by carrying out empirical field research, this project investigates the practical side of using “Translation” as a perspective and a category of analysis in response to Bachmann Medick’s hopes to see “what empirical research is furthered by working with the category of translation” (2009: 14). The conceptual understanding of “Translation” as a paradigm and a cultural praxis will be applied as an instrument to understanding development in translational terms.

These perspectives align with Santos’s sociology of absences and emergencies, where the knowledge of Palestinian NGOs in providing local solutions to development issues can be highlighted and potentially given a voice. Santos emphasizes translation as a way to highlight and legitimize these knowledges and practices, offering an alternative to the one-sided view of development and of developing the world. Through translation, the contributions of Palestinian NGOs are made visible, and their local insights are hoped to be integrated into broader development discourses.

1.6 Thesis Structure

The subsequent sections of this thesis are structured into seven principal chapters, each building upon the foundation established in the introduction, where the main argument, research questions, assumptions, methodologies, and contributions to knowledge are outlined. Chapter Two commences with defining key concepts such as international development, discourse, power, and human rights. It explores development theories, tracing their historical evolution and related discourses. Then, it explores the existing research at the intersection of translation and development, positioning this study within the broader framework of related scholarly work. Chapter Three provides a brief overview of the context, focusing on Palestine and the status of human rights within the region. It also critically examines the literature addressing development and human rights challenges specific to the Palestinian context. Chapter Four delineates the theoretical framework employed in this study, serving as the conceptual foundation for the research. Chapter Five explicates the methodology adopted for conducting this research, detailing the selection of participants, the interview process, and the techniques used for data collection. Chapter Six presents the findings derived from the investigation, analyzing the data obtained from the interviews to address the research questions and test the hypotheses proposed at the study's inception. This chapter connects the various types of translations employed by local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs), exploring the challenges associated with implementing the concept of translation as a perspective in the development sector. Chapter Seven concludes with an extensive discussion of the research findings, reflects on the insights gained by the researcher, and offers concluding remarks and recommendations for future research directions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This interdisciplinary research attempts to drill down into the relationship between translation and development and explore how translation may provide insights into development and how development can be an enabling or constraining context by examining the translations mainly triggered by the international development context in Palestine. Therefore, the reviewed literature in this chapter covers the research that underlines the role of development theories in justifying and informing international development practices and development discourse as a language and discourse used by international development.

Consequently, this chapter is organized as follows: First, it explains what international development means and introduces the related development theories from multiple perspectives. This section also summarizes the history and evolution of development, presenting key milestones and shifts in thought that have shaped international development practices. It also briefly defines critical concepts such as discourse, power, and human rights. This foundational discussion aims to demonstrate how development has evolved, informing contemporary practices and framing development as a context for translation. Special emphasis is placed on the criteria used to classify countries as developed or underdeveloped, highlighting the metrics and standards employed in these assessments.

Second, this chapter delves into the literature that explains how and why the fields of development and translation have been coupled in numerous studies. It examines the intersections of these fields, showcasing various approaches to address similar research problems. This review highlights how translation studies have been applied to the development context, providing a backdrop for understanding the unique challenges and opportunities that arise when translating

development. By situating my research within this body of literature, I aim to clarify the contributions and insights this thesis offers to the ongoing dialogue between development and translation, focusing on their cooperation and interdisciplinarity. Shared assumptions and theories will be highlighted wherever applicable to pave the way for the interdisciplinary dialogue between TS and DS.

2.2 International Development Meaning, Theories, Origin, and Discourse.

This section will briefly explain the most prominent theories that inform international development. The definition of international development will be presented from different perspectives to illustrate its evolution and how it informs current development practices and discourses. This explanation will encompass several key elements:

First, it will address why some countries are classified as developed or developing (underdeveloped). This classification is based on various metrics and criteria, such as economic indicators and social progress. By exploring these classifications, the underlying assumptions and standards that shape global development policies can be understood more clearly. Second, it will explore why development is considered a discourse. The concept of development as a discourse highlights how ideas, language, and practices associated with development are constructed and propagated. This perspective emphasizes the power dynamics involved in defining and implementing development agendas and the role of dominant narratives in shaping development policies and practices. Finally, the section will discuss some crucial implications of considering development as a discourse. Recognizing development as a discourse allows for critically examining the assumptions, values, and power relations embedded within development practices. It also opens up spaces for alternative perspectives and approaches, acknowledging the diverse ways development can be understood and pursued. By examining these aspects, the section aims

to provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations and discursive nature of international development, setting the stage for subsequent discussions on the intersections and interdisciplinarity of development and translation.

2.2.1 International development meaning and theories

When the term is used in general language, among the definitions under the general heading “development” in Collins dictionary, it can mean “a gradual growth or formation of something, or the process or result of making a basic design gradually better and more advanced, or the process of making an area of land or water more useful or profitable” (*Development Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary*, 2024). Because development is defined as a gradual and continuous process, it implies growth and often connotes betterment and improvement. When 'development' is defined in the context of efforts undertaken by developed countries in developing regions under the banner of 'development cooperation' or 'international development', the notion of development becomes subject to varying perspectives and assumptions. For many people, “the terms ['development' or 'development cooperation'] are assumed to be self-evident: everyone knows that they are about something like projects for poverty eradication in Africa, Asia, and Latin America” (Ziai, 2016, p.1). This definition is what often comes to mind and what is assumed when people hear the expression ‘international development’; thus, it is poverty as a problem that is solved through humanitarian aid or projects done in countries considered in need of sort of support. This understanding is not far from the goal of global development found today on the World Bank’s Website, where it states that “We face big challenges to help the world’s poorest people and ensure that everyone sees benefits from economic growth” (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2024).

However, according to the Encyclopedia of International Development, “international development is best understood as the production of social change that creates conditions where more and more people can achieve their human potential....Development implies increasing people’s choices, and respecting their ability to choose, within diverse processes of social and economic change” (Blakemore, 2018, p. xvii). Accordingly, this concept respects individuals’ autonomy and agency within the broader context of social and economic transformations. Thus, development is about enhancing people's quality of life and well-being by providing them with more options and the freedom to pursue their goals. Still, international development is a highly debated interdisciplinary field that uses different approaches and is described by various theories trying to explain the factors that drive development undertakings in diverse countries. To understand the various perspectives on development, we will briefly describe some of the most prevalent theories that inform development practices and discourse.

The most prominent theory development draws on is the modernization theory, supported by scholars such as Max Weber, Walt Rostow, and Seymour Martin Lipset. According to modernization theory, developing countries can achieve economic development by employing the same strategies developed countries have used to achieve economic growth. From this perspective, international development can be viewed as a process of social change from traditional to modern societies through economic growth and modernization, wherein developed countries provide financial aid, technical assistance, and expertise to help developing countries achieve higher living standards, improved infrastructure, and enhanced economic performance. Hout (2016) maintains that modernization theory emphasizes that successful adaptation to economic, political, and social changes is key to development, mainly through embracing industrialization and democratization, similar to what occurred in Western nations.

Another theory that focuses on economic growth as the driver of development is neoliberalism which calls for allowing the free markets to drive the economy because it considers that the state's intervention in the economy is counterproductive: "Neo-liberal development policy basically aims at increasing economic growth through creating competitive markets and encouraging innovative entrepreneurs" (Peet, 2018). These approaches were criticized, as will be reviewed hereafter, for being overly prescriptive and imposing Western-centric development models that may not align with the cultural, social, and economic realities of developing countries. Critics argue that this art of development can perpetuate dependency, undermine local autonomy, and fail to address structural inequalities and power imbalances. For example, Dependency Theory contends that unequal relationships between developed and developing countries impede economic development. According to dependency theorists, developing countries are entrapped in a cycle of dependency on developed countries, perpetuating underdevelopment. Hout (2016) maintains that modernization and dependency theories are two classical theories that continue to shape contemporary studies and debates on topics such as development, democratization, culture, identity, and global production. Hout (2016) argues that although modernization and dependency approaches propose different strategies for improving conditions in developing countries, they share key similarities: Both assume that development is inherently a process that leads to progress, and they place an excessive emphasis on economic factors and adopt a deterministic perspective on development.

The most recent theories explaining the rationale behind international development are the human development theory and the sustainable development framework. These approaches gained prominence in the late 90s. They align with the contemporary definitions of international development found on the websites and in the documents of the World Bank, various international

development organizations and agencies, and Development Studies textbooks. The human development approach emphasizes investing in human capital as the key to economic development, focusing on health care, education, and social welfare programs. The economists Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker argued that investing in human capital was necessary for long-term economic growth. The sustainable development guidelines emphasize balancing economic growth and environmental and social sustainability. Dernbach & Cheever (2015) define sustainable development, or sustainability, as a decision-making framework aimed at ensuring human well-being now and in the future. This framework integrates environmental protection, social justice, and economic development into decision-making processes.

These approaches have been criticized by scholars such as Cowen (1996), Rist (2002), Power (2003), and Willis (2011) because, as will be elucidated here, they are Eurocentric, focus on economic growth, fail to account for developing countries' distinct history, cultural, and political contexts, and are treated as universal while adopting the Western model and standards for development. The following perspectives on international development reflect some of these views and criticisms. For example, Cowen (1996) states that in development studies textbooks,

Development is construed as a process of enlarging people's choices; of enhancing 'participatory democratic processes and the ability of people to have a say in the decisions that shape their lives'; of providing 'human beings with the opportunity to develop their fullest potential'; of enabling the poor, women, and 'free independent peasants' to organize for themselves and work together (p.1).

Cowen also clarifies, “simultaneously, however, development is defined as the means to 'carry out a nation's development goals' and of promoting 'economic growth', 'equity', and 'national self-reliance'” (ibid).

These definitions mainly reflect the human development theory. However, Cowen explains that these two definitions show a contradiction between empowering people and the state's plans and goals. This is one of the reasons why 'what development means' can be very confusing; as for Cowen, "Development seems to defy definition" (1996, p.1). From his perspective, "development has increasingly come to refer to a discontinuous process in which destruction and renewal are simultaneous, as much as sequential" (Cowen 1996, p. viii). Cowen upholds that development is not synonymous with progress, as he clarifies that,

The idea of development that was embedded in the older idea of progress, . . . was an unfolding of potential and that the new was a purposeful improvement over the old, was subsumed by development doctrine. Development doctrine, as [Cowen] shows, rested upon the intent to develop through the exercise of trusteeship over society. Trusteeship is the intent, which is expressed, by one source of agency, to develop the capacities of another (1996, pp. ix-x).

According to his perspective, development is a doctrine that endows certain nations with the authority and responsibility to develop other nations. This development paradigm, often framed under the guise of international cooperation or aid, inherently involves an external imposition of values and criteria where the recipient country does not autonomously undertake the renewal process or capacity development but rather orchestrated by an external entity. This approach to development is critically analyzed within the broader discourse of power dynamics and post-colonial theory. It underscores the asymmetrical relationship between donor and recipient countries, where the former's hegemonic influence shapes the developmental trajectory of the latter. This external imposition often reflects the interests and values of the donor nations, potentially leading to a form of neo-colonialism where the recipient nation's sovereignty and self-determination are compromised.

In his book, *The History of Development*, Rist's definition reflects his views of development practices, where development includes transformations of societies that also do not necessarily result in improvement or progress. Rist (2002) defines development as,

a set of practices, sometimes appearing to conflict with one another, which require – for the production of society – the general transformation and destruction of the natural environment and of social relations. Its aim is to increase the production of commodities (goods and services) geared by way of exchange to effective demand (2002, p. 13).

Rist (2002) explains that inherent contradictions characterize development practices. For instance, while some development initiatives advocate for privatization, others emphasize the empowerment of state roles. Moreover, these practices can have detrimental environmental impacts, such as promoting industrialization and production processes that can lead to deforestation and complicate recycling efforts. Additionally, development can disrupt social relations by imposing an economic approach that commodifies various aspects of society. According to Rist's definition, the ultimate objective of development is economic growth, achieved through transforming societies into commodity-based economies. This transformation is typically facilitated by external actors rather than being a product of the internal efforts of the societies undergoing development. This external imposition of development objectives and methods often reflects the priorities and values of the donor nations rather than the needs and contexts of the recipient countries, leading to a range of complex and sometimes adverse outcomes. He adds that “there is essential agreement that 'development' is above all an economic matter of production and accumulation, based upon private investment and external assistance” (Rist, 2002, p. 85). Rist's definition underlines the profound impact of development on societies when it is orchestrated by external forces. This externally driven process often reflects the priorities and ideologies of the

donor countries rather than the indigenous needs and contexts of the recipient societies. Such an approach to development can lead to both intended and unintended outcomes.

Rist (2002) clarifies that the main goal for Rostow in his book *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, when he explains development is to transition from tradition to modernity. In reality, however, Rostow recognizes that, unlike in Britain in the early nineteenth century, change occurs as a result of external circumstances. “This allows [Rostow], in his own way, to justify colonialism” (Rist, 2002, p.96). In this particular setting, the notion of development is underscored as an external force exerted upon communities under the guise of modernity. At the same time, Eisenstadt (1996) argues that modernization is historically defined as a transition process toward the types of social, economic, and political systems that emerged in Western Europe and North America between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Modernity includes industrialization, urbanization, and the use of technology in all sectors of the economy, according to the Western European experience. As a result, the spread of modernity and its reflection on society and culture was interpreted as progress or development (Willis, 2011). Development as a Western idea on how to improve human existence is regarded as a successful Western experience that should be replicated in other non-western and underdeveloped countries. According to Power (2003), “the vision of development articulated by many global agencies remains very much based around the idea of a linear progression, indicated as differing degrees of departure from already established western ideals and experiences” (p. 3). In a word, “development means Westernization” (Apffel-Marglin and Marglin, 1990, p.2).

The reviewed perspectives underscore development approaches that adopt the replication of Western models in developing countries. This approach inherently views economic growth and modernity as universal paradigms for development, applicable across diverse socio-cultural

settings. Bruton (1985) argues that, while there have been measurable successes in economic development in the past thirty years, such as growth in GDP, life expectancy, literacy, and school enrollment rates, these have often been accompanied by significant disappointments and tensions. He explains that these adverse outcomes are attributed to efforts to replicate Western models rather than foster indigenous change processes. One must use the same approaches to replicate something or copy an original to achieve the same goals or results. Hodge & Hödl (2014) describe development simply as “an intentional, organised intervention in collective affairs according to a general (if not universal) standard of improvement” (p. 3). Development as copying a better original is a shared assumption between a development based on the modernization paradigm and the linguistic translation paradigm.

However, it is essential to understand the historical context of development, where development theories and concepts come from, and how they emerged.

2.2.2 The invention of development

The historical context of colonialism laid the groundwork for contemporary development practices. During the colonial period, European powers established systems of extraction and control that fundamentally reshaped the economies and societies of the colonized regions. The primary objective of colonialism was to exploit these regions' natural and human resources for the benefit of the colonizing powers. This included the establishment of plantations, mines, and other extractive industries that aimed at producing raw materials for European markets. The development discourse adopted economic growth as its central tenet in the post-colonial era. The rationale was that developing countries could achieve modernization and improve their living standards by fostering economic growth. Hout (2016) explains that dependency theory asserts that

the economic and social development of countries in the periphery is shaped by their relations with the center (developed countries), which exploit their resources and labor through unequal trade and investment practices. Rist (2002) maintains that the making/invention of development is based on a Western philosophy rooted in the 19th century that justified the intervention of the ‘great powers’ in other countries. According to him, “The intervention ‘outside Europe’ was first made in the register of colonization, and with time, the brutal power relations existed alongside paternal feelings of responsibility towards ‘natives’ who needed to be ‘civilized’” (Rist, 2002, p. 47). The transition from colonizing to civilizing, eventually to developing, was underpinned by a shifting discourse that sought to legitimize each phase and its associated practices. This discourse served to rationalize and justify the actions of dominant powers about the societies they sought to control.

During colonization, the dominant narrative framed the colonizer's actions as a moral obligation and duty. Colonization was justified because it was necessary for the protection and improvement of the colonized peoples. The colonizers presented themselves as bearers of civilization, tasked with sharing the benefits of science, progress, and modernity with less ‘advanced’ societies (Rist, 2002). The belief that life conditions can be improved, mainly through scientific and economic progress, shaped the ideas about development and stemmed from the Enlightenment. Peet & Hartwick (2015) explain that “development has evolved from Enlightenment notions about how the modern, scientific, and democratic mind can intervene to improve human existence” (2015, p. 3). Development was linked to the concept of modernity based on the experiences of Western Europe. As such, the diffusion of modernity and its reflection on society and culture was interpreted as development or progress (Willis, 2011).

Colonization was followed by a mandate system and the League of Nations was established and “legitimized the *internationalization* of this intervention in the name of civilization itself”

(Rist, 2002, p. 58). Rist argues that “Beyond the political and economic interests, there were supposed to be universal values – ‘civilization,’ ‘material and moral well-being,’ ‘social progress’ – which could be legitimately invoked to justify intervening in the existence of other peoples” (2002, p. 62). The political and economic interests were justified by universally accepted values such as ‘civilization,’ social advancement,’ and ‘prosperity’. These values were used to morally justify intervention in the affairs of other societies. In another definition that explains development in economic terms and shows how some nations’ involvement in others was justified and continued after colonization, Cowen (1996) argues that development was initiated in the nineteenth century to bring order to the problems of poverty, unemployment, and migration caused by industrial capitalism where the idea of trusteeship was introduced to solve these problems.

However, as stated by Rist (2002), it was after World War II in the inaugural address that US President Truman gave in January 1949 that “the adjective ‘underdeveloped’had been used in a text intended for such a wide circulation, as a synonym for ‘economically backward’ areas. Subsequently, the noun ‘underdevelopment’ was introduced. It was this *terminological innovation* which altered the meaning of ‘development’ itself, by relating it in a new way to ‘underdevelopment’” (Rist, 2002, p. 72). Rist clarifies that,

These changes [were not] merely semantic; they radically altered the way the world was seen. Until then, North-South relations had been organized largely in accordance with the colonizer/colonized opposition. The new ‘developed’/‘underdeveloped’ dichotomy proposed a different relationship, in keeping with the new Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the progressive globalization of the system of States (2002, 73-74).

This discourse has not only re-defined the relationship between the South and the North but “‘underdevelopment’ [was defined] as a lack rather than the result of historical circumstances, and by treating the ‘underdeveloped’ simply as poor without seeking the reasons for their

destitution, ‘development policy’ made of growth and aid (conceived in technocratic, quantitative terms) the only possible answer” (Rist, 2002, p.79). Accordingly, “development was presented as a set of technical measures outside the realm of political debate” (Rist 2002, p.78).

The speech underscores the transformative power of language and discourse in shaping new realities. Consequently, the notion of development and the criteria used to evaluate countries as 'developed' or 'underdeveloped' became integral to the redefinition and perception of the global landscape. Development has always been linked to ‘less developed’ places. The term “Third World” has been criticized for its generalizing and subordinate connotations, which misrepresent diverse countries and inhabitants, potentially harming them by prioritizing external interventions and delegitimizing local perspectives (Jones, 2023, p. 58).

Thus far, development has predominantly been characterized by technical interventions implemented by the Global North to assist the Global South in achieving the West's economic growth and scientific advancements. To elaborate more on the scientific and economic, thus, quantitative description of development, the following section presents how development is measured and how countries are classified and viewed accordingly.

2.2.2 How is development measured?

To comprehend not only how countries were classified on the development scale but also how they became to be perceived and identified, Rist clarifies that “the mandated countries were classified according to the level of development they needed putting the ‘*developed*’ nations at the *top of the ladder*” (2002, p. 61). Rist adds that,

There were differences on how to define the 'stages' through which every society had to pass, but there was general agreement on the three essential points: that progress has the same substance (or nature) as history; that all nations travel the same road;

and that all do not advance at the same speed as Western society, which therefore has an indisputable 'lead' because of the greater size of its production, the dominant role that reason plays within it, and the scale of its scientific and technological discoveries (Rist, 2014, p. 40).

Consequently, Western society exhibits a markedly higher natural level of scientific and economic advancement relative to other regions, a level that is inherently challenging to attain. This advanced state is defined by superior scientific prowess and productivity and signifies an elevated capacity for rationality and judgment grounded in reason, logic, and science—qualities deemed intrinsic to a civilized and modern society. To bridge this gap, underdeveloped nations can initiate their progress by acquiring expertise and scientific knowledge from the West to enhance their productivity and achieve sustainable economic growth.

Going back to the development theories that informed development, Wills states that “Modernization theories argue that “development is largely economic, and the same development path should be followed by all countries” (2011, p. 60). Consequently, “development as modernity is looked at legally in economic terms, for example, the World Bank uses the Gross National Product per Capita (GNP) to divide the countries of the world into development categories, and this classification is considered appropriate because it is assumed that with greater wealth comes other benefits such as improved health, education, and quality of life” (Willis, 2011, p. 3). However, this categorization does not account for the differences in wealth and economic conditions in the same country or other inequalities and fails to recognize the dynamism of all societies and the continued desire by populations for improvement ‘not necessarily in material goods’ (Willis, 2011). These measures were considered universally applicable, disregarding individuals' diverse preferences and values across varying contexts. Rist maintains that

For those who are happy to have a lot, it may seem logical enough that those who have little should wish to have more. But the anthropological evidence shows that it

has not always been so. In many societies, it is not low productivity but a rejection of accumulation, which is the factor limiting production (2014, p. 96).

Rist highlights the complex interplay between cultural values and economic behavior, challenging the assumption that the desire for accumulation is universal. In societies where accumulation is not a priority, production levels are naturally lower—not due to an inability to produce more, but due to a cultural choice to reject the pursuit of excess. This perspective is supported by anthropological evidence indicating that many societies prioritize different values, such as community cohesion, sustainability, and spiritual well-being, over material accumulation. Such societies may achieve a balance and quality of life emphasizing sufficiency rather than surplus. This starkly contrasts capitalist frameworks, which equate economic growth with progress and well-being. The anthropological findings call into question the universality of Western economic principles and highlight the diversity of human aspirations and ways of living.

It is essential to mention that several UN² and UNESCO³ Conventions and conferences invite all countries, UN organizations, and NGOs to incorporate cultural factors into their development programs and projects to promote sustainable development that fully respects cultural diversity, considering different values and identities. However, De Beukelaer et al., (2015) maintain that the Geneva Convention attempts to link culture and sustainable development through Articles 13 and 14, which outline culture's role in both development policy and as a tool for development. Still, practical implementation is limited, as economic growth remains the dominant model. They add that the absence of culture from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its marginal role in the post-2015 development agenda highlights ongoing challenges.

² <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/266071?v=pdf>

³ <https://www.unesco.org/creativity/en/2005-convention>

Moreover, the economic and political measurements, e.g., GDP or whether there is a democratic government in a country, do not necessarily say much about what it means to be human in a certain country (Nussbaum, 2011; Nussbaum & Sen, 1993). Other scholars, such as Ayogu & Ross (2005) call for “incorporating non-income dimensions of poverty such as insecurity, powerlessness (lack of choice), and lack of voice or basic civil and political freedoms into the development agenda” (p. 218). Consequently, the Western economic standards for measuring development were highly criticized and needed to be incorporated or replaced by other measurement tools.

Another way of categorizing countries is used by the UNDP, which is the Human Development Index “HDI”, “[the] HDI divide[s] the world’s countries into those with high, middle, and low human development, this measure incorporates three dimensions in relation to human well-being: a long and healthy life, education and knowledge, and a decent standard of living” (Willis, 2011, p. 7). Willis (2011) states that using this scale makes development more than just economic progress measured at the national level. Still, HDI is a value-laden measure that overemphasizes economic growth and overlooks other important factors necessary for the well-being of people, such as environmental sustainability and political freedom. In addition, The HDI assumes that all people share the same definition of well-being, desires, and priorities, thereby reflecting a universal perspective on what constitutes well-being. Sen (1995) argues that rather than focusing solely on income or material possessions, well-being should be measured in terms of people's ability to live the lives they value. Willis also maintains that “this way of measuring development does not encompass what the vast majority of the people feel development is, or how they would like their lives to change (if at all)” (2011, p. 8). For many, “progress and development

are associated with the eradication of cultural practices, the destruction of the natural environment, and a decline in the quality of life” (Willis, 2011, p. 3).

Even after adopting HDI for measuring development, Rist states that “thirty years later, the UNDP would maintain: Just as economic growth is necessary for human development, human development is critical to economic growth” (2002, p.90). Escobar maintains that development was and continues to be for the most part a top-down, ethnocentric, and technocratic approach, which treated people and cultures as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the charts of "progress." (1995, p. 44). Ethnocentrism within development paradigms tends to prioritize Western values, norms, and economic models as universal benchmarks of advancement. This approach overlooks or marginalizes local knowledge systems, cultural practices, and social contexts that may offer alternative pathways to well-being and sustainability. Consequently, even HDI is measured with numbers and statistics and mostly fails to assess its effects on societies where it operates. Blakemore (2018) maintains that,

In most measures, development is “produced” through factors such as economic productivity and economic growth (per capita gross domestic product (GDP)), the extent to which developing countries emulate Western levels of industrialization, governmental agency restructuring, the growth of liberal markets, expanding education, access to health care, and legislative reform. Such factors can be measured quantitatively. Conversely, development is “consumed” by individual human beings, but factors such as “quality of life,” “community participation,” or “wellbeing” are not easily addressed by numerical measurement (p. 433).

As a result, Blakemore concludes that the HDI was debated as a way of assessing development and needed reconsidering. Jones 2023 states that the 1990 UNDP Human Development Report, coordinated by Mahbub ul Haq and consulting Amartya Sen, showed this perspective's impact on development. The report stressed the need to understand how economic growth affects human development encouraging a re-evaluation of development objectives, raising

questions about the policies, institutions, and social factors affecting differential development outcomes and the need for a stronger link, which is not automatic. However, Human development indicators signaled a shift in the way development was conceptualized, emphasizing welfare and incorporating a broader range of values and metrics beyond just GDP per capita. This shift in approach paved the way for viewing development as a process aimed at enhancing individual freedoms, with the understanding that these freedoms can also serve as a means to achieve development (Jones, 2023. P. 44). This broader perspective allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of development, one that considers the diverse and multifaceted nature of human needs and aspirations.

Currently, sustainable development goals are widely used as a framework to produce international development. They were set by the United Nations in 2015 with 17 goals to achieve by 2030. They consider economic, social, and environmental factors without compromising any on the account of the other. The related indicators attempt to measure a wide range of development factors such as reducing poverty, gender equality, and a sustainable environment. However, Jones (2023) argues that,

The three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental, appear to be laden with contradictions in the SDGs. For example, some SDGs appear to be in conflict, notably concerning conservation and then increasing food production. More viscerally, the SDGs are arguably still primarily about a model of (neoliberal) economic growth (p. 96).

The SDGs also fail to recognize the causes of inequalities or the underdevelopment of societies. They have been criticized for their complexity and inability to know the effect of development on a particular country or society. Therefore, Rist clarifies that “development is not just economic growth; it is growth plus change! The hard core of 'development' is still growth - to be complemented by (unspecified) 'change'” (2002, p.90). Accordingly, even if development

can be measured using statistics or other indicators, the changes in societies and cultures that accompany development are still difficult to measure or predict.

Furthermore, as will be discussed in the context of Palestinian development, international development initiatives are predominantly run on a project-based model. Within this framework, meeting deadlines and spending allocated budgets on time are among the most critical criteria for measuring the success of a development project. However, these metrics have been criticized for their limited scope. Critics argue that such measures often prioritize short-term outputs and financial efficiency over long-term, sustainable outcomes and genuine community empowerment. This project-based approach can lead to a narrow focus on quantifiable results, neglecting the complex, multifaceted nature of development challenges and the need for adaptable, context-specific solutions.

To summarize, the classification of countries as developed or underdeveloped is rooted in a historical narrative where Southern countries were labeled as underdeveloped due to their perceived lower levels of rationality, scientific progress, and productivity compared to the West. This classification relies predominantly on economic and productivity indicators benchmarked against the Western model, reinforcing a hierarchy that often overlooks these nations' diverse and complex realities.

The concept of development and the accompanying discourse significantly influence societies' acceptance of development interventions on the receiving end. The allure of becoming as modern and prosperous as developed countries often underlies this acceptance. The promise of well-being and progress encapsulated in the development discourse presents a compelling vision that aligns with many societies' aspirations. However, it raises critical questions about whether this

acceptance is voluntary or shaped by the portrayal of development as the sole path for human advancement.

Development is often presented not as a choice but as an imperative, driven by a powerful discourse perpetuating its narrative. This discourse frames development as a universal goal and a necessary evolution for all societies, effectively marginalizing alternative paths and perspectives. To understand this dynamic, it is essential to delve into the concept of discourse itself, its role in shaping realities, and more specifically, the development discourse that justifies and sustains development practices.

2.2.3 Development as a discourse

This section delves into the development discourse, exploring its evolution and impact. It examines how this discourse shapes the perception of development, justifies various interventions, and influences the practices and policies of international development. Understanding development discourse is crucial for critically assessing development efforts' motives and outcomes and envisioning more inclusive and context-sensitive approaches to global progress.

Hall (2019) defines discourse as “a coherent body of speech or writing or a group of statements which provide—a language for talking about—i.e. a way of representing a particular kind of knowledge about a topic” (p. 86). How something is described and presented in a coherent body of speech significantly contributes to creating realities about it. This process, known as discourse, shapes perceptions and constructs social realities by framing how we understand and engage with various concepts and phenomena.

Through discourse, particular narratives, values, and meanings influence how individuals and societies perceive and respond to the world around them. Ziai (2016) explains that “the term

discourse usually denotes a structure in the way reality (or a certain aspect of it) is constructed through language” (p. 55). Some reasons for using a particular discourse are to create a desired reality or change certain realities. According to Foucault (1972), discourse is not merely a reflection of reality, but is actively involved in the construction and production of reality. Discourse shapes how we understand and experience the world, and it is shaped by power dynamics and the interests of dominant social groups (Foucault, 1972). As an outcome of power relations, a discourse emerges as a power or a powerful tool for dominating and preserving certain realities.

As a result, discourse and power are inextricably linked. Stuart Hall (2019) maintains that “not only is discourse always implicated in *power*, discourse is one of the ‘systems’ through which power circulates” (p. 89). He adds, “Those who produce the discourse also have the power to make it true- i.e., to enforce its validity, its scientific status” (ibid). The discourse producers possess the power to make it appear true, effectively enforcing its validity and scientific status. This means that instances that generate discourse shape how concepts are understood and establish the standards by which these concepts are accepted and legitimized within society. By controlling the narrative, they influence what is considered knowledge, truth, and reality, thereby maintaining authority and power over how information is perceived and utilized. Giddens (1984) defines power as "transformative capacity" or "the capacity to achieve outcomes" (as cited in Karlberg, 2005, p. 5). In this sense, power is not merely about domination or control but is fundamentally about the ability to shape and transform conditions, situations, and structures to align with specific objectives and goals. Lukes (1974) points out that “Giddens' (1984) definition of power as "transformative capacity" or "the capacity to achieve outcomes" is further elucidated by Karlberg (2005), who

asserts that "power over others can also be exercised by preventing them from identifying or recognizing their own interests" (p. 3).

In international development, this notion of power is particularly pertinent. Discourse on development is deliberately used to frame it to benefit prevailing groups. By representing the controlled populations in a way that rationalizes involvement in their society, these dominant actors are permitted by this discourse to do so. The dominant groups maintain a cycle of reliance and strengthen existing power structures by effectively preventing the subordinate populations from identifying and articulating their own interests through control over the narrative. In addition to justifying outside intervention, this manipulation of speech hides the actual needs and goals of the communities that are ostensibly being 'developed'.

The discourse surrounding international development exerts a profound and multifaceted influence on the lived realities of individuals within affected communities. As previously articulated, discussions on economic growth are often intricately linked to underlying power dynamics, which can obscure individuals' awareness of their own interests and preferences. The empirical findings of this study will illustrate that donor agencies frequently prioritize funding for specific programs, which may not correspond with the immediate and pressing concerns identified by local NGOs. Furthermore, these donor entities routinely formulate financial guidelines and strategies that reflect their perceptions of what is most beneficial for the developing country and themselves, often at the expense of alignment with local needs and perspectives. Such misalignments can lead to a disjunction between the objectives of external funders and the realities faced by local communities, thereby complicating the efficacy and relevance of development interventions.

This study defines discourse as the linguistic framework used to represent, convey, and enact specific objectives within social practices. This framework often utilizes organized and structured concepts to articulate ideas and beliefs, which can create or transform social realities. International development is examined through a critical lens as a discourse that influences perceptions of development and actively shapes the identities and roles of both 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' nations. This deconstruction reveals the power relations embedded within the discourse, highlighting how language reflects and constructs social hierarchies and norms that inform the experiences and interactions of diverse stakeholders within the development sphere. Ziai clarifies that development discourse is essential since “it makes a difference whether we designate an entity as an underdeveloped country, as a newly industrialising country, as an age-old civilisation or as a rogue state, because each of these expressions evokes different images, allows for different political measures and enables different perceptions and constructions of identity” (2016, p.1). In the same vein, Ferguson (1994) argues that development is a broader system of knowledge, practices, and power relationships that shape how we understand and address social and economic issues in the Global South. Ferguson highlights how certain epistemological paradigms dominate the discourse by framing development as a knowledge system. These paradigms often originate from Western scientific and economic thought, which tends to prioritize quantitative measures of progress such as GDP. This dominance can marginalize other forms of knowledge, particularly indigenous and local understandings of development that may emphasize qualitative aspects like community well-being, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. Escobar (1995) maintains that development discourse is the process of articulating knowledge and power that creates and reproduces specific concepts, theories, and practices for social change.

Hence, the language and concepts used to talk about development work towards justifying its practices, transforming societies, and thus justifying the social and political changes resulting from development. Apthorpe (1986) argues that development discourse “justifies itself as being professional and scientific, and on that account socially and politically and altogether unproblematic” (1986, p. 2). Development is envisioned as a system of universally applicable technical interventions aimed at delivering ‘badly needed’ goods to a target population rather than as a cultural process; therefore, it is unsurprising that development has become a destructive force to Third World cultures in the name of people's interests (Escobar, 1995). Rist maintains that with such a justification, “one was at liberty to destroy whole societies for their own good” (Rist, 2002, p. 68). But how does development present itself? And what does it imply?

As previously noted, the concept of international development emerged from a historical obligation of the Global North to civilize and foster the economic and scientific advancement of societies in the Global South. This mandate positioned the Global South as the primary implementer of this mission, thereby linking development with the processes of modernization and Westernization, which were to be modeled after the example set by the North. In this context, development was framed as a scientific endeavor to enhance human capacities and improve societal well-being. This framing granted a rational and widely accepted justification for the existence of development initiatives, legitimizing interventions under the guise of progress and improvement. Such a narrative not only obscures the complexities and nuances of local realities but also perpetuates a hierarchical dynamic that privileges the knowledge and experiences of the Global North over those of the Global South. As a result, the discourse surrounding international development becomes intertwined with issues of power, identity, and the ethical implications of imposing external models of progress on diverse cultural contexts. In addition, “development was

presented as the only solution to the problem of humanity...., it became impossible to question 'development'.....You don't argue about the obvious; the most you can do is try to improve it" (Rist 2002, p. 77). Rist states that "everyone has to attain development (an evolutionist view of history), growth is the foundation of development. Impossible for countries at the bottom to 'catch up' those at the top" (2002, p. 45).

Moreover, the prevailing narrative posits that the sole pathway to achieving development is through adopting modernity, as exemplified by Western nations. This perspective often implies that societies and cultures in the Global South must undergo transformative changes to align with Western ideals and practices, even at the cost of eroding local traditions and identities. Such an approach reinforces a linear and homogenizing conception of development and risks disregarding the intrinsic value and agency of diverse cultural expressions. By framing modernity as a prerequisite for development, the discourse implicitly legitimizes the imposition of external models of progress, thereby perpetuating a cycle of dependency and marginalization. Escobar clarifies that "as an entry point for this inquiry on the nature of development as discourse is its basic premises [that] was the belief in the role of modernization as the only force capable of destroying archaic superstitions and relations, at whatever social, cultural, and political cost. Industrialization and urbanization were seen as the inevitable and necessarily progressive paths to modernization" (1995, p. 39). Rist (2002) explains that the belief in the natural and inevitable 'development' of societies prevented the underdeveloped from being considered as distinct entities with distinct characteristics. Instead, they were judged using the Western standard. Overall, "proponents of this discourse have represented it relentlessly as a neutral scientific tool that explains and facilitates understanding of past and future political-economic processes in the South, and as a set of ideas, that enables the transition of tradition societies to the linear path of universal

modernity” (Sahle, 2010, p. 2) that comes with the promise of well-being. This implies that “such societies should gratefully welcome the technological means that allow them to produce more” (Rist, 2002, p. 96) at every cost.

Development discourse has adeptly evolved to sustain its momentum by continuously identifying new problems that require resolution, thereby ensuring its relevance and persistence. This dynamic adaptation involves shifting towards novel development narratives that justify the ongoing interventions and initiatives. By framing emerging challenges—such as climate change, poverty alleviation, and social inequality—as pressing issues necessitating external expertise and resources, the discourse effectively legitimizes the continuation of development efforts: “Development proceeded by creating ‘abnormalities’ (such as the ‘illiterate,’ the ‘underdeveloped,’ the ‘malnourished,’ ‘small farmers,’ or ‘landless peasants’), which it would later treat and reform” (Escobar 1995, p. 41). Many scholars argue that the continuity of development was not due to its success in solving these problems but it is thanks to the continuity of the dominant discourse, “despite the fact that the history of the last several decades has indicated the limitations of these discourses, the promise of development in the South along Euro-American lines continues to 'gain acceptance everywhere' even though 'the moral duty is fulfilled in the very act of proclamation rather in any actual success’” (Sahle, 2010), p. 1).

Another success factor that granted the continuity of development is the ability to shift the development discourse into discourses that fit into the global political, economic, and environmental changes. From civilization to modernity, development is now supported by the current human security discourse. Sahle argues that “there has been no scarcity of ideas and practices claiming to represent the blueprint for the march towards cultural, political and economic capitalist modernity for social formations in the global South” (2010, p. 1). “Overall, in the post-

1945 period, ideas embedded in shifting development discourses have emerged as the 'common sense' (Gramsci, 1971) through which this process is imagined and mapped out in policy" (ibid).

But why development discourse is a problem? As Ziai states

The discourse of development assumes a consensus on what is seen as developed, progressive and desirable. If one were to take seriously the talk that 'people have to decide for themselves what they see as development', this universal scale would disappear and we could not compare societies unless they had explicitly agreed to one scale (2016, p.2019).

As a result, development discourse assumes that there is a single universal Western path and scale for development. Olivier de Sardan (2005) argues that development is not about all societies reaching the same end goal (usually what countries viewed as developed are now) or aspiring to be like the most successful economies or political systems (as cited in Marais, 2020). Marais comments that "in his view, true development entails dealing with the meaning of the suggested changes, thinking it through, and deciding whether it would be a beneficial adaptation under the current conditions" (Marais, 2020, p. 50). Marais emphasizes that true development goes beyond simply implementing changes or adopting new practices. It involves critically engaging with the meanings behind these proposed changes, carefully considering their implications, and thoughtfully assessing whether they would be beneficial given the specific conditions and context in which they are introduced.

Numerous scholars contend that contemporary development paradigms are increasingly oriented towards participatory approaches that prioritize the involvement of local populations in development decision-making processes. This shift emphasizes the importance of empowering individuals and communities to define their own developmental trajectories, thereby acknowledging their agency and unique contexts. Brett (2009) argues that the emphasis of

development discourse has shifted to empowerment, which emphasizes local communities' agency and participation in shaping their own development paths.

Conversely, recent research still argues that “Millennium Development Goals, the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Universal Human Rights all suggest universalism” (Hamaidia et al., 2018), p. 3). Sondarjee (2021) argues that in the 1990s and 2000s, the World Bank adopted more inclusive processes, involving local governments, NGOs, and civil society, but these practices mainly led to strengthening existing neoliberal policies rather than empowering local communities. She adds that radical ideas like participatory development have been reshaped into quantifiable goals, prioritizing technical efficiency over addressing deeper structural issues (Sondarjee, 2021). The result was a focus on efficiency and measurable outcomes rather than on empowering marginalized groups or challenging existing power structures, as Sondarjee explains. Therefore, have developed countries begun to consider people's aspirations regarding development? This study aims to explore this question in greater depth within the Palestinian context. This will be accomplished by reviewing relevant international development literature and the empirical research conducted for this study.

A critical review of the implications of development discourse illuminates the pivotal role of language and the specific concepts employed within this discourse in perpetuating its perceived universality. The strategic use of language exerts considerable influence over those designated as ‘underdeveloped’, a categorization that constrains their capacity to articulate their own interests and autonomously construct their identities and realities. As a result, both development and translation scholars have increasingly acknowledged the significance of language and translation—conceptualized in a broader sense that extends beyond linguistic concerns—in the context of development. Given the framing of development as an inevitable trajectory, as this study

posits, a pertinent inquiry emerges: Can development be negotiated and translated into local meanings, practices, and priorities?

This study specifically examines the translation of human rights within the framework of development projects, necessitating an introduction to the concept of human rights and its intricate relationship with international development. This examination will establish a foundational understanding of how human rights principles are integrated into development initiatives and the challenges arising in their translation into local contexts. By addressing these issues, the study aims to elucidate the complexities of aligning human rights with communities' diverse realities and aspirations within the development paradigm.

2.3 Human Rights

The concept of human rights encompasses a set of essential rights and freedoms considered to be intrinsic to every individual worldwide. Human rights notions are considered universally applicable, independent of an individual's origin, personal beliefs, or preferred way of life. The contemporary definition of human rights originated during the Enlightenment period in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. Human rights comprise essential features, including the protection of life, the exercise of personal freedom, and property ownership.

With the end of WWII and the establishment of the United Nations, the concept of human rights was included in the preamble and other segments of the UN Charter. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was ratified by the United Nations General Assembly alongside the announcement of the new worldview mentioned earlier. The UDHR is a document that outlines the fundamental human rights that are inherent qualities and are presented as universally applicable to persons worldwide. The aforementioned text has undergone translation

into over 379 distinct languages, thereby establishing its status as the most extensively translated work on a worldwide scale,

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations in 1948, remains a consistent reference point in human rights debates. It has become the most widely translated document in the world, available in 379 languages. As the UN Human Rights website proudly notes, it is the "most translated document in the world" and has been recognized by the Guinness World Records for its unparalleled reach and universality (Bachmann-Medick, 2012a, p. 337).

The UDHR was a response to the WWII war crimes and an attempt to prevent these atrocities from happening again "the horrors of the Second World War provided a certain context for the development of the modern human rights movement" (Clapham, 2015, p. 36). The UDHR was proclaimed by the UN as a universal standard of all people and a global norm, and key mechanisms were created to promote and safeguard the implementation of human rights.

Numerous supplementary human rights treaties were ratified later by the UDHR. The aforementioned treaties encompass the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); both came into force for the relevant states in 1976 (Clapham 2015), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979), which "entered into force in 1981" (Clapham, 2015, 55), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1984, The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) that was adopted by the UNGA in 1990, and The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that was adopted in 2006.

These agreements have provided a comprehensive framework for the creation, application, and protection of international human rights legislation at a global level. These treaties and accords possess legal enforceability upon the nations that have ratified them and provide legal accountability for governments to uphold, safeguard, and fulfill the human rights of persons within their territorial control. When a nation ratifies a treaty, it commits to abiding by the stipulations outlined in the treaty and can be held responsible for any violations of those rights.

The development and expansion of human rights legislation have been accompanied by the emergence and proliferation of human rights organizations. The aforementioned bodies include the United Nations Human Rights Council, the International Criminal Court, and regional courts specifically established to address human rights issues, such as the European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. These institutions play a vital role in the supervision and enforcement of human rights. Moreover, they provide a medium through which individuals who have encountered human rights violations can seek legal redress. Human rights have advanced throughout the 21st century. Modern and developing human rights issues have been prioritized, such as the right to privacy in the digital age, the right to an unpolluted environment, and especially indigenous rights.

Despite progress, global human rights efforts face challenges. Human rights violations continue to deprive millions of people of their basic rights. Clapham (2015, p.33) argues that “We did not yet have meaningful international rights or obligations which protect human beings as human beings”. Human rights are hindered by inequality. For example, wealth inequality is growing, making it harder for millions to obtain essential services and opportunities. Conflict and violence hinder human rights since conflict-induced displacement forces many people to move and instills a pervasive sense of insecurity. Conflict may also damage infrastructure and disrupt

services. Discrimination is widespread and affects race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and other variables. Discrimination prevents people from realizing their full human rights. Climate change threatens human rights too. The current condition is already harming people's health and finances. Poverty, inequality, and war are exacerbated by climate change. These issues interwind with international development endeavors. Gready & Ensor (2016) explain that Human rights have become an integral part of development discourse, with economic and social rights now mainstreamed into development discussions. They even explain that the focus has moved from whether these rights are justifiable to examining the degree and methods of their enforcement. They add that, this process has faced resistance and skepticism since some critics argue that human rights have promoted a narrow, technical view of development, prioritizing individual rights at the expense of broader goals like distributive justice and participatory democracy, while other perspectives, particularly from marginalized groups, view rights as essential for enhancing agency, strengthening citizenship, and holding power accountable (Gready & Ensor, 2016). These differing views reflect ongoing debates about the role and impact of human rights in shaping development outcomes. Therefore, the relationship between international development and human rights will be reviewed in the next sections. Before that, however, relevant to this research is to discuss the universalism versus relativism of human rights, the different interpretations of human rights, and human rights and power.

Jones (2023) maintains that the concept of human rights can be viewed through different disciplinary perspectives such as history, law, philosophy, social science, concepts, categories of rights, and cultural relativism. Therefore, the views and challenges related to the cultural relativism versus universalism of human rights concepts and the translation of human rights into local contexts will be reviewed in the following sections.

2.3.1 The universality versus relativism of human rights

Academic literature has extensively examined the discourse surrounding the universalism and relativism of human rights. The ongoing debate questions whether human rights values should be universally applicable or contingent upon cultural and regional specificities, a discussion that continues to be explored from many scholarly perspectives. Abualwafa (1995) contends that when human rights are viewed as inherent entitlements belonging to all individuals, regardless of gender or racial identity, they possess an intrinsic connection to the person and exhibit universal qualities, extending even to the cosmic realm. Conversely, he argues that if human rights are perceived as rights articulated in specific international documents, they diverge from universality and are instead rooted in Western origins or sources from this perspective. (Abulwafa,1995, my translation). This suggests that international human rights standards, as outlined in global treaties and conventions, may reflect Western values and norms, which can be at odds with the non-Western societies' cultural and social contexts. This view challenges the assumption that these codified rights are universally applicable, emphasizing their Western origins and the potential imposition of Western perspectives on diverse cultural and regional contexts. However, Jones (2023) argues that Western powers' impact on modern human rights is complex: although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) has been criticized for mirroring Western ideas, not all Western states backed it, for example, colonial powers opposed universal rights, the US fought racial discrimination and socio-economic rights, and the USSR opposed inherent rights. He adds that non-Western nations like Syria, Lebanon, and China helped create the UDHR, which makes human rights history more complex than a Western domination narrative (Jones, 2023).

(An-Naim, 2021) argues that all cultures accept the concept of universality of rights, but the specific content and implementation vary. Therefore, a tension between universality and

uniformity must be negotiated. This means that many cultures accept the core principles of human rights. An-Naim advocates for a more localized and self-determined approach to human rights. However, this also requires a careful negotiation between respecting cultural differences and upholding fundamental human rights globally.

Jones clarifies, “Being norms-based and top-down universalist values certainly invites a range of context-specific challenges and critiques of their legitimacy.....They also embody an authority with their norms and especially through legal commitments” (Jones, 2023, p. 7). Therefore, the texts of human rights laws can be seen as imposed and authoritative, especially if they conflict with certain societal, cultural, and religious values. However, Hogemann (2020), argues that applying fundamental human rights is a moral duty that should overcome cultural differences, and the benefits of globalization force nations to accept human rights even if they disagree with their culture. Others see that some governments try to escape applying human rights to their society by using the universalism versus relativism argument.

Some researchers argue for finding a middle ground between universalism and relativism of Human Rights laws (Johansson Dahre, 2017). However, the challenges of balancing the universally declared human rights and the local values and context are acknowledged (Hogeman, 2020, Mullender, 2003). The experience of some Islamic countries to localize some human rights treaties led to reproducing the original document due to the absence of effective enforcement mechanisms and partiality. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), an inter-governmental organization of 57 member states, established two prominent human rights instruments: the 1990 Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, which is non-binding and subordinates all rights to Sharia law, and the 2005 Covenant of the Rights of the Child in Islam, which allows for domestic law limitations (Cismas, 2011). The OIC's Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission

(IPHRC), established in 2008 and governed by a 2011 Statute, is primarily consultative and lacks mechanisms for monitoring or addressing human rights complaints, raising concerns about its independence and effectiveness (Cismas, 2011). Mozaffari (2021) maintains that the 2020 revision of the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam addressed longstanding debates between Western and Muslim states over its compatibility with international standards. He explains that despite aligning more closely with the UN human rights language, the revised declaration failed to harmonize these standards with Islamic teachings, as the IPHRC essentially replicated existing international human rights texts (Mozaffari, 2021). A significant challenge in applying both universal human rights and Islamic frameworks in many Arab and Islamic countries lies in the nature of their governance structures, which often do not align with either democratic or Islamic principles. These regimes typically operate in a hybrid manner, failing to embody the values of secular democracy or a cohesive interpretation of Islamic governance. This disjunction between state policies and societal values results in a lack of consensus on the appropriate human rights framework, thereby complicating efforts to establish a unified and coherent human rights agenda that resonates with the government and the populace.

Mullender (2003) argues that the primary challenge lies in implementing human rights due to the intricate balancing of competing interests and the diverse interpretations of principles. Consequently, he suggests that conventional human rights discourse would benefit from integrating diverse perspectives and philosophical frameworks. He contends that balancing universal ideals and local contexts may prove more effective than strict adherence to universalism or cultural relativism. He adds that supporting a non-exhaustive vision of the good, such as multiculturalism in Canada, may help reconcile universal and local perspectives on human rights (Mullender, 2003). This method acknowledges that creating a decent and just society cannot be

accomplished in a single, conclusive step. Rather, it should be done through accepting a range of moral, social, and cultural frameworks. Canada's multiculturalism offers a real-world illustration. It promotes the cohabitation of various cultural identities in one country. Berry (2013) maintains that Canada's policy emphasizes cultural diversity, equity, and inclusion, distinguishing it from other countries that equate multiculturalism with mere diversity. This paradigm fosters a society where many viewpoints on what makes a good life can flourish by respecting and integrating people from different cultural values and traditions. An-Naim (2021) calls for a human-centric approach where Human rights must be specified and protected by people in their own cultural contexts and maintains that imposing a uniform standard derived from one culture denies this self-determination.

In conclusion, the complexities surrounding the dichotomy between the universal application and relative interpretation of human rights stem not solely from clashes with diverse cultures but also from variations in their understanding, execution, and localization. The next section discusses the interpretation and localization of human rights in local communities.

2.3.2 The interpretation and localization of human rights

All legal systems modify and integrate international human rights norms in various ways to reflect their unique legal, cultural, and socioeconomic situations. This process, known as localization, entails understanding and applying international human rights standards within the context of a country's existing legal and institutional frameworks. Localization is critical because it guarantees that human rights are acknowledged formally, legally, and effectively in each nation's context. Peerenboom (2003) argues that all legal systems localize international human rights in many ways. Clapham (2015) adds that there is still a dispute on the meaning and best execution of human rights and that translating international human rights laws into national law is necessary to

implement rights and provide remedies for abuse victims. When we go from abstract pronouncements to actual execution and responsibilities, we face the argument that rights must match each nation's culture and economy, something that sometimes is seen as a major blow to 'universality' in human rights, still, it is incorrect to think that human rights can or should function independently from their local settings (Clapham, 2015). This means that the concept of universal human rights implies that everyone should have certain rights, regardless of where they reside, but in reality, these rights frequently need to be applied while taking into account the unique social, cultural, and economic circumstances of each country. However, Clapham (2015) explains that even fundamental human rights such as the right to life can be disputable, for example, the European Court of Human Rights ruled on a frozen embryo dispute between divorced parents: since there is no European consensus on the scientific and legal definition of life, the Court normally gives States freedom to initiate the right to life. He adds that,

Clearly now the prohibitions on crimes against humanity and genocide apply in all places and at all times. Other rights related to torture, slavery, or forced labour contain core content that cannot be adjusted to consider local conditions. However, when it comes, for example, to rights to freedom of expression, privacy, access to justice, food, water, health housing, and education, we shall see that the issues become more complex as we need to consider how to weigh competing interests (Clapham, 2015, p.53).

In general, certain fundamental human rights, like preventing crimes and genocides, are universally applicable across all contexts, while other rights may be subject to adaptation based on specific local circumstances. However, what is often overlooked is that localization isn't about compromising global standards; it's about ensuring that these standards are meaningfully implemented in ways that resonate with the local realities and that people everywhere have the right to have human rights. Immler & Sakkers (2022) state that “there is an important and central

lesson to be learned from the debate and localisation of the human rights agenda if Agenda 2030⁴ is to be successfully implemented; namely to take the local more seriously....To date, there has been little attention paid to the localising process” (p. 263).

In conclusion, the localization of human rights presents significant challenges, particularly concerning the definition and interpretation of 'localization'. This concept may sometimes be understood as a mere departure from universal human rights frameworks or, in more problematic instances, as a means to justify violating fundamental rights under the pretext of cultural or political exigencies. The next section shows how applying human rights principles became part of international development initiatives and how international development became a human right.

2.4 International Development and Human Rights

In the 1980s, international development faced ethical scrutiny concerning conditions for recipient nations, leading to a shift towards more morally guided, participatory approaches and eventually paving the way for increased attention to human rights in the 2000s (Johns, 2023). Uvin (2007) traces the integration of human rights into development discourse, beginning with the Right to Development and evolving into the Rights-Based Approach (RBA). As stated in the United Nations General Assembly's 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development, every person has the right to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political development (*Declaration on the Right to Development*, 2024). Access to developmental benefits emerged as a direct response to the widespread critiques of traditional development models, which often failed to address issues of inequality, exclusion, and lack of accountability. In response, development was redefined as a human right, positioning access to its benefits as an entitlement

⁴ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

rather than a privilege. Gready & Ensor (2016) argue that historically, the right to development emphasizes the impact of colonialism and global economic systems, advocating for fairer development policies and challenging structural adjustment programs that overlook historical and global economic influences on development outcomes. Uvin (2007) maintains that in the 1970s, developing countries promoted the Right to Development to challenge global economic inequalities, but the concept was largely symbolic, lacking concrete implementation mechanisms. However, the Right Based Approach HBA was developed in the 1990s as a more operational framework for integrating human rights into development practices. Uvin (2007) explains that the HBA shifted the emphasis from state-level responsibilities to individual entitlements, redefining development outcomes as rights that individuals can claim rather than services or benefits that are given.

Graedy and Ensor (2016) explain that a Rights-Based Approach (RBA) to development presents development outcomes as entitlements or rights, not just acts of charity. They clarify that the state must be empowered to take responsibility for fulfilling these rights; RBA focuses on building the capacity of both rights-holders to claim their rights and duty-bearers, like the state, to meet their obligations; RBA is guided by participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and adherence to human rights laws; Poverty is seen as a result of deeper issues like inequality and power imbalances, not just technical failures. Therefore, RBAs focus on addressing these root causes (Graedy & Ensor (2016)). By doing this, it hopes to enable people and communities—especially the marginalized ones—to assert their rights and hold those in positions of authority responsible. Moreover, international development has increasingly integrated human rights initiatives that promote peace, prevent violence, and ensure equality, aligning with human rights frameworks' overarching objectives.

However, while development practices started promoting the participatory approach, human rights are top-down universal values. Uvin (2007) explains a distinction between RBAs, which focus on political and social activism, and Human Rights-Based Approaches (HRBAs), which focus more on legal standards and international norms. He adds that while HRBAs can sometimes be donor-driven and top-down, RBAs emphasize grassroots movements and bottom-up participation, aligning with alternative development perspectives. In other words, HRBAs are grounded explicitly in international human rights law and standards emphasizing the legal obligations of states and other duty-bearers to protect, respect, and fulfill human rights. Thus, they ensure that states and other actors adhere to normative international human rights frameworks like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenants, and other legal treaties. Conversely, RBAs are broader than HRBAs and focus on the entitlements of individuals, communities, and groups within the development process, whether or not these entitlements are strictly rooted in international human rights law. While RBAs incorporate many of the same principles as HRBAs, such as participation and empowerment, they do not always require explicit reference to legal frameworks. RBAs address broader justice, equity, and empowerment issues beyond international human rights law boundaries, potentially covering a wider range of social, political, and economic claims.

The tension between these approaches results from the different ways they seek to achieve their goals. While the participatory approach in development prioritizes local engagement and context-specific solutions, the human rights framework emphasizes the application of universal standards that may not always align with local practices or beliefs. This can lead to conflicts or challenges in implementation, particularly in regions where local customs and traditions diverge significantly from international human rights norms. The findings of this research are expected to

shed light on the context and tensions of translating and applying human rights in the context of Palestinian development.

A substantial body of research explores the role of linguistic translation in development. This scholarship examines how linguistic translation facilitates the transmission of development knowledge, policies, and practices across diverse cultural and linguistic landscapes. Moreover, this body of work highlights the challenges and complexities of translating development concepts, emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding of local cultures, languages, and social dynamics to achieve meaningful and sustainable development outcomes. The following section elucidates how translation has been instrumental in shaping development initiatives, addressing cultural and linguistic barriers, and communicating between international development agencies and local communities.

2.5 Translation Studies and International Development Studies

A survey of studies combining translation and development reveals a growing interest in understanding how these two practices mutually influence and impact each other's functions. For instance, international development has been considered a context that significantly affects translation practices, while translation is viewed as a mediator of development. Understanding the interaction between development and translation helps uncover their relationship's reciprocal positive and negative effects and illustrates how both disciplines can collaborate more effectively. This body of research seeks to elucidate the complexities involved in translating development initiatives, highlighting the importance of context-specific translation strategies and the potential for improved outcomes through better integration of these fields. The prevailing body of research predominantly frames translation within the development context as a linguistic endeavor.

Effective research at the intersection of translation and international development is traditionally centered on the interlinguistic translation of development project materials. This approach primarily aimed to evaluate the linguistic quality and the conveyance of intercultural meanings. In the last decade, however, interdisciplinary research between translation studies (TS) and development studies (DS) has begun to address the complex dynamics between translation and development processes, covering multifaceted investigations such as language and translation policies in development projects, translating and preserving Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices within development contexts; the role of interpreters in facilitating effective communication between local and international stakeholders; the process of localization and adaptation of development materials to suit local contexts; power dynamics and inequalities stemming from colonial legacies inherent in development practice, and the impact of translated materials in achieving development goals and including the local partners and beneficiaries. The primary objectives of the referenced research are to assess whether translation within the development context enhances communication, fosters greater inclusion and participation, reduces marginalization, and ultimately contributes to improved development outcomes.

One of the most recent studies demonstrating how development ideas were communicated as an inter-semiotic transfer is (Chibamba, 2018). Focusing on Zambia, Chibamba investigated the historical, political, linguistic, socioeconomic, and cultural factors influencing translation in public health communication. In her study, translation is considered a cluster concept and a communicative act. Her study emphasizes the importance of intersemiotic translation in oral-culture societies by utilizing Jakobson's three types of translation, descriptive translation studies, and functionalist theories. Chimamba's study aligns with this research by emphasizing the

significance of the development context, which influences how translation conveys and supports development goals.

Conversely, our research conceptualizes and defines translation as a broader concept encompassing a broader scope and functionality, extending beyond linguistic and intersemiotic transfer to include mediation, negotiation, and reciprocal transformation processes.

Recent studies have increasingly emphasized language and translation policy planning in development, highlighting the critical role of language and translation in effectively communicating development goals while engaging local partners and beneficiaries. These studies underscore the importance of language and translation in shaping the outcomes of development projects and enhancing the accountability of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). Simultaneously, they emphasize power dynamics in the development context and how translation plays a role in all that. For example, Tesseur (2022b) argues that translation and interpretation can improve access to information and opportunities, as well as facilitate proper representation, equitable two-way communication, and improved NGO accountability. Tesseur (2022a) discuss some of the conflicts and discrepancies between INGOs' working values of inclusiveness and their translation. Tesseur (2020) argues that considering the role of languages and translation can lead to a more in-depth understanding of factors contributing to effective local capacity building.

Frings-Hessami (2022) maintains that failing to accommodate for language and translation needs of the locals in development contexts can affect the accountability of the INGOs and their ability to reach the beneficiaries and thus achieve project goals calling the INGOS to develop work practices that are more in tune with the cultural and linguistic preferences of the local partners.

Roth (2019) emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing linguistic and cultural capital within the global context of aid organizations. Specifically, employees of national NGOs who are proficient in English and possess a deep understanding of their national culture are seen as crucial to the success of development projects. Their intercultural awareness gained through learning another language provides them with unique insights that native English speakers, who may not have undergone the process of learning a foreign language, often lack. This underscores the need for aid organizations to leverage the skills and knowledge of these bilingual and bicultural individuals, as their ability to navigate both local and international contexts can significantly enhance the effectiveness and relevance of development initiatives.

In conclusion, the reviewed research emphasizes the importance of enhancing the accessibility of development information and systems through language policies and translation, positioning them as critical tools for involving local partners. This approach promotes social justice, accountability, and more effective development outcomes. Additionally, the research acknowledges that using English as a lingua franca in development projects can exacerbate the exclusion and marginalization of those who are not proficient in the language, further widening the asymmetric power gap between international and local actors. By prioritizing English, development projects risk sidelining valuable local perspectives and expertise, perpetuating a dynamic in which international voices dominate while local contributions are undervalued or ignored. This linguistic hegemony undermines meaningful participation and equitable collaboration, ultimately jeopardizing the success and sustainability of development efforts.

A departure from the focus on language and language policies in development can be detected in Krøvel (2020). In his research on sustainable development for the Indigenous population, he extends the attention and definition of translation to the mutual understanding

between different traditions of science where capitalist and socialist forms of development were rejected because both “are destructive of both humans and ecological systems” (p. 129). He highlights the importance of translation and dialogue between knowledges, called “Diálogo de Saberes”. All knowledge is incomplete (of course, also science), so reciprocity is necessary to share and improve experiences. Therefore, we need a translation exercise among these knowledges to make them mutually intelligible” (Krøvel, 2020, p. 130). Translation between knowledges is, then, emphasized as a mutual understanding for achieving equality between partners of development and to benefit from the indigenous knowledge as an alternative to Western knowledge. This research aligns with Santos’s sociologies of absences and emergencies and his concept of ecology of knowledge. Santos advocates for the ecology of knowledge as a pluralistic, non-hierarchical approach that recognizes the diversity of knowledge systems across cultures and contexts. Instead of privileging one form of knowledge (e.g., scientific or Western) over others, the ecology of knowledge promotes the coexistence of multiple ways of knowing, including traditional, experiential, and spiritual knowledge. This approach allows for a more inclusive and democratic production of knowledge, valuing each system based on its usefulness and relevance to specific contexts rather than on abstract criteria of scientific validity. For Santos, the ecology of knowledge is essential for achieving cognitive justice, as it acknowledges the complexity and richness of the world’s diverse knowledge systems. He asserts that societies can better address complex social, political, and environmental challenges by creating space for dialogue and interaction between different knowledge forms. This framework also challenges the epistemological monopoly of the Global North and encourages the participation of marginalized communities in global knowledge production, thus contributing to social justice and equity.

Chris G. et al. (2020) discuss how sustainable development goals are translated into different national polities, and they wonder whether some translations can lead to unsustainability due to the various social and political contexts in different countries. This implies that the universal nature of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) might clash with local realities, leading to potential mismatches between the intended global objectives and the actual local practices and priorities. Mancuso Brehm (2019) calls for including language and translation policies in development project planning, as well as for the monitoring and evaluation process and for prioritizing contextual knowledge, language, and cultural understanding as major factors in the success of development programs.

Many academics increasingly argue that the work of translators and translation practices should be broadened to include meaning negotiation in the development context. For example, Hamaidia et al. (2018) focus on the agency of translators who should go beyond the linguistic meaning and work on “the processes of making meaning in specific complex local contexts” (2018, p.22). In her research, Footitt (2017) shows how Oxfam displayed linguistic hospitality by accepting other ways of “naming and enacting aid and development, and the provision of language and translation policies as integral elements in ongoing initiatives to regionalize and globalize” (p. 525). By doing so, Oxfam sought to adapt to the language complexities present in the areas where they operate (p. 525). This highlights the organization's commitment to respecting and accommodating linguistic diversity, crucial for effective and inclusive development practices. Both Hamaidia et al. (2018) and Footitt (2017) argue that language and translation policies in the contact zones of cultures, such as development, are often messy and require well-defined policies and strategies to effectively convey development ideas to targeted contexts.

Previous research indicates that linguistic translation in many development contexts is often underplanned and insufficiently addressed. Recent scholarship has begun to focus on translation in development as an active and dynamic process that facilitates dialogue between the involved parties, thereby enhancing communication and mutual understanding in the development process.

Studies such as Olivier de Sardan (2005), Westoby & Dowling (2013), Marais (2014, 2019, 2020), Tesseur (2017), Footitt (2019), and Hamaidai et al. (2018) have agreed that development is a meaning-creating process that contributes to making realities and changing societies. They also have facilitated the interaction between TS and DS by identifying avenues through which both disciplines can mutually enhance and contribute to each other's performance. For example, Footitt (2019) discusses the importance of the presence and absence of translation in development in creating realities on the ground, and she maintains that the hegemony of English as the dominating language used by development decontextualizes the used concepts and affects “the ways in which the meanings of development are created, and project initiatives implemented” (p. 396). Tesseur (2017) argues that TS should contribute to the professionalization of translation in development by involving translation technology, or by providing insight into theoretical issues concerning the connections between human rights, Amnesty as a movement, and language and translation.

One of the first translation scholars who established a conceptual link between TS and DS is Kobus Marais (2014), who considers translation in South Africa as a development context and uses complexity theory to explain how semiotics, including translation as semiotics, contribute to creating meaning and social reality. From there, he wants to “understand and account for what people do when they need to communicate, in whichever mode, with other people who do not

speak the same language as they do” (Marais, 2014, p. 144). Furthermore, he aimed to understand and account for how these communications contribute to the creation and maintenance of social ties or “the social” (ibid).

Marais (2020) uses Peircean semiotics and complexity thinking to present the parameters of a theory of development from a translation perspective. He argues that “all meaning making and meaning taking processes entail a translational aspect, and this translational aspect of all of reality is the interest of Translation Studies” (Marais 2020, p. 48). Marais (2020) points out that ‘Translation’ can be used to study all realities. However, Marais does not provide examples of how translation can be used in this way.

The vast majority of the reviewed literature predominantly addresses translation as a process of linguistic and cultural transfer, with particular emphasis on language policies, the impact of the absence of translation in development, and the use of English as a lingua franca, especially in relation to its influence on power dynamics and the hegemony of English. The role of translation in communication and inclusion in international development is highly acknowledged. However, we argue that viewing translation solely through the lens of linguistic transfer is insufficient within the development context, especially when new ideas and values are transferred via translation. In addition, translation should work on revealing rather than concealing the smooth integration of differences or newness. Specifically, by understanding translation in its broader sense and scope, a dialectical relationship between an extended understanding of translation and development can emerge, offering valuable insights into how these practices can mutually enhance one another.

This thesis further posits that the intersection of TS and DS can be expanded by identifying the common ground between their foundational assumptions and paradigms. This conceptual linkage would allow for a more nuanced understanding of how translation can play a transformative role in development processes, particularly in addressing imbalances in communication, power, and participation. By framing translation as both a category of analysis and practical intervention, this work seeks to explore how translation, in its expanded sense, can actively shape and contextualize development projects.

Moreover, this argument is bolstered by an empirical study that investigates the role of translation in the contextualization of development ideas in response to Bachmann-Medick's (2009) call for research into "what empirical research is furthered by working with the category of translation" (p. 14). By examining the actions of cultural mediators, this study aims to reveal the local knowledge embedded in development processes. It demonstrates how translation can act as a bridge, facilitating the transition from externally imposed development models to more locally driven forms of self-development. In doing so, this thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of the transformative potential of translation as both an analytical concept and a practice which can optimize development outcomes through more inclusive and context-sensitive approaches. The conceptual link between TS and DS is developed in the framework chapter.

Chapter 3: International Development in Palestine as a Context for Translation

Palestine represents a unique and critical context for studying translation in international development due to its high dependency on external aid. For over 75 years, Palestinians have relied on external aid and international development projects. The prolonged reliance on international aid has created a complex environment where development initiatives are still heavily mediated by translation across multiple languages and cultural frameworks. In this occupied Palestinian Territories OPT, hundreds of international donors and both international and local NGOs have been working together, necessitating the use of different languages and, consequently, translation. This research explores and analyzes the development context and the specific actions undertaken to translate development initiatives within the Palestinian context. This analysis aims to provide insights into how translation can be optimized to better support self-development and sustainable donor practices. In the context of development, the translation process extends beyond linguistic conversion; it requires bridging and negotiating diverse cultural and epistemic perspectives, encompassing differing ways of understanding and interpreting the world. This intercultural exchange is vital for the success and sustainability of development initiatives, as it ensures that local contexts and needs are adequately addressed. The focus will be on understanding how this context and these actions contribute to or hinder self-development among the Palestinian population. Through this research, we aim to contribute to both the theoretical discourse on translation and the practical implementation of development projects in complex, multilingual, and intercultural settings.

This chapter will lay out the Palestinian context as a development context. It begins by elucidating the critical importance of context in researching translation phenomena. By detailing the Palestinian context, an understanding of the specific environment in which the translation

occurs is explained. The Palestinian context involves cultural, social, historical, and political dimensions influencing the translation process and its outcomes. Afterwards, the literature on international development in Palestine is reviewed. The literature highlights several critical issues such as tendencies to universalize development discourse and success indicators such as the focus on measuring development through statistics and economic indicators rather than by the aspirations and needs of the local population. Therefore, this research tries to investigate whether the development local partners have a voice in defining and determining what kind of development they want.

3.1 The Importance of Context in Translation Research

Since the cultural turn, the study of translation phenomena has become inextricably linked to studying the context in which any type of translation happens. This shift emphasizes the importance of understanding the cultural, social, and historical factors influencing translation practices and outcomes. The cultural turn encourages a holistic analysis of translation phenomena, taking into account the multiple layers of context that influence translation. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances involved in translation processes. Contextual analysis also brings to light ethical considerations in translation. Translators must navigate issues of power, representation, and cultural sensitivity, ensuring that their work respects the involved cultures and communities.

This research investigates whether translating development in Palestine considers the specificities of its context. For example, the development context in the OPT is different from the development context in many other developing countries because it is not a post-colonial context but rather an ongoing colonial context. Marais asks, “if I want to understand a particular context, can I understand it with the logic of another context? Or perhaps what I am asking is whether there

is only one kind of logic for understanding the world” (2014, p. 9). Therefore, Marais (2014) has called for the study of translation phenomena in Africa from the viewpoint of its specific context. Consequently, the following sections elaborate on the specificity of the Palestinian development context.

3.2 Palestine as a Context for Development

For this research, the studied translations are considered as the outcome of the context in question. Hence, the “context” here will be defined using Kobus Marais’ words when he states, “My existence, my hopes, my history is the context in which I live, work and write” (Marais, 2014, p. 3). Thus, the context of the Palestinian people that will be used in this study means their history, their way of living and existence, and their hopes and aspirations. The culture and the dominant beliefs (religious, political, and national) will also be briefly introduced. It is important to understand the historical context that brought out the status quo in Palestine. Knowing the historical background will help us understand how people there currently live and why. It will also help understand the hopes and aspirations of the people, or in other words what they want from international development.

3.2.1 The historical context

The first word that comes to anyone’s mind when they hear about Palestine or the conflict in the Middle East is “complicated”. In the same vein, Spangler (2015) states,

Complexity is a challenge. “No, no,” we are told repeatedly, often accompanied by dismissive hand motions, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is “just too complicated.” “Haven’t they always hated each other?” we are asked. “Wouldn’t we have to understand hundreds of years of a very complicated history to be informed about this conflict? (p. 5).

My answer is ‘yes’ to having to understand a long-term history of colonization. However, the word complicated may imply that a situation is beyond comprehension or resolution. Anyway, appendix 5 provides a brief history of the region that starts from WWI, to help understand the current ongoing colonization that brought about the status quo. My information is mainly taken from Neil Caplan’s book *The Israel Palestine Conflict: A Contested History* (Caplan, 2019, 2009), not only because it is one of the most updated books about the issue but given the fact that the history of the region is very contested, the reviews on this book describe it as an objective academic book that does not attempt to take sides or favor a certain narrative (Aronoff, 2010; Dowty, 2010; Stein, 2010; *Akhbar-Alkhaleej*, 2014). Consequently, in this section, I will focus on the history that triggered the need for international development in the region. Afterward, I will provide a brief description of Palestinian society in terms of culture, education, inhabitants, etc.

The region of this study is what is known currently as the occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT); the area that comprises about 22% of the historical Palestine. It is also the same area that is called the West Bank and Gaza. This area has been dependent on humanitarian aid since 1948, which is the date when the Israeli occupation of historical Palestine resulted in the displacement of 700,000 to 750,000 Palestinians. This mass displacement, known as the Nakba (Arabic for ‘catastrophe’), resulted in the large-scale exodus of Palestinians from their homes in what became the State of Israel, leading to the ongoing Palestinian refugee crisis. A big percentage of the Palestinians still live in refugee camps that are dependent on the UNRWA to provide them with health care, education, and other humanitarian aid such as food packages. However, what came to be called development projects has started since Oslo Accord between the Palestinians and the Israelis in 1993. Oslo agreement allowed the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to administratively run security and basic services in the West Bank and Gaza. However,

“the Palestinian territory has been divided into three areas: Area ‘A’ [18 percent of the territory] with full Palestinian security control; Area ‘B’ [22 percent of the West Bank] with joint Israeli Palestinian control; and Area ‘C’ [over 60 percent of the West Bank] with primary Israeli control; Palestine has no security jurisdiction whatsoever in East Jerusalem although the city is part of Palestine according to international law” (Qafisheh, 2020, p. 172). Giacca & Nohl (2019) clarify that “control was maintained over the majority of the occupied territories, creating a separation between territory (controlled by Israel) and population (under the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority). Area C exemplifies this: although the Palestinian Authority is responsible for service delivery, Israel hampers the development of infrastructure and the movement of goods and people” (p. 493). Since the Oslo Accords, the international community has committed to supporting the Palestinians in three key areas: developing an independent state, establishing a stable and self-sufficient economy, and fostering peace.

3.2.2 Existence: Current situation

Today, the aspiration for Palestinian independence and the establishment of a sovereign state remains a distant and challenging objective. This is particularly due to the continued suspension of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 1515, which endorsed the two-state solution, and the stagnation of the peace process between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The resolution aimed to facilitate the establishment of a Palestinian state through a series of reciprocal steps by both parties, including security measures, the cessation of violence, and the halting of Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied territories. The resolution's implementation has faced numerous obstacles, including the differing visions for a final settlement, including the status of Jerusalem, borders, security arrangements, and the right of return for Palestinian refugees, which remain major sticking points. Continued Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank and

East Jerusalem has been a significant barrier to the peace process. These settlements are considered illegal under international law and have been a source of tension, as they encroach on land envisioned for a future Palestinian state.

The varying stances of international actors have also influenced the peace process. While the UN and many countries support a two-state solution, differing policies and priorities among key players, including the United States and regional powers, have impacted the feasibility of achieving this goal. Palestinian uprisings or Intifadas are continuous. Confrontations and casualties are falling from both sides while I am writing this research. The separation wall and the many permanent and temporal checkpoints are restricting the daily movements of the Palestinians who must cross the checkpoints to go to work or school or see family members. The war on Gaza is launched every few years, and the siege around it is continuing to make Gaza the biggest open-air prison on earth. On September 18, 2024, the General Assembly adopted a text demanding Israel to end its unlawful presence and policies in OPT within one year⁵. The text was adopted by a majority in a recorded vote of 124 in favor to 14 against, with 43 abstentions. Several of the states that either voted against the resolution or abstained are significant donors to development and human rights initiatives in the OPT. These countries have articulated objectives aimed at fostering development to support the establishment of a Palestinian state and advancing peace in the region. Ibrahim and Beaudet (2012) explain that, despite substantial aid flows, economic and social conditions in the OPT have deteriorated. They add that international norms emphasize aid effectiveness, state-building, and conflict prevention, yet, these principles have not been fully realized in the OPT due to the occupation: Israel's control over key aspects of Palestinian life, including natural resources, security, and movement, has limited the PNA's effectiveness and

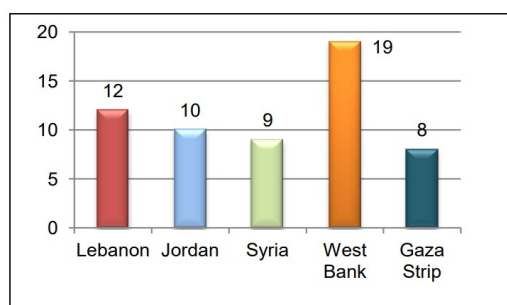
⁵ <https://press.un.org/en/2024/ga12626.doc.htm>

undermined aid efforts. They explain that the Oslo process failed to address critical issues such as East Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, and the right of return for Palestinian refugees, which has led to ongoing conflict and instability (Ibrahim and Beaudet, 2012).

3.2.3 The Palestinian society: Population, culture, and education

According to the 2022 census (PCPSR, 2022), the number of Palestinians living in the West Bank is about 3.2 million, while in Gaza, there are about 2.3 million. About 43% of the WB and Gaza population are refugees. The total number of Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA amounted to 5.9 million as of the 2018 census (please see figure 2: Distribution of refugee camps per Arab countries, and figure 3: The percentage of Palestinian refugees per Arab country).

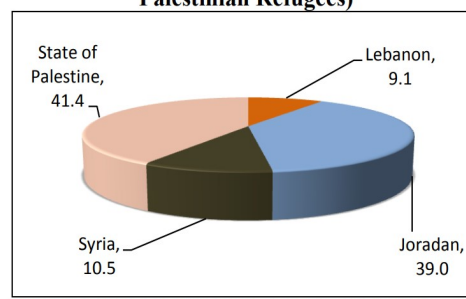
Number of Official Palestinian Refugee Camps as Recognized by UNRWA by the Residential Country



Source: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), annual statistics 2018, (01/01/2017)

Figure 2: Number of Official Palestinian Refugee Camps as Recognized by UNRWA by Country.

Percentage Distribution of Palestinian Refugees by the Residential Country 2017, (According to the data of UNRWA on the Palestinian Refugees)



Source: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), annual statistics 2018, (01/01/2017)

Figure 3: Percentage Distribution of Palestinian Refugees by the Residential Country, 2017.

Palestinians are a young population where, in the West Bank, 62% are under the age of 30, and in Gaza, about 50% are under the age of 19. West Bank and Gaza have one of the highest

literacy rates globally, with an illiteracy rate of only 2.5% for persons aged 15 years and above. According to the UNDP Report 2014, “Despite economic hardship, households continue to prioritize investing in higher education for their members. From 1993 to 2011, the enrolment rate of students in higher education increased by 940%. A higher proportion of females are enrolling each year. The gender gap is narrowing, and overall enrolment rates are increasing”⁶. However, the UNDP 2022-2023 report indicates that “the cycle of de-development and economic decline in the Gaza Strip as a result of the protracted blockade and recurrent hostilities translates into constant higher unemployment rates, reaching 47% in 2021 (as compared to 16% in the West Bank). Youth unemployment also remains high, particularly for skilled and educated graduates”⁷. According to the 2020 census, 80% of households have internet access, and the unemployment rate as of 2020 is 26%.

In addition to the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza, there are also 1.9 million Palestinians living in historical Palestine, which was occupied in 1948 and whose ancestors managed to stay in their towns and villages after the 1948 war. They carry Israeli passports, and they are counted with the number of the Israeli population. More than 700,000 Israeli settlers live in WB as per the 2019 census. About 97.7% of the Palestinians are Muslims, while 2.3% are Christian.

3.3 Hopes: What do Palestinians Want?

After providing a concise overview of the historical trajectory and contemporary living conditions of the Palestinian people, and contextualizing the current Palestinian situation, I will delve into scholarly research that elucidates the aspirations and basic requirements of the

⁶ <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/ps/UNDP-papp-research-PHDR2015Education.pdf>

⁷ https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-08/ppf_final_and_complete.pdf

Palestinian population. This examination will draw upon the literature that presents an understanding of what Palestinians want and hope for. The aspirations and needs of the Palestinian people align closely with the global agenda set by the United Nations through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals, which include eradicating poverty, achieving quality education, and promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions, reflect universal human rights and development objectives that can be relevant to all people, including Palestinians. However, do they address the main rights aspired by the Palestinian people such as to be freed from colonization and have self-determination? The SDGs adopted by the United Nations in 2015 aim to ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace, prosperity, dignity, and human rights. Peace and dignity are rights that cannot be achieved without freedom and self-determination. The eighth secretary general of the UN, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, has pointed out in the 159th GRIPS Forum (*GRIPS*, 2015):

We should all be able to live with human dignity. However, much money or wealth you may have, if all humans are not treated with dignity, then what is the difference between us humans and other animals? That is why human rights is a very important consideration. As I said earlier when I talked about the philosophical or political background of this work, freedom from want and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are very important philosophical considerations, and the Sustainable Development Goals are based on them.

In his article, *What Do the Palestinians Want?* Bahour (2020), the American Palestinian policy advisor, points out that full rights are the Palestinian single demand: full rights between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, including the right for Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and statehood in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip. He explains, though, that “in essence, there are two processes at play within the Palestinian national struggle that should be seen as distinctive, yet complementary: rights (or individual liberty) and a defined political endgame (self-determination)” (Bahour, 2020, p. 28). However, he argues that “Palestinian [individual] rights should not remain hostage to the two-state diplomatic non-process”

(Bahour, 2020, p. 31), Palestinians [as individuals] should enjoy social, political, and human rights, “Palestinians want to be treated as equal human beings wherever they reside, from the refugee camps in South Lebanon to the refugee camps in South Gaza, and everywhere in between, near and far” (Bahour, 2020, p. 26). He explains that “rights and politics are two asynchronous and inseparable tracks” (Bahour, 2020, p. 32). Therefore, “the conflict is a political one par excellence and requires political tools, first and foremost” (Bahour, 2020, p. 28). He adds that “the fulfillment of rights should lead to conflict resolution. Rights lead to peace. Rights lead to conflict resolution” (Bahour, 2020, p. 33).

Bahour (2020) adds that “the entire world, excluding Israel and the current U.S. administration, acknowledges that Palestinians are under occupation, and therefore the Fourth Geneva Convention and other relevant provisions of international law apply to them. Palestinians have also long accepted this definition of the Palestinian state of affairs” (pp. 28, 29). Bahour (2020) further argues that

If it is an occupation, it is beyond time for Israel’s custodianship—supposedly provisional—to be brought to an end, allowing Palestinian rights to be achieved through withdrawal in favor of a Palestinian state. If it is not an occupation, there is no justification for denying equal rights to everyone subject to Israeli rule, whether Israeli or Palestinian, irrespective of where they live under Israeli jurisdiction, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River (p. 29).

If the territories are considered occupied, the relevant international human rights laws applicable under occupation should be enforced. Conversely, if they are not occupied, equal rights should be guaranteed for all individuals under a unified political framework. However, the present scenario reflects an ongoing occupation, with the Palestinian Authority (PA) administering the territories without adequate political recognition or development support necessary for statehood.

This complex situation will be further examined in the subsequent research on international development in Palestine.

The published Palestinian National Development Plan NDP 2021-2023(*National Development Plan 2021-2023 | Arab National Development Planning Portal*, 2020) states that,

The plan looks to eliminate the colonial structures, maximizing the use of human and financial potential and resources, and without raising expectations, to regenerate hope among Palestinian citizens and ease political and economic frustration. Therefore, the NDP is centered around a new development paradigm: cluster development and disengagement from the occupation... The economy is a leverage of politics: economic advancement and empowerment will move the liberation process forward, **rather than maintaining welfare under the occupation**. Therefore, cluster development is closely linked to progressive disengagement from the occupation and **ending economic dependence** (My emphasis).

Palestinians seek human, political, and civil rights, and while economic development is important, welfare initiatives under occupation are insufficient. If the political causes of rights denial are not addressed, the conflict is likely to worsen, with international aid merely delaying a resolution and diminishing hope for a solution. Development implies progress, yet research suggests that current projects in Palestine, as analyzed by local and international scholars, fail to achieve the meaningful improvements that Palestinians prioritize.

It is crucial to clarify that neither Palestinians nor others expect development initiatives to end the occupation. Instead, they hope that development efforts will implement policies and solutions supporting their quest for economic and political independence alongside the realization of basic human rights. However, as the literature reviewed in the next section reveals, current development strategies in Palestine are reinforcing the status quo and increasing dependence on international aid. These approaches misrepresent the local context, contributing to the decontextualization of the situation and the fragmentation of Palestinian society.

3.4 Research on International Development in Palestine

Hundreds of international and local staff work in Palestine to provide humanitarian aid and development. Huge resources are dedicated to planning, implementing, and reporting to keep the process rolling and the funding coming. However, the reviewed literature on development in Palestine shows that these efforts are neither achieving the announced targets nor what Palestinians want from development.

Keating et al. (2005) point out that “since the aim of the international community was to foster economic development in the OPT in order to stimulate the peace process” (as cited in Wildeman & Tartir, 2014), there is a fairly broad agreement among researchers that aid has failed (Roy, 1999; BISAN, 2011; Nakhleh, 2004, 2011; Khalidi & Taghdisi-Rad, 2009; Khalidi & Samour, 2011; Tartir & Wildeman, 2012; Barghouti, 2012 as cited in Wildemen & Tartir 2014, pp. 432-433). They add that “post-Oslo ‘peace process’ has been characterized by economic decline, large increases in unemployment, intense violence, and a moribund peace process” (Wildeman & Tartir, 2014, p. 433). Khalidi & Samour (2011) explore the impact of neoliberal development policies on the Palestinian statehood program, which emphasizes economic aspects and neoliberal thought. This approach, as they explain, could not succeed as a path to independence, statehood, or as a strategy for sustainable economic development. They add that neoliberal policies have contributed to the economic dependency of the Palestinian territories without addressing the underlying issues of occupation and national rights (Khalidi & Samour 2011). Ibrahim and Beaudet (2012) state that the reliance on international aid has increased dependency and corruption while failing to foster sustainable development or state-building, and aid programs have often been instrumentalized to stabilize the occupation rather than promote genuine development. They add that the Paris Protocol (1994) further integrated the Palestinian

economy with Israel, reinforcing dependency. Overall, Ibrahim and Beaudet (2012) critique the international aid paradigm in the OPT, highlighting the adverse effects of the occupation and the structural challenges that undermine development efforts. Therefore, they call for a reassessment of aid strategies to better address the unique and complex realities of the OPT (Ibrahim and Beaudet, 2012). In addition, a report by the Arab Center in Washington DC states that

since the establishment of the PA, international aid has failed to achieve the Palestinians' aspiration of placing their economy on the path of economic growth and sustainable development. This failure is due to the deadlock in the Palestinian Israeli peace process and the recurrence of dramatic political and security developments.... These factors continue to lead international donors to focus on relief and on addressing imbalances and distortions.... instead of working to bring about the real development that the Palestinians seek to achieve (DC, 2022).

The consulted literature highlights critical issues surrounding the policies, impacts, and management of development programs. It emphasizes that development initiatives, including human rights projects, are typically executed on a project basis. As the interview data will demonstrate, these projects generally follow three primary phases: planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Each phase is further divided into several stages or steps to ensure systematic progress and accountability.

When it comes to planning, usually donors should agree with the developing country on a development plan that goes with the country's national development plan. Accordingly, project proposals are written by the local donors' offices to explain the needs and the problems to be tackled by every specific project. For this phase, the literature addresses the insufficient participation of the Palestinians in designing suitable development ideas to address the local challenges and context. Springer (2015) states:

In terms of country-level strategy, ODA⁸ institutions in Palestine have yet to find a successful way to address the context of occupation that impinges on every aspect of development. In order to continue designing and implementing projects, they have opted to work within the constraints set by occupation. Consequently, the approach taken to state building, in particular, has become increasingly technocratic, confined to administrative and bureaucratic functions with an emphasis on reporting and documentation. Governance reforms have consequently failed to effectively bolster citizen participation or political leadership (p. 2).

The donors sometimes agree with the PNA on the high-level development plans. However, when it comes to detailed solutions, there is a lack of understanding and consideration of the local context which incorporates people's history, existence, and aspirations. As explained by Springer “the planning process fails the FSP⁹ principle of aligning with local priorities partly because the parameters for development planning largely exclude meaningful discussion about citizen priorities of reducing poverty and unemployment and ending the occupation” (2015, p. 13). Nassar and Beaudet explain that “many PRDP¹⁰ projects, particularly in social and economic development, remain unfunded because donors have other ‘priorities’ (2012, p. 493). Thus, the planned solutions do not consider the priorities of the Palestinian context.

Donors' priorities that deviate from local priorities are reflected in the projects' language and discourse. Brown (2018) points out that “Washington is offering Palestinians what is sometimes called an ‘economic peace’—improving living conditions without any realistic political horizon for Palestinian national aspirations” (p. 1). Brown adds, “Close to two years ago, the European Union (EU) released a new joint strategy on Palestine that openly assumed that “Palestine will stay under occupation in the coming four years. But even that document hastened

⁸ official development assistance to the Palestinian Authority

⁹ guidelines for donors involved in conflict-affected or conflict-prone countries

¹⁰ Palestinian Reform and Development Plan 2007

to add that ‘protection of the viability of a two-state solution remains a common priority’” (2018, p. 2). As well, Taghdisi-Rad (2010) argues that:

Being the highest per capita recipient of aid worldwide for consecutive years...after more than 15 years of massive aid inflows. However, the economy of the oPt has deteriorated sharply over time, leaving behind an undiversified economy, still heavily dependent on the Israeli economy and donor finance, far from the post-Oslo donor aim of supporting the creation of an independent Palestinian economy (p. 5).

During the implementation phase, local cultural contexts and the realities of life under occupation are often overlooked. Many projects fail due to a lack of understanding of how people live within Islamic or Christian conservative communities or under the constraints of occupation. The interview data collected for this research provides several case studies that illustrate these challenges and highlight the gap between project planning and on-the-ground realities.

Finally, for the monitoring and evaluating phase, project assessment criteria and impact reports assess the achievement of targets from mainly economic and statistical points of view. In other words, improvement means economic or material growth which is not necessarily all that people want and hope for or how the local challenges need to be addressed. In a study that emphasizes how development adds a new perception of time, land, and society and of the world while ignoring the reality of the field to create a rational reality, Sbeih (2018) explains that the success of the projects is measured by good control of time and adherence to allocated budgets, and if these projects have achieved their objectives- as any expert opinion or economic evaluation can show- it is because these objectives have been developed from a decontextualized perception of reality (my translation).

Sbeih refers to the challenges mentioned above and puts great emphasis on their effect on how the context and society are consequently misrepresented and perceived by the development

efforts. For example, donors require adjusting the language of the project proposals, rather than saying ‘saving lands from the Israeli confiscation’, the language is reformulated to say, ‘securing jobs for farmers’, by doing that, the language of activism for the Palestinian cause is replaced by economic concepts. Similarly, Sbeih (2018) argues, that this approach risks decontextualizing the situation by neglecting the underlying causes of the problem and thus normalizing the circumstances (my translation).

Unfortunately, no matter how much money comes in to make better infrastructures and new roads, Palestinians are not happy because they cannot move freely through the new shiny streets. Many times, the shiny streets are destroyed after they are built after a new invasion of Gaza or one of the refugee camps in the West Bank. Brown explains that “the frustration comes from the steps backward that often follow and the realization that even positive accomplishments are married to no viable long-term political process” (2018, p. 13).

Consequently, the reviewed research shows that development practices constitute a form of translation of the occupation policies; first, the development discourse attempts to ignore to address the root cause of the ‘underdevelopment’ of the Palestinians, insisting on representing the local problems as purely economic or sometimes cultural. Second, the international community is paying for development as an alternative or compensation for the lack of political or diplomatic solutions or as a trade-off for political compromises from the side of the Palestinians: “Donors are not ready to alter a framework dominated by policy instrumentalists who emphasize pre-determined normative values over actual results, quietly trading financial inducements to Palestinians to forgo political rights within a ‘peace dividends’ mode” (Wildeman and Tartir, 2014, p. 431). Third, the project’s policies are designed to support the occupation’s plans to seize more lands and displace more people either by ignoring the context or by implementing projects that

serve the occupation's interests such as the continuous dependence on the Israeli economy. Also, Brown (2018) points out that “the former would place restrictions on such assistance or that the latter would behave in ways that would make it impossible for aid to operate except within parameters that favored continued occupation and even effective annexation” (p. 17).

The next section provides an overview of the human and women’s rights context in Palestine and reviews the related literature that discusses the related challenges with a focus on localizing human rights in the Palestinian context.

3.5 Human Rights Context in West Bank and Gaza

The Palestinian National Authority ratified a series of international human rights treaties in 2014 including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), and International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

The signing of human rights treaties and accords was seen as a move to achieve international recognition as an independent state, which is a critical step in its quest for sovereignty and self-determination. This action signals a commitment to aligning with established principles of international law, which is essential for gaining legitimacy on the global stage. The Palestinian National Authority has ratified these international treaties without any reservations. Schneider (2020) clarifies that the Palestinian administration endeavors to attain global recognition as an

independent state, and to adhere to established principles of international law which prompted President Abbas to undertake the signing of several human rights accords, that deviate from prevailing practices among Muslim society. The decision to sign these human rights agreements was considered by many Palestinians as a departure from certain prevailing practices within Muslim-majority societies and contradicting some interpretations of Sharia [the Islamic law], necessitating adaption within local settings for their efficacy. Merry (2006) explains, “in order for human rights ideas to be effective, they need to be translated into local terms and situated within local contexts of power and meaning. They need, in other words, to be remade in the vernacular. How does this happen?” (p. 39).

By many observers, joining these agreements was seen as a substantial step towards affirming the commitment of the PA to uphold international human rights standards and integrate them into its legal and institutional frameworks. “The PA, meanwhile, inherited the legal system that existed in the territory of the West Bank and Gaza, which in turn stemmed from the different regimes that ruled Palestine since its detachment from the Ottoman Empire in early twentieth century, including Turkish, British, Jordanian and Egyptian law, in addition to a series of Israeli military orders” (F. Milhem, 2004 as in Qafisheh, 2020, pp. 175-176). However, integrating HR principles into the PAs local legal system was hindered by the fact that the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) was put on hold in 2007 because HAMAS (the Islamic Resistance Movement) won the Parliament elections in 2006. Since HAMAS is listed as a terrorist organization by the US and the European Union, “The United States and the European Union would not give it financial support, and it was never allowed to govern in the West Bank” (Webb, 2014, p. 128). This dependence on external financial assistance has entrenched a situation where the PA's survival and operational capacity are intrinsically linked to the continued flow of international funds. The

stagnation of the PLC has compounded these challenges by paralyzing the legislative process, thereby obstructing the formulation and enactment of new laws, policies, and reforms. This legislative vacuum has significant implications, limiting mechanisms for governance, accountability, and the protection of human rights.

Still, the accession of the State of Palestine to seven of the principal international human rights treaties provides an opportunity for LNGOs, lawyers, and judges to try to interpret and apply these treaties at the local level, especially in a legislative environment with multiple inherited legal systems, many of which conflict with international standards. Lawyers have the chance to persuade courts to apply specific provisions of treaties to which Palestine has become a party by relying on interpretations of treaty texts as established by United Nations committees in general comments, concluding observations, and decisions related to individual complaints. They can also utilize reports from special rapporteurs on human rights, as well as the general principles for interpreting treaties, such as reliance on official languages, preparatory works, historical sources, comparable treaties, and scholarly interpretations (Qafisheh and Awawda, 2015, my translation). However, these activities are not collectively coordinated or systematically organized. Often, controversial human rights cases are addressed and resolved on a case-by-case basis. Consequently, the effective implementation of these treaties has faced numerous challenges due to the ongoing political situation resulting so far in stateless Palestinians and a suspended PLC. These challenges can be summarized as follows.

First, the absence of an active PLC has limited the incorporation of the provisions of the conventions into local legislations and national enactment which has also significantly limited mechanisms for holding the government accountable for violations of human rights. The Palestinian Constitutional Court decided that "any treaty or convention can not be enforced as an

applicable law in Palestine unless it undergoes the required formal stages for issuing internal laws" (Qafisheh & Awawda, 2020). It indicates that any international treaty or convention cannot automatically become enforceable as domestic law in Palestine. Instead, it must undergo a formal legal process, which typically includes ratification by the appropriate authorities, followed by the necessary legislative procedures to incorporate it into the internal legal system.

Second, not all treaties are translated into Arabic and for some, judges and lawyers need to refer to the English text. In addition, Qafisheh and Awawda (2020) state that Judges and lawyers in Palestine are not yet well-trained in the interpretation or the application of international laws. Consequently, they face significant challenges in understanding and implementing these laws. Palestinian legal professionals often resort to examining similar cases in neighboring Arab and Islamic countries to understand how these laws have been interpreted and applied there. Qafisheh and Awawda (2020) add that this situation underscores the need for enhanced legal training and resources to facilitate the translation and localization of international laws in Palestine.

Third, human rights conventions take precedence over local laws if they align with the national, religious, and cultural identity of the Palestinian people. Problems arise when lawyers and judges believe that some provisions in international treaties do not align with the Sharia or the local culture. Qafisheh and Awawda (2020) maintain that

many texts in Palestinian legislation align with human rights conventions. In situations where there is a conflict between specific provisions in international treaties and general provisions in Palestinian law, or vice versa, the application of legal interpretation principles is employed. These principles prioritize specificity and aim to establish coherence between the two sources of law. In cases where discrepancies or legal gaps arise, treaty rules are utilized to resolve such issues or fill any gaps that may exist (my translation).

Fourth, being a stateless territory, Palestine not only lacks a developed legal and functioning legislative body but also cannot have robust administrative and law enforcement mechanisms. The PA is responsible only for the security and civil administration of the A area¹¹ in the West Bank. This implies that the Palestinian Authority (PA) is unable to intervene in human rights violations occurring outside the territories under its administration. Naturally, the PA lacks the authority to intervene or provide assistance in cases where violations are perpetrated by the Israeli military or settlers.

Fifth, as a stateless country, Palestine relies heavily on international aid, which can come with conditions that might not align with the local HR priorities. This dependency can also lead to a lack of sustainability and accountability in HR endeavors. Implementing human rights requires financial resources for numerous reasons such as supporting and maintaining institutions that safeguard human rights. These institutions must be operated by trained professionals, including lawyers and human rights advocates. Enforcing human rights involves public education campaigns to raise awareness and inform citizens of their rights. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms are essential for ensuring compliance with human rights principles. This involves regular assessments, investigations, and the publication of findings, all of which require financial support. Moreover, specific human rights projects, such as those aimed at protecting marginalized groups or addressing systemic issues like access to education, health care, and cultural rights, require continuous funding to create sustainable programs. For example, Hanieh, (2016) maintains that “fundraising constraints led to the implementation of donor-driven short-term programs, while

¹¹ The West Bank, divided by the Oslo Accords into Areas A, B, and C, is ultimately under Israeli military control. Area A, comprising major cities, is under Palestinian control with Palestinian police handling security and civil matters. Area B includes Palestinian villages under mixed control but recently only Israeli military control. Area C, 62% of the West Bank is under Israeli control (United Nations 2010, as in Webb, 2014, p. 127).

core programming determined by Palestinian cultural priorities was neglected. For the building blocks of Palestinian collective identity are rooted in political events that funders preferred to avoid” (p. 31).

Sixth, the dual control exerted by the PA and Israeli occupation creates a complex HR environment for Palestinians. Webb (2014) clarifies that Palestinian complaints about civil rights violations by the PA include detention without trial, issues with treatment while in custody, disbanding demonstrations, restrictions on civil liberty, and corruption. He explains that similar concerns are present in Gaza. Human rights issues involve, for example, the disputed killing of six individuals in Gaza accused of collaborating with Israel, raising concerns about whether these were executions following court proceedings or lynchings. Webb (2014) adds that the primary complaint of Palestinians against Israel is the occupation. Other specific complaints include arrest and detention without trial, military force resulting in civilian deaths, treatment during detention, trials with secret evidence, difficulty obtaining building permits in East Jerusalem and Area C, destruction of "illegally" built homes, land confiscation for settlements, and the construction of the "Separation Barrier" or "Wall" (Webb, 2014, p. 129).

However, regarding the HRs situation with the Israeli occupation, Hajjar (2006) explains that the Israeli Palestinian conflict is basically a contestation of rights, pitting Israel's exercise of state privileges against the Palestinian population's entitlement to self-determination, legal protection, and civil freedoms. She adds that, since the year 1967, there has been a consistent refusal on the part of Israel to recognize the relevance and applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law driven by a prioritization of Israel's security interests, which has resulted in the subordination of the rights of the Palestinian population (Hajjar 2006).

During the 1970s-80s, legal practitioners specializing in human rights from both Israeli and Palestinian backgrounds initiated a process of contesting Israel's narrative of legitimacy via the utilization of international legal frameworks and the establishment of the initial local human rights groups inside the region (Hajjar, 2006). These groups use the language and discourse of universal human rights laws to express their hopes and aspirations to the international community, thus requesting assistance in securing these rights into their locale. Hajjar (2006) explains that, in the context of Israel/Palestine, the significance of human rights discourse persists as a means to express legal and ethical assertions and they are utilized to challenge or alter the existing state of affairs by employing strategic legal tactics to guide and validate opposition movements against dominant power structures (Hajjar, 2006). The colonial power tends to maintain its dominance through legal, political, and military means, which complicates efforts to achieve justice and equality through conventional human rights frameworks. Despite its commitment to moral and political principles of justice and human rights, the international community, often finds itself constrained by geopolitical interests and alliances. This can result in a lack of decisive action or support for Palestinians' rights, as international bodies may prioritize stability and strategic partnerships over confronting colonial practices. Shalbak (2023) states that,

While international law and human rights have afforded Palestinians some opportunities to make claims, the correspondence between the ethico-political status of Israel as a settler colonial society and the international community as a moral-political entity limits the normative and political purchase of human rights in supporting Palestinian liberation and overturning the settler colonial relationships of domination (p. 495).

However, can the use of universal human rights discourse represent the specific context and needs of the Palestinians? This will be further elaborated through the work of LNGOs and in the interviews data discussion. The next section gives an overview of the role and importance of

NGOs around the world and how they receive funds so as to pave the way for explaining the work of the Palestinian NGOs.

3.6 Human Rights Non-Governmental Organizations

There are several channels through which international development funding is transferred from donor countries and organizations to developing nations. These include bilateral aid, which involves the direct provision of assistance from one government to another; multilateral aid, where assistance is given to international organizations such as the World Bank or UN agencies that subsequently allocate and disburse funds to poorer nations for various programs and projects; and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which gather private donations and engage in development initiatives either by directly implementing them in developing countries or by allocating funding through local partners.

Local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) function at the community level, independent of government involvement. They are essential actors within civil society, often bridging the gap between the local populace and broader institutional frameworks. These organizations are typically formed and managed by community members who are acutely aware of the local context, challenges, and needs. This grassroots foundation enables LNGOs to prioritize and address specific local concerns effectively. They are thematically distinct, and their respective missions cover a broad spectrum of domains of development. A few examples of LNGOs are:

- Development LNGOs are dedicated to enhancing the well-being and quality of life for individuals within a certain community. These entities have the potential to offer educational, healthcare, or other important services. In addition, they may engage in efforts aimed at fostering economic development or safeguarding the environment. An example

of these NGOs is <https://www.ecojustice.ca/> in Canada, which, according to them, works toward setting practices for keeping fossil fuels in the ground, accelerating the transition to a clean energy future, clean water, natural spaces, and healthy communities.

- Social justice LNGOs aim to combat and rectify instances of social injustice within the society. Efforts may be undertaken to advance gender equality, racial equality, and other manifestations of social justice. Additionally, they may engage in efforts to safeguard the rights of vulnerable populations, including individuals experiencing poverty, disabilities, or displacement as refugees.
- Human rights LNGOs are dedicated to safeguarding and advancing human rights throughout society. One potential avenue for their involvement is the provision of legal assistance to those who have experienced abuses of their human rights. Additionally, they may engage in advocacy efforts to effect legislative changes that promote and protect human rights. Another critical aspect of their work involves raising awareness about various human rights concerns.
- Women's rights LNGOs play a role in promoting and defending the rights of women and girls. They work on various subjects, including economic empowerment, gender-based violence, and political participation. They provide services to women, such as legal aid, education, and healthcare. They advocate for laws and policy changes that endorse gender equality. They raise awareness of women's rights issues and mobilize people to act.

Local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) focused on HRs play a crucial role in many societies, regularly more effectively than governments, in understanding and addressing community requirements since they are deeply embedded in societies, which allows them to have a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by marginalized groups. Unlike governmental

bodies, NGOs often operate at grassroots levels which enable them to directly respond to local needs. This closeness ensures that their interventions are contextually appropriate. Usually, NGOs are known for their responsiveness in addressing societal issues. They can implement targeted initiatives quickly, adjusting to changing conditions and emerging needs. This flexibility contrasts with bureaucratic processes often known in government offices. Jones (2023) maintains that due to their proximity to people, efficiency, cheaper costs, less bureaucracy, and perceived lesser corruption than states, NGOs were preferred.

NGOs serve as advocates for marginalized peoples, providing a platform for their voices to be heard. They empower individuals who may otherwise be overlooked or silenced, representing their concerns and advocating for their rights. By doing so, NGOs contribute to a more inclusive and participatory civil society where diverse perspectives are recognized and respected. Jones (2023) explains that NGOs also promoted progressive policies by embracing gender, Indigenous, grassroots, and participatory approaches, and NGO-led micro-projects to improve local living conditions increased in the 1990s.

Moreover, NGOs play a crucial role in holding governments and corporate entities accountable for their actions or lack thereof. Through research, advocacy campaigns, and legal initiatives, they monitor compliance with human rights standards, challenge discriminatory practices, and push for policy reforms. This watchdog role helps ensure that power holders are transparent and responsive to the needs and rights of all citizens, particularly vulnerable and marginalized groups. By fostering community engagement and mobilization, human and women's rights NGOs strengthen civil society. They promote civic participation, encourage democratic processes, and build solidarity among diverse groups. This contributes to a more robust and resilient society capable of addressing systemic injustices and promoting social equality.

Engaging with the LNGOs as development practitioners, and stakeholders facilitates witnessing and identifying lived experiences, decision-making processes, and the socio-cultural contexts that influence translation practices which lends depth and authenticity to research findings, fostering a holistic understanding of the multifaceted challenges within a specific context.

3.7 Human and Human Women's Rights NGOs in Palestine

The 1987 Palestinian uprising (*Intifada*) against the occupation had a profound impact on the human rights landscape, leading to increased engagement from pre-existing groups advocating for resistance against the occupation and human rights of the Palestinians, and the emergence of several Israeli and Palestinian organizations.

Hajjar (2006) explains that, following the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1994 through the Oslo Accords, the persistence of human rights abuses presented novel challenges to the human rights movement, including strained relations with the Palestinian Authority. The Oslo Accords, intended to pave the way for peace and self-governance, instead introduced complex dynamics that complicated the human rights landscape in Palestine. Despite the aspirations for democratic governance envisioned in the Oslo Accords, the PA has been criticized for its authoritarian practices, including restricting freedoms of speech, assembly, and press. These tendencies not only hinder the work of human rights defenders but also create an atmosphere of fear and repression that stifles public dissent and activism. For example, challenges arise from the limitations of expressing criticism during the peace process. The fragile nature of the peace negotiations often means that open criticism of the PA or its policies is discouraged or suppressed, as it could be perceived as jeopardizing the peace efforts. This limitation stifles the essential role of civil society in holding authorities accountable and advocating for rights and justice.

Hajjar (2006) adds that one significant issue is the perception that human rights are introduced from Western cultures. This perception undermines the legitimacy of human rights advocacy within Palestinian society, where such principles may be seen as foreign impositions rather than universal values. This cultural dichotomy creates an environment where local human rights initiatives can be viewed with suspicion or even hostility, complicating efforts to promote these values effectively.

Furthermore, the dependence of local organizations on Western financial support and recognition exacerbates this issue. Many Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) rely on funding from Western countries and international bodies, which can lead to accusations of these organizations being aligned with external agendas rather than representing authentic local interests. This dependency not only affects the credibility of NGOs but also places them in a precarious position where they must balance donor expectations with local needs and realities. Dependency on foreign aid may also make NGOs concentrate on individual rights or specific legal violations that align with the donors' priorities, so human rights advocacy might overlook or even undermine the collective struggle for national sovereignty and self-determination. This can result in a superficial or fragmented approach to justice that fails to address the larger systemic injustices faced by the population. In this way, the advocacy can unintentionally align with colonial interests, perpetuating the status quo rather than empowering the oppressed to achieve true autonomy and freedom. Shalbak (2023) investigates how human rights groups, like Al-Haq, expose Israeli abuses and promote the rights of the Palestinian people. However, even while these groups have been successful in drawing attention to certain injustices on a global scale, their initiatives may frequently entwine with the larger governance process. In this particular setting, human rights advocacy may unintentionally contribute to colonialism by emphasizing minor

transgressions and legalistic remedies that fail to tackle the more significant problems of national rights and self-determination (Shalbak, 2023). While well-intentioned, HRs advocacy can inadvertently reinforce colonial dynamics by focusing on minor violations and legalistic solutions rather than addressing the broader and more critical issues of national rights and self-determination. This approach may divert attention from the root causes of oppression, such as colonialism or occupation, and instead prioritize smaller, more easily remedied issues that do not challenge the underlying power structures.

Women's human rights organizations are particularly active in the Palestinian context, reflecting the significant role that Palestinian women play both in resisting occupation and in enduring its consequences. These organizations not only advocate for gender equality but also address the broader social and political challenges that women face under occupation, highlighting their dual role as agents of change and bearers of the occupation's impact. The emphasis on using the "women under occupation" concept in project documents by many LNGOs reflects the unique experiences of Palestinian women. While women and children often represent the most vulnerable groups in conflicts due to the impacts of war and displacement, the protracted nature of the occupation in Palestine has shaped a distinct context. Palestinian women's resilience (*sumud*) and their active participation in resistance efforts have contributed to their portrayal as emblematic figures of endurance and resistance, setting their experiences apart from other conflict settings. As a result, women's rights NGOs play a pivotal role in articulating the distinctive position of Palestinian women to donors, emphasizing the need for context-specific support. By highlighting the unique challenges faced by women under prolonged occupation—such as their dual role in sustaining family and community resilience while participating in resistance—these organizations advocate for funding and policies that go beyond generic frameworks. They argue that tailored

support is essential to address the complex interplay of gender, political struggle, and social resilience in Palestine, distinguishing it from other conflict or post-conflict settings.

The subsequent chapter articulates the thesis argument advocating for an expanded scope and role of translation to effectively address the challenges inherent in international development. This discussion will explore how broadening the understanding of translation can foster sustainable self-development. This chapter highlights translation as a multidimensional practice that goes beyond linguistic conversion to include dialogue, mediation, and reciprocity. By framing translation in this way, it underscores its essential role in achieving development goals.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

4.1 Introduction and Roadmap

Translation proper is indisputable in enabling communication and the exchange of knowledge across linguistic and cultural boundaries. However, its function extends beyond mere communication to encompass the integration and assimilation of values, new ideas, and worldviews through intercultural and inter-knowledge exchanges. This complex process merits closer examination due to the nuanced implications it has for cultural integrity and knowledge dynamics.

We argue that when translation is conducted primarily as a linguistic activity, without attention to the deeper cultural and contextual dimensions, it can facilitate the seamless integration of ideas from one context to another. In doing so, translation often carries implicit assumptions, suggesting that the ideas being transferred are universally applicable and inherently compatible with the target context. This can result in a form of cultural imposition, where the translated ideas appear as though they naturally fit within the existing framework of the receiving culture, potentially marginalizing or overshadowing local perspectives and epistemologies.

Moreover, the uncritical transfer of ideas through translation as a linguistic paradigm can serve as a mechanism for marketing these ideas within the target culture, subtly promoting them as desirable or superior without providing the opportunity for critical engagement or debate. This one-way flow of knowledge perpetuates a power dynamic where the source culture's ideas are positioned as dominant or normative, while the target culture is relegated to a passive role of reception and assimilation.

We argue that such a dynamic risks reinforcing existing inequalities and undermining the diversity of knowledge systems. It is essential, therefore, to approach translation not exclusively as a process of linguistic conversion but as a complex, dialogical activity that involves negotiation and critical reflection. Translators must be cognizant of the cultural imprints and power relations embedded in the ideas they are transmitting and strive to facilitate a more equitable and reciprocal exchange of knowledge that acknowledges and respects the specificity and autonomy of the target culture.

We advocate for an expanded understanding of translation that goes beyond its conventional linguistic boundaries to encompass its role as a tool for negotiation and mediation between development partners. Such an approach is particularly relevant in contexts characterized by asymmetrical power relations, where the transfer of knowledge and practices is often influenced by broader geopolitical and cultural dynamics. This perspective necessitates a more nuanced analysis of the challenges and tensions inherent in translation processes in these settings. It also calls for interdisciplinary research that bridges Translation Studies (TS) and Development Studies (DS) to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between the two disciplines.

In this chapter, we aim to reconceptualize translation within this broader framework, critically examining the intricate conceptual interconnections between TS and DS. By exploring their shared and conflicting assumptions, paradigms, and methodologies, we seek to illuminate how these two fields can mutually inform and shape each other. This interdisciplinary dialogue has the potential to enrich both disciplines, particularly when applied to the context of international development.

One of the central aims of this research is to investigate whether the expanded concept of translation can function as a transformative force, facilitating a shift from externally imposed development models to more locally driven forms of development in Palestine. This involves questioning the traditional unidirectional flow of ideas and practices from the Global North to the Global South and instead promoting a more reciprocal and participatory model of knowledge exchange.

This redefinition of translation not only enhances the analytical tools available to both TS and DS but also has practical implications for development practice, offering new strategies for fostering genuine dialogue and partnership in international development contexts. By engaging the concept of translation as an act of mediation and negotiation, this study aims to promote a form of development that is more inclusive, equitable, and attuned to local agency.

The following section will address the limitations and implications of relying solely on linguistic translation in development contexts. Through this examination, the study aims to underscore the importance of adopting a broadened understanding of translation that considers the broader implications of language and translation in the development discourse.

4.2 Problematizing Linguistic Translation Based on Natural Equivalence

This research contends that simply transferring development notions, ideas, and values linguistically assumes their universality, overlooking the cultural and contextual specificities that are critical for indigenizing development. This issue arises prominently in the translation of human rights concepts within the framework of linguistic translation paradigms, where an implicit presumption of equivalence is often assumed between languages. This assumption posits that the task of the translators primarily entails identifying and utilizing already existing linguistic and cultural equivalents within the target cultural framework. Pym (2014) discusses the idea of

equivalence in translation which assumes that what is said in one language can carry the same value when translated into another language, whether in form or function. He focuses on the “natural” equivalence “where the things of equal value are presumed to exist prior to anyone translating” (Pym, 2014, p. 6). The suggestion that the concepts or items in the source language are inherently equal in value or meaning to those in the target language does not only simplify the complexities of the translation process but assumes the existence of universal concepts that are understood similarly across different cultures and languages. Pym's (2014) discussion of the natural equivalence paradigm also highlights the potential for deception and the concealment of imperialism when new ideas are seamlessly integrated into target cultures through translation. Moreover, the asymmetric power relations in the development context can add to the influence of the source texts and the unequal exchange of concepts.

Within the scope of this study, a significant challenge arises when materials pertinent to development such as project proposals, contracts, and training materials that carry development concepts and ideas, are viewed as requiring exclusively linguistic translation. Despite the emergence of other translation theories and solutions, Pym explains that “Natural equivalence stands at the base of a strong and robust body of thought, closely allied with Applied Linguistics. It is also close to what many translators, clients, and end-users believe about translation” (2014, p. 6). Hence, the principle of linguistic translation grounded in the concept of natural equivalence constitutes a common underlying assumption among various stakeholders including those engaged in translation (studies) and development (studies).

Consequently, this study suggests that the translation of human rights within international development initiatives represents a complex issue demanding comprehensive solutions and heightened involvement from translators and cultural mediators, surpassing an exclusively

linguistic transference. Bachmann-Medick 2012a calls for “a problematization of human rights in the scope of translation - looking for points of intersection for ‘cross-categorical translations’ and not assuming that human rights can be validated worldwide like a ‘traveling concept’” (pp. 335-336, my translation). This includes a critical analysis of the established ideas and practices on how human rights are conceived, communicated, and translated. The term “traveling concept” implies that a concept, such as human rights, can move across different contexts without losing its core meaning. This notion often assumes that human rights are universally understood and accepted in the same way, regardless of cultural or linguistic differences. Therefore, Bachmann-Medick suggests a cross-categorical translation that recognizes that concepts like human rights do not exist in a vacuum but are embedded in specific cultural and historical contexts. Hence, translating human rights should involve more than merely finding equivalent words in another language; it requires a deep understanding of why human rights are considered universally valid and how the related values are perceived and interpreted across different cultures. Therefore, this study focuses on the actions and efforts undertaken by cultural mediators, specifically local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs), in addressing the challenges associated with translating human rights. It aims to understand their actions and responses to introducing new concepts into their societies through development initiatives. However, it is imperative first to elucidate why linguistic translation, particularly the equivalence paradigm, is problematic. Subsequently, the proposed strategies and solutions discussed by this research to address these issues will be outlined.

While the theoretical discourse might emphasize natural equivalence, the practical application of translation inherently acknowledges the necessity of finding other strategies and solutions. Pym explains that “the linguists were able to theorize the desirability of natural equivalence, but also implicitly recognized the practical need for translators to produce other kinds

of solutions as well” (ibid, p. 14). Other solutions are also needed because international development often brings new information to the targeted culture expressed by new concepts, neologisms, or loanwords. Pym explains “If translations are supposed to bring in information that is new to a language or culture, then they cannot be expected to be ‘natural.’” (ibid, p. 19). Therefore, expecting new ideas and values to blend into the target language or culture through translation seamlessly is an issue in the development context since natural equivalence can pose a potential threat of deception and hides imperialism as explained by Pym: “If a translation brings a culture a new way of thought, any attempt to present that thought as being ‘natural’ is fundamentally deceptive” (ibid). Numerous scholars contend that linguistic translation exhibits conscientious regard for the cultural and contextual milieu of the target text. However, Pym explains, “When the ‘lamb of God’ becomes a ‘seal of God’ for Inuit readers, the New Testament ceases to refer to first-century Palestine. The nature of the start text is thus concealed, the Inuit readers are deceived, and we have an ideological ‘illusion of symmetry’ (ibid, p. 20). Pym (2014) wonders if Nida can argue that the Christian God was inherently present in non-Christian cultures before translating the Bible into their languages. Hence, he contends, “[a]t that point, translation has been reduced to the problem of marketing a product” (ibid). In this view, translation is no longer a means of introducing meaningful cross-cultural dialogue or understanding, but rather a transactional activity aimed at promoting and spreading a specific religious product (the Bible), as if it were simply repackaged for a new audience. This reductionist viewpoint sees translation as a tool for selling a preconceived ideology or belief system, rather than as a cultural or religious bridge.

Hence, Bachmann-Medick (2013) suggests an understanding of the translation concept that would question and alter universalizing European theories and categories so that the notion of

global communication based on universal transfer, predominantly Western-centric, is contested and instead shaped by reciprocal translation processes worldwide, with studies emphasizing shared aspects in translation endeavors (Bachmann-Medick, 2013). This includes an understanding of the translation concept that problematizes the one-way universal transfer of Western concepts, advocating instead for an approach based on reciprocal learning and shared knowledge. Thus, the equivalence paradigm is not only a way to market and integrate as is new concepts and ideas into targeted cultures but also implies a one-way transfer of knowledge especially between unequal languages and countries in many aspects.

Consequently, introducing human rights through international development is carried out in a context where asymmetric power relations can affect the translation process. Gambier & Van Doorslaer (2016) posit that “the import and export of concepts and methods between cultural systems are far from equal: dominance and the power of the source creates unequal exchanges between center and periphery, between peripheries” (p. 6). As delineated within the literature review chapter, the originating locus of developmental concepts, typically emanating from developed nations, assumes a position of greater potency by virtue of its role as both the source of knowledge and financial resources. The process of knowledge transfer, when grounded in a traditional view of translation as purely linguistic, tends to be unidirectional. This approach implicitly assumes the superiority of the source material, overlooking the reciprocal and dialogic potential of the translational process when implicating transactional negotiations over a disputed object. Returning to the linguistic transfer of knowledge or values, “the equivalence paradigm thus tends to regard the start text as being superior to the translation” (Pym, 2014, p. 39). This perspective underscores an implicit presumption regarding the source text’s inherent attributes of authenticity, authority, or universality, which are perceived as challenging for the translation to

replicate fully. Thus, the equivalence paradigm contributes to the asymmetry of power within the development context, necessitating an understanding of translation that not only acknowledges but also addresses these inherent disparities. It is important to recall that the goal of the neoliberal development paradigm for developing countries is to emulate the modernity and economic progress of developed nations. Thus, the linguistic paradigm and development share the same assumption of copying a 'better' original.

In conclusion, linguistic translation rooted in the natural equivalence paradigm is often predicated on a unidirectional flow of knowledge from a source deemed more knowledgeable and authoritative. This approach presupposes the validity and universality of the source's knowledge across all contexts. The dissemination of new concepts or knowledge through the paradigm of natural equivalence may involve elements of deception and strategic marketing, thereby contributing to a form of intellectual imperialism. Consequently, the linguistic paradigm can either control or uncontrollably introduce new concepts and values into different contexts. Accordingly, this research advocates for broadening the definition and scope of translation studies to include practices that facilitate the negotiation of new ideas and values and foster reciprocal learning and knowledge exchange. Such practices may contribute to a process of self-development. The following chapter will elaborate on the necessity of expanding the concept of translation.

4.2.1 The need for a broadened concept of translation (studies)

Taking stock of the discussion on the notion of equivalence in the context of development, this study advocates for a broadened scope of translation studies, emphasizing greater involvement from translators and cultural mediators to negotiate meanings, shifting the translation process from unidirectional to bidirectional. Hence, translation can be seen as a mediator and facilitator of

mutual understanding. This expanded purview of translation studies aims to redefine or augment traditional notions of translation.

Given that Human Rights encompass value-laden principles with purported universal applicability, their introduction into local contexts can provoke resistance when they are perceived to clash with local frameworks. By understanding the inherent challenges of translating Western or universally conceived of notions into diverse contexts, and how these notions contribute to societal transformations, the contextual complexities and the methodologies employed by various cultural mediators in addressing these challenges can be better understood. Bachmann-Medick (2013) argues for a translation concept that can work as an analytical tool offering new insights into complex issues such as power dynamics and interculturality which aims at making complexity more manageable.

Accordingly, this study posits that understanding the actions carried out to translate development notions serves as an analytical tool for elucidating development dynamics as novel concepts permeate distinct societies via translation as a conduit. By comprehending these obstacles, practitioners, and scholars in development can glean insights conducive to refining both their theoretical frameworks and practical methodologies. The actions undertaken to translate developmental concepts can serve as a means to comprehend and address various developmental challenges associated with the implementation of Western ideas and projects in developing societies. Understanding the actions of the local population provides valuable insights into their efforts to negotiate, adapt, or perhaps struggle, to appropriate or resist the purportedly universal values. However, this endeavor is not merely an exercise in knowledge and understanding. It seeks to employ translation as a tool to address the imposition of purportedly universal concepts and

values that are disseminated through linguistic translation. This is achieved by utilizing translation within the proposed broader framework.

Consequently, this research addresses a two-fold translational issue. Primarily, the transmission of developmental concepts and practices through linguistic translation within a context dominated by asymmetric power relations poses a challenge, prompting a wider scope and practices of translation (studies) to mitigate these challenges. Secondly, this broadened understanding of translation can yield valuable insights into the contextual intricacies of translating human rights in development and stakeholders' responses to pertinent issues. Therefore, this study postulates that translation understood as a broadened concept, can function as first, an analytical (Bachmann-Medick, 2012a, 2013) or a heuristic tool (Basalamah, 2018) offering perspectives on intercultural interactions, especially within developmental contexts. Consequently, translation is more than just transferring ideas or practices from one context to another: “Inquiring into the social relations underlying intermovement translation and striving for increasingly less unequal power relations are both constitutive of the work of translation” (Santos, 2014, p. 214). It involves a deep inquiry into the social relationships that facilitate or hinder this transformative transfer. It also requires a commitment to addressing and reducing power imbalances to ensure that the translation process is fair, inclusive, and effective. Thus, translation is a model for comprehending and tackling intercultural challenges and misunderstandings in intercultural encounters. Hence, a widened concept of translation understood as mediation, negotiation, bidirectional and more can function as a perspective to guide our translational actions. For Santos, these two aspects—understanding social relations and striving for equity—are essential to making the translation process successful and meaningful. Such an understanding necessitates a broader grasp of the concept, scope, and objectives of translation (studies), as advocated by this research, and as

inspired and viewed by scholars such as Bachmann-Medick (2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2013), Basalamah (2008, 2012a, 2012b, 2018, 2020, 2022), Santos (2005, 2006, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2023).

Leveraging its interdisciplinary character and proficiency in managing differences, translation, in its broader understanding, emerges as a pivotal mediator between distinct cultures and their associated knowledge structures and as an analytical tool for action. Therefore, the principal focal point of this research pertains to elucidating whether translation as a perspective and a way of thinking about difference is guiding the actions of the cultural mediators, here the local NGOs. However, the translational actions triggered by development will be first investigated through interviews with the local NGOs. The international development context will be explored to see if it supports or hampers the fulfillment of the local developmental objective. Central inquiries revolve around this objective: articulating and implementing development ideas congruously with the target context and collectively endorsed by local development partners, hence, fostering the transition from development to self-development. When locals possess the agency to negotiate and validate their knowledge, concepts, and values to achieve their aspirations, they can transition from externally driven development to genuine self-development. The opposite of self-development can be described as imposed development. This refers to development initiatives led by and implemented according to the values of non-local entities rather than those of the local communities. This type of development often lacks local communities' involvement, input, or perspectives, leading to solutions that are not tailored to their specific needs, contexts, or aspirations. Consequently, these externally imposed solutions cannot be described as sustainable or conducive to the self-reliance of developing countries. The concept of self-development will be developed in later sections of this chapter.

The theoretical basis informing this study revolves around defining and conceptualizing translation in its broader, more encompassing meaning. This thesis also draws on the interdisciplinarity between translation studies and development studies, examining the interaction between these two disciplines. Therefore, the primary objective of this chapter is to elucidate the inherent significance embedded within the broadened definition of translation and to highlight the interdisciplinarity of translation as it intersects with development studies. However, before proceeding with conceptualizing translation as a perspective and an action analytical concept, we must define the term ‘translational actions’ as it was used before in TS in different meanings and frameworks.

This thesis uses the term ‘translational action’ to describe the efforts of translators and cultural mediators—specifically, LNGOs—to bridge different cultures and bodies of knowledge. It adopts Bassnett's (2002) call to treat translation theory as a general theory of transactions, emphasizing translators as cultural brokers and highlighting translation as a dynamic process with cultural implications (Bachmann-Medick, 2013). By viewing translation as a key factor in facilitating cultural exchange and dialogue this research aims to understand how these actions both shape and are shaped by the context in which they occur. Consequently, translation is understood here as an action analytical tool.

The term "translational action" in Translation Studies (TS) is typically associated with functionalist approaches and appears to have largely emerged from the translation of German terminological concepts into English. It also seems that the initial use of this term can be traced primarily to German scholars, as evidenced by the following citations. Furthermore, two closely related terms have been employed in different strands of research: ‘translational actions’ and ‘translatorial actions’. These terms may reflect nuanced distinctions in their respective theoretical

and practical applications within the discipline. Pym (2014) clarifies that, in Skopos theory's terms, *Translatorial* is an adjective used to describe the qualities of translators, as opposed to the adjective "translational", used to describe the qualities of translations.

As for Holz-Mänttari's work, '*Translatorisches Handeln: Theorie und Methode*' (1984) "that was published only in German" (Munday, 2016, p. 322), the term '*translatorial action*' seems to be used more than '*translational action*' for translating '*Translatorisches Handeln*' and referring to Holz-Mänttari's theory in English. Christiane Nord clarifies, in her preface to Reiss and Vermeer (2013), that,

Andrew Chesterman, the translator of Vermeer's essay on skopos and commission in translational action (Vermeer [1989] 2004: 227) uses the term translational action to refer to Justa Holz-Mänttari's *Translatorisches Handeln*, a generic concept including not only translation and interpreting but also other forms of intercultural mediation which are not based on a source text, such as cross-cultural technical writing or a consultant's information on a regional political or cultural situation (cf. Holz-Mänttari 1984)". I adopted this translation in an earlier publication (Nord 1997: 12). More recently, Snell Hornby (2006: 56, similarly Schäffner 1998) translated Holz-Mänttari's term with translatorial action, which makes sense if we understand translatorial as an adjective to describe objects or phenomena related to translators (cf. Pym 2009: 46) (Reiss, 2014, p. ii).

Munday (2016) uses '*translatorial*' to describe Holz-Mänttari's work and '*translational*' to describe Reiss and Vermeer's work and he sees both as part of the same theory. Munday (2016) states that Reiss and Vermeer's work on skopos theory (*Skopostheorie*) '*Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*' (1984) was translated into English as '*Towards a General Theory of Translational Action*' (2013). While Skopos theory, as Munday explains "pre-dates Holz-Mänttari's theory of translatorial action, it may be considered to be part of that same theory because it deals with a translational action based on a ST – the action has to be negotiated and performed and has a purpose and a result (Vermeer 1989/2012)" (pp. 126-127).

Although functional theories prioritize the function and purpose of the text over its linguistic form, Skopos theory is concerned with translating non-literary texts from a source to a target language. Still, Pym (2014) explains that Skopos theory offers a revolutionary shift away from the author's perspective emphasizing that a translator should focus on the purpose (Skopos) of the translation, whether defined by the commissioner, end-user, or the translator, rather than strictly adhering to the original text. Pym (2014) also clarifies that,

both Holz-Mänttari and Vermeer were producing critiques of traditional equivalence-based definitions of translation. They were also challenging the traditional role of linguistics in the training of translators. At the same time, they were quite possibly reacting to changes in the translation profession, where translators are increasingly being called on to do more than translate (terminology, post-editing, reviewing, desktop publishing, and project management, and then there are logical career moves into international marketing and public relations) (p. 50).

Their critiques reflect a broader understanding of the evolving role of translators in the professional world, where they are expected to take on a variety of tasks beyond translation itself. This is relevant to the current settings of translation projects where translators are multitasking in translation companies. For Holz- Mänttari, “the translator is an expert in cross-cultural communication who can do much more than translate” (Pym, 2014, p. 53). These definitions allow for envisioning translators as project managers who oversee the entire process surrounding the translation task, including aspects such as text quality, contract negotiation, and other managerial responsibilities. The German term ‘handeln’ conveys, to me, a stronger association with commercial elements rather than cultural ones.

In their book *Translational Actions and Intercultural Communication*, edited by Bührig et al. (2014), ‘translational action’ refers to the process of transmitting linguistic and cultural messages across barriers between cultures, such as those encountered in translation and interpreting. Their approach focuses on understanding in intercultural communication. For Bührig

et al. (2014), functional equivalence is a key to Intercultural understanding. They see functional equivalence as necessary for a text or speech to have a similar effect in another cultural context. So, intercultural understanding is the measure of how well a translation or adaptation works, based on whether the new version fulfills the same role as the original (see House 1977, 1997, 2006a, 2006b, as in Bührig et al.). In this view, intercultural misunderstanding happens when functional equivalence is not achieved. This framework places a strong emphasis on the linguistic transfer of meaning, aiming for the closest possible match between the source and target texts in terms of function and effect. The book does not mention Holz-Mänttari's translational action which can be understood as that Bührig et al do not see their use of the term as relevant.

In conclusion, the use of the term 'translational action' in previous research differs from its application in this study, as prior uses primarily emphasize linguistic translation and the translation of texts. In contrast, this research focuses on cultural mediators and places greater emphasis on the translational actions of these mediators. Here, translation is viewed as an act of cultural mediation, negotiation, and mutual transformation of the parties involved. These actions serve as analytical tools for understanding contexts and intercultural interactions, broadening the concept of translation beyond its traditional linguistic boundaries.

Consequently, the next sections examine the literature exploring the related conceptualizations of translation as previewed by this study within the realm of Translation Studies (TS) and other interdisciplinary domains with an attempt to explain how this broader concept of translation is relevant to international development and how it can be used in interdisciplinary research. Eventually, it intends to explore related perspectives and applications to culminate in articulating the perspectives held by this research endeavor. The next section starts by reviewing some pertaining discussions on expanding the concept of translation.

4.3 Broadening the Concept of Translation and the Scope of TS

This study adopts an expansive perspective on translation (studies) by extending its scope to include a broader range of research and practical applications, transcending its traditional disciplinary boundaries. By positioning translation as an analytical or heuristic tool, it aims to enhance understanding of phenomena in other fields, such as development studies, that are not typically seen as closely related to translation. Ultimately, this approach facilitates intercultural encounters and contributes to bridging the gap between disciplines.

Engaging in a discourse on the broadening of the definition of translation is particularly pertinent in light of Chesterman's (2018) assertion that “we do not even have a generally agreed definition of translation itself!” (p. 15). The absence of a definitive conceptualization of translation poses a significant challenge in establishing a foundational point of departure for further exploration and analysis. Without a clear, agreed-upon definition, it becomes inherently difficult to critique, modify, or expand upon existing frameworks. Consequently, developing an expanded and more encompassing understanding of translation requires navigating and reconciling diverse theoretical perspectives and practical considerations. Nonetheless, Chesterman contends that translation is a developing and expanding field: “Translation’ itself is of course a quintessential lumpen concept, covering an ever-expanding range of activities, like the increasingly fragmented interdiscipline of ‘Translation Studies’” (2018, pp. 17-18). Within the examined scholarship, the starting point for expanding the definition of translation can entail transcending the commonly perceived understanding of translation as a linguistic procedure solely involved in changing the language of the source into the target language. This departure is crucial, especially considering the persistent prevalence of such a perception among both lay individuals and translation practitioners. Mary Snell-Hornby (2009) maintains that “Outside the scientific community it is all

too often still seen in its narrow, traditional, strictly linguistic sense” (p.44). On the other hand, an expansion is seen as an abandoning of the “equivalence” paradigm. Gambier maintains that “despite decades of academic and professional translation research, the traditional parameters configuring the equivalence paradigm persist” (2016, p. 889). The conviction in the concept of equivalence, coupled with the notion that translation primarily involves substituting signs or texts from one language into another, persists notably among individuals seeking or commissioning translation services from diverse disciplines. Van Doorslaer, (2018) argues that “the dominant view on translation in other disciplines is that of a language-based practice which designs methods for translation on a normative basis” (p. 228). In the context of this inquiry, a pertinent observation arises when texts concerning development and human rights undergo translation into diverse languages, where there exists an anticipation for their translation rooted within the linguistic paradigm. In other words, the need for translation is perceived as inherently linked to linguistic differences between languages, highlighting the role of language as a medium for conveying ideas related to development and human rights. Van Doorslaer (2018) explains that in everyday perception, a common belief about translation is the insistence on non-alteration, including content, style, and effect assuming that languages are interchangeable and leading to the expectation that only language changes in translation. This notion influences both non-specialists' views and the expectations of many translation practitioners in their negotiations with clients (Van Doorslaer, 2018). Viewing translation as a purely linguistic endeavor oversimplifies the intricate cultural, social, and contextual dimensions that shape meaning, assuming language operates independently of culture and context. This reductionist perspective marginalizes the role of the translator as an active agent restricting the scope of translation studies by prioritizing linguistic

accuracy over broader concerns, such as power dynamics, ethical considerations, and intercultural communication.

Within TS scholarly discourse, one has to notice, however, that caution is expressed regarding the broadening of the definition of translation. Some scholars argue that such expansion may dilute the essence of translation, shifting focus away from its core function as a linguistic activity between two languages. For example, Trivedi (2007) contends that if the bilingual ground of translation is worn away “we shall sooner than later end up with a wholly translated, monolingual, monocultural, monolithic world” (2007, p. 286). Maitland (2016) explains that Trivedi is concerned that applying the term “translation” to postcolonial and diasporic life, as seen in Bhabha's framework, would expand the influence of Anglo-American cultural studies globally, canceling the need for learning languages other than English. For Maitland (2016), translation, led by human interpreters, represents a model for all significant exchanges, challenging the notion that translation is solely interlingual (Maitland, 2016). Maitland upholds a broader model of cultural translation that extends beyond linguistic boundaries and encompasses diverse forms of communication. Moreover, Blumczynski (2023) posits that the original etymological meanings of the Latin word “*transfere*” and the English word “*translate*”, which suggest physical transfers and material journeys, provide a more historically accurate and theoretically solid foundation for the concept of translation (p. 5). To Blumczynski (2023) and (Wintroub, 2015), this perspective is deemed more central to understanding translation than the traditional perception of translation which typically positions linguistic translation as the primary form of translation. Instead, Blumczynski (2023) critiques traditional assumptions in TS, especially the focus on language and text, arguing that this view limits the broader conceptual and experiential potential of translation. Blumczynski challenges the assumption that translation is expanding or becoming more complex

only recently, asserting that early conceptions of translation were not necessarily narrow, and that translation has always involved more than linguistic operations. By focusing on **translationality**—the broader phenomenon of translation beyond just text or language—Blumczynski aims to explore how translation impacts the world, influences individuals, and transcends its traditional boundaries. Through these explorations, he seeks to expand the understanding of what translation is and what it does, emphasizing that translation is deeply tied to the material, social, and experiential dimensions of life (Blumczynski, 2023). This broader perspective recognizes translation as a ubiquitous, semiotic process that encompasses a wide range of movements, from textual adaptations to cultural shifts and physical relocations. However, Blumczynski's focus on translation as "transfer" rather than "transformation" is limiting, particularly when it is only justified through etymological reasoning, which reinforces the Eurocentric character of the epistemology underlying the concept of translation (Basalamah, 2024). This focus prioritizes translation not only as a physical transfer rather than an immaterial transformation but also as the imposition of a Western-centric approach to translation which restricts the potential of a broader conceptual scope.

This study does not advocate for abandoning the linguistic aspect of translation but asserts that linguistic translation is often insufficient in contexts involving cultural interactions. Is there any translation that does not involve any? Not to my knowledge! However, the sole reliance on linguistic translation can perpetuate deception and imperialism. Furthermore, linguistic translation is frequently a unidirectional process that may not include negotiation of meaning between the source and the target. Therefore, this study argues that translation studies and practices should extend beyond linguistic concerns. By broadening its practices and scope, translation studies and practices can become beneficial in various aspects, particularly in mediating cultural differences

in synch with and respect for the values of the receiving party. The inherent complexity of translation, combined with its expertise in bridging cultural divides, highlights its potential as a tool for managing differences and achieving more than linguistic transfer. This broadened understanding became a need driven by globalization, migration, technology, and more. Snell-Hornby clarifies that “the term translation has since the early 1980s been broadened greatly from its original, strictly linguistic sense to include aspects of sociology, ethics, postcolonial studies, nonverbal communication, new fields of interest resulting from the process of globalization plus the advances of information technology and many other aspects” (2009, p. 48). Moreover, when ST focuses solely on linguistic skills, students might not be exposed to the wider array of competencies required in today's culturally interconnected world “in the practical and especially the didactic world a too narrow definition of the field only sets an artificial boundary for translators and the jobs they see themselves as able to carry out” (Zethsen, 2007, p. 301). These boundaries can hinder the development of the discipline while not recognizing the full spectrum of roles translators and cultural mediators can play in various contexts.

Many views and discussions argue for a broadened definition of the concept of translation as well as the scope of practices and research domains. Van Doorslaer (2018) contends that “translation scholars tend to widen not only the definition but also the scope of the research object and the discipline’s field of application” (p. 221). He adds that translation is fundamentally changing beyond interlingual aspects, as shown by translator choices, cultural context, ideological influences, agency, idiosyncrasy, multilingual processing in newsrooms, and phenomena like travel and migration which highlights the growing importance of contrasts and differences that “have complemented the traditional focus on sameness” (p. 222). Van Doorslaer highlights that in real-life scenarios translation became inevitably involved in processes of change that extend

beyond the linguistic change while putting more focus on differences and dissimilarities in contrast to the presumption of equivalence between languages. Van Dooslaer's views, as he explains, reflect a trend toward adopting a more inclusive understanding and utilization of the concept of translation beyond the traditional constraints and acknowledging its relevance and involvement in diverse contexts that include change, transfer, and transformation. In turn, Marais (2020) supports a Peircean perspective on translation that is relevant to a wider range of practices, including those where language is not involved and that is broad enough to encompass all forms of translation, including those generated by information technology and artificial intelligence, as he claims. Therefore, Marais argues that "a theory of translation needs to conceptualise translation more broadly than interlingual translation" (p. 46).

In translation studies, changing views on the definition and scope of the concept of translation or its theorization, as well as what happens in the translation process, are often referred to as "turns." In the following section, the evolution and changes in the definition and scope of translation (studies) in terms of 'turns' will be briefly reviewed.

4.3.1 Turns in Translation Studies TS

In this section, a brief overview of the turns in translation studies will be presented to explain the stages of the development in defining the concept of translation as viewed by this study. Gambier & Van Doorslaer (2016) explain that "the development of TS was considered as a set of 'turns' (Snell-Hornby 2010) from the cultural turn of the 1980s to the empirical, pragmatic, globalized, post-colonial, sociological, cognitive, technological and ideological turns (from the 1990s onwards)" (p. 2). These turns were sometimes described as paradigm shifts. However, Mary Snell-Hornby defines a turn as a change in direction that may amount to a 'redefinition'; she maintains that "not every change is a 'turn': ...A 'turn' is dynamic a clearly visible change of

direction, even amounting to a redefinition” (2009, 42). She adds that the use of the term ‘turn’ allows for a “more practical, open and flexible approach” (2010, p. 366). Unlike the term that a “paradigm shift” may imply such as a total change in methodologies and frameworks, the new turns do not necessarily cancel the previous ones, but they can be “interrelated and even complementary” (Gambier and van Doorslaer, 2016, Zwischenberger, 2022).

Subsequently, in order for a new turn to take place, Bachmann-Medick (2009) argues that in the academic thinking, it must typically pass through three stages observed in transformative shifts: first, there's a need for the object or the subject field to expand, encompassing more areas or topics, then, this expansion is embodied in a more metaphorical manner, and finally, there's a call for refining the methodology, triggering “conceptual leap and transdisciplinary application” (p. 4). Therefore, The cultural turn in translation studies in the 1980s and 1990s has already contributed to the broadening of the concept of translation and emphasized that translation transcends its traditional linguistic confines redirecting attention toward context and cultural underpinnings where “the familiar categories of text-related translation, such as original, equivalence or faithfulness, were increasingly supplemented by new key categories of cultural translation such as cultural representation and transformation, alterity, displacement, discontinuity, cultural difference and power” (Bachmann-Medick, 2009, p. 5). More objectives and applications of translation were also defined such as being a “primary method of imposing meaning while concealing the power relations that lie behind the production of that meaning” (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998, p. 136) and as “a strategy devised by a culture for dealing with otherness” (p. 13).

Consequently, there has been a turn from the linguistic paradigm, which particularly accentuates the significance of language form in the process of translation, uses linguistic theories to explain translation decisions, and focuses on the concept of ‘equivalence’. The subsequent turns

emphasize the crucial role of factors such as contexts, cultures, power, translators, and technology in understanding how translation works. For example, the ‘cultural turn’ throughout the 1980s and 1990s highlighted that translation does not occur in a void, thus emphasizing the effect of the context and the surrounding culture on translation. Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) emphasized that translation occurs within a contextual continuum as various textual and non-textual constraints influence the translator, leading translation studies to shift focus toward these challenges and investigating the related manipulative processes.

Furthermore, to investigate translation as both a process and a product, along with its reciprocal impact on society, knowledge, and various other domains, TS has expanded its methodological approach by incorporating concepts and analytical tools from disciplines beyond linguistics, including cultural studies, social sciences, history, and other related fields. Bassnett (1998) explains that “Translation Studies turned to ethnography and history and sociology to deepen the methods of analysing what happens to texts in the process of what we might call ‘intercultural transfer’, or translation” (p.132). Consequently, there has been a shift in perspective regarding the definition and scope of translation and the tools used to analyze and understand what happens in the translation process. Translation is no longer solely judged by the degree of equivalence it achieves between source and target texts. Instead, it is currently evaluated based on multiple affective factors within the cultural contexts in which it is both sent and received. The scope of translation studies has broadened to investigate the functions and effects of translation within societies. Researchers from both within and outside the field of translation studies have recognized the potential of translation to extend beyond meaning transfer. This includes the ability to work as a perspective to understand asymmetric power relations among languages and cultures and how translation contributes to the creation of knowledge and social realities.

Accordingly, there have been calls for an outward turn (Bassnett & Johnston, 2019) that would “improve communication with other disciplines” (p. 187), and “connect TS with other disciplines and fields of research precisely because of its inter- or transdisciplinary nature” (Zwischenberger, 2019). Genzler (2003) maintains that “Susan Bassnett, in the final chapter of *Constructing Cultures* (1998), suggests that while Translation Studies has taken the cultural turn, it is now time for cultural studies to take the translation turn” (p. 21). He adds that “the next step will be to incorporate translation into their analysis” (ibid). Bachmann-Medick argues for a translational turn in “the Humanities and Social Sciences [which] entails a broader, cross-disciplinary adoption of translation as an analytical category with a new emphasis on the often-challenging shifts between different (cultural) levels and contexts, whether in intercultural transfers or in interdisciplinary activities” (2013, p. 157). By using translation as an analytical framework, scholars can better understand how the movement of ideas, values, and practices between different cultures occurs, including the reinterpretations and modifications that happen as cultural elements move from one context to another. Moreover, translation as an analytical category helps to explore the adaptations required when integrating methods from different academic disciplines. Basalamah (2012) provides a philosophical foundation for the expanded understanding of translation outlining potential applications across disciplines and demonstrating the practical use of it in social science contexts.

However, translation (studies) as an interdisciplinary field has primarily focused on importing concepts from other disciplines without reciprocating by contributing its own insights and methodologies back to those fields. This means that while translation studies have benefited from theories and ideas originating in areas such as linguistics, literary studies, anthropology, and

cultural studies, they have not sufficiently shared their unique perspectives and analytical tools with these and other disciplines. (Kaindl, 2002) explains that,

As it became emancipated from its source disciplines in the course of the 1980s, Translation Studies faced new challenges. The methods of linguistics were shunned as not suitable for an adequate account of the complex object of study, but the young discipline had not yet developed a sufficient body of analytical methods of its own. The option taken to reduce this deficit was to import methods and theories from other disciplines. This second level of interdisciplinarity, which is currently dominant in Translation Studies, is what I would like to call "importing interdisciplinarity". It is characterized by the fact that the knowledge gained from such research is useful only to one of the disciplines, while the role of the other(s) is limited to supplying the necessary tools (p. 88).

As a result, the potential for translation to enrich and inform a broader range of academic inquiries remains underutilized, limiting its impact as a truly interdisciplinary field. Snell-Hornby (2009) maintains that "as far as translation studies is concerned, the much-cited and very positive activities produced by interdisciplinary cooperation have up to now tended to be a one-way track: translation studies is still at the stage of 'importing' impulses and methods from other disciplines rather than interacting or exporting them" (p. 48). Despite the long track record of these suggestions, there is still little adoption of this viewpoint and a lack of extensive empirical studies in this field: "these early hints have not yet been systematically pursued by translation studies, despite increasingly 'translational' research standpoints across the humanities and social sciences" (Bachmann-Medick, 2009, p. 3). Bachmann-Medick sees that the calls from outside TS to use the translational perspectives are a kick-off for a translational turn in the humanities: "Only now, as voices from outside the discipline join the debate, does there seem to be a drive to sharpen the translational perspective theoretically and systematically enough to constitute the breakthrough to an independent 'turn'" (ibid). Therefore, this study will examine various perspectives from outside the field of TS regarding the use of a translational perspective and about "the phenomenon that

today several other disciplines seem to feel the need for a translation-like concept” (Gambier and Van Dooslaer, 2016, p. 1).

However, despite the popularity of the translation concept in various disciplines, the broader and more nuanced contributions of TS remain underexploited in interdisciplinary research. Zwischenberger (2019) maintains that other disciplines use the term ‘translation’ creatively and metaphorically without grounding in TS theories and research. So, the rich insights and theories that TS provides are not being utilized in research. She adds that the TS has been very interdisciplinary in importing concepts and theories from other fields but has not exported much back with one major exception, the concept of ‘translation’ itself, which has recently become very popular in other disciplines (Zwischenberger, 2019). However, as explained by Bachmann-Medick (2009), the popularity of the concept of ‘translation’ as a metaphor for various processes of change and interpretation indicates a ‘translational turn’. Bachmann-Medick (2009, 2012, 2013) and Basalamah (2012, 2018) attempt to deconstruct translation into various components and concepts that can be used in understanding and analyzing other disciplines, as will be reviewed in the next section. Both researchers discuss how translation can be established “as an analytical category and even as a model for conducting cultural research” (Bachmann-Medick, 2012, p. 23), or “as a heuristic tool in the wider framework of the three knowledge cultures” (Basalamah, 2018, p. 481) elucidating a nuanced explication of its pertinence in both research and practical applications. Henceforth, a ‘translational turn,’ conceived of by this inquiry, delineates a reorientation in focus and utilization across various academic disciplines, centering on the utilization of translation as both a model and a heuristic tool.

This interdisciplinary approach can be valuable in this academic pursuit by incorporating concepts and methods from translation studies into development studies. Therefore, in the next

sections, the translation concept will be further elaborated as a model and a heuristic tool while delineating the potential approaches for implementing a translational shift, offering new insights to development studies and other disciplines. Afterward, the literature that used translation as an analytical and heuristic tool will be reviewed.

4.3.2 Translation as a model and an analytical category

This section argues that a promising avenue lies in using the concept of translation as a category of analysis to understand and scrutinize various fields and disciplines, particularly those engaging diverse cultures, religions, ethnicities, and knowledge systems such as development studies. Bachmann-Medick (2012a) explains that translation as a category of analysis is an approach that defines translation as a social and intercultural practice and a tool that can be used to explore complex contexts in terms of their individual steps of translation, emphasizing translation's role in mediation, negotiation, and the transformation of meaning in diverse contexts, so the translation is “both: a practical category, but also an epistemologically sharp category of analysis” (p. 332, my translation). This perspective aligns with contemporary research in the cultural and social sciences, addressing globalized world challenges by examining translation processes between social and ethnic groups, religions, and various cultures (Bachmann-Medick-2012a, my translation). In the broader scope of international development, this analytical approach to translation can become a powerful tool for exploring negotiations, understanding, and effective collaboration among development partners that come from diverse backgrounds. To encapsulate Bachmann-Medick’s conceptualization of translation as an analytical category and the distinguishing features of the translational turn, the following points delineate some of the most significant ideas upon which this study can be grounded.

First, translation as a category of analysis, as explained by Bachmann-Medick (2009) is based on a broadened scope of the translation concept that goes beyond translating language, but based on (Dizdar, 2009), “translation proper” provides a foundation for guiding the somewhat divergent translation concept back towards more specific trajectories. Dizdar (2009) argues that “a ‘translational turn’ can only take place effectively if all attempts to broaden the concept of translation (and/or to use it in a metaphorical sense) have ‘translation proper’ as their point of reference” (p. 90). He also “argue[s] for the necessity of keeping the tension between translation proper and other translations, with the proviso that a closer look be taken at translation proper in theory and practice, and that precisely this tension could serve as a productive (and necessary) means for analyzing interrelations between different orders of signification” (ibid). Dizdar (2009) differentiates “translation proper” from direct transcoding, emphasizing that it entails a thoughtful process revealing the complexities of intermediary positions and ethical considerations. By highlighting “translation proper,” Dizdar aims to underscore the depth of the translation process, emphasizing its intentional nature and its pivotal role in addressing ethical challenges within the intricate “in-between” spaces (Dizdar, 2009).

The link to translation proper is productive in two folds: on the one hand, it can be connected to action-oriented translation; Bachmann Medick (2009) explains that the “translational turn” links smaller textual units to broader cultural patterns allowing detailed examination of larger communication spheres through the microscopic analysis of translational activities by cultural brokers. Equally, there is an emphasis on leveraging the expertise inherent in ‘translation proper’, which is understood as a complex process that navigates differences and necessitates a deeper engagement with the source material. This process involves considering context, cultural nuances, and the ethical responsibilities of the translator. In the context of this study, by focusing on the

work of cultural brokers—the LNGOs involved in facilitating cross-cultural communication—including the changes they make to ‘translation proper’, this approach can uncover insights into how their acts of translation contribute to and shape broader cultural patterns.

Second, Bachmann-Medick (2013) clarifies that adopting a broader perspective on the concept of translation risks diluting the concept or reducing it to a mere metaphor, hence it is crucial to define the concept more precisely by breaking it down into its various components, such as (transfer, mediation, transmission, metaphor, linguistic dimension, transformation, and so on) “and breaking up larger complexes like cultural transfer, cultural dialogue and cultural comparison into smaller units of communication and interaction – including concrete translational activities performed by agents” (p. 188). An important dimension that defines the translation category is that it focuses on the translational actions of the mediating agents between different cultures. This involves examining concrete translational activities carried out by agents involved in the process, thus Bachmann-Medick adopts Bassnett's (2002) call for treating translation theory as a general theory of transactions that focuses on translators as cultural brokers implying an emphasis on understanding translation as a dynamic process with cultural implications and viewing translators as key actors in facilitating cultural exchange and dialogue (Bachmann-Medick, 2013). This general theory of transactions recognizes that translation is not a static process but involves continuous negotiations. It underscores translation as a process marked by interactions and transformations beyond the lexical or syntactic levels where every act of translation has a cultural impact and where translators work as cultural brokers. In an increasingly globalized world, where cross-cultural interactions are frequent and vital, translators play a pivotal role in fostering human connections and understanding.

Therefore, (Bachmann-Medick, 2012a) argues that “approaching translation as a category of analysis entails deconstructing complex social problems, cultural interactions, conflicts, and transitions between different contexts through an action-analytical perspective” (p. 332, my translation). Understanding contexts through translation is done by analyzing the actions of the cultural mediators and the reasons behind their actions. Bachmann-Medick clarifies that the focus is on thoroughly examining the multi-layered dynamics of the involved actors which includes studying their discursive and medial integration, understanding their respective reference systems and frames of reference, as well as observing how they navigate differences, so the investigation zooms in on the actors' translational actions, which become particularly evident in the individual steps and layers of their interactions (ibid).

Within international development projects, analyzing translation as an action within the studied context permits a more nuanced examination of the specific challenges and opportunities encountered by various actors in international development and their responses to these dynamics. Comprehending the intricate processes and actions involved in translating concepts and ideas across diverse knowledge systems and cultural backgrounds is essential for fostering effective communication and collaboration in international development initiatives. This approach enables a deeper understanding of whether translation mediates interactions and facilitates mutual understanding among stakeholders, thereby enhancing or hindering the overall efficacy and impact of development efforts.

Third, translation as a social action involves complex relationships of reciprocity and mutual transformation, challenging conventional views of translation as a simple bridge or a one-way transfer process (Bachmann-Medick, 2013). Bachmann-Medick (2012a) explains that the current bridging model might be replaced by a more conflict-aware translational approach to

analysis which means that the traditional method of translation increasingly represents negotiating differences and understanding the actors involved and the concrete processes of translation within contexts of contact and transition. Bachmann-Medick (2006) explains how the meaning of translation, especially under globalization, is shifting from hermeneutic understanding to tracing cultural networks, and entanglements and managing differences pragmatically by showing how anthropology moved away from a unilateral, harmonious view of translating cultures toward embracing the complexities of translation.

This translational perspective underscores several pivotal dimensions. Firstly, it advocates a departure from perceiving translation exclusively as a seamless transference of meanings and ideas. Instead, it urges an attentive pause at the juncture of "Untranslatables" and disparities of cultural nuances that resist facile translation. Secondly, this paradigm encourages continuous interactive discussions and translational actions between societies and within the same society. Third, there is a focus on analyzing the practical aspect of translation as a concrete social action that extends beyond the traditional cognitive dimension. Fuchs (2009) introduces an interactional concept of translation that would change the understanding of social relationships, as he maintains that "What 'translation' requires is a deepening sociological discussion, one which takes it as a social activity, as interactive and interpretive praxis, and which also undertakes to analytically distinguish the various aspects and dimensions of translatorial action" (2009, p. 10). This social interactional translation has been discussed within societies distinguished by diversity (Fuchs, 2008) or in the migration context (Basalamah, 2008) but was rarely discussed in a development context. By applying translation, in this sense, in the international development context, the development actors' mediation efforts and the related actions and constraints can be explained and

analyzed to examine whether their translational actions involve negotiations, reciprocity, and mutual transformation among the parties involved.

By examining the so far explained understanding of translation, what makes this broadened definition of translation concept relevant to the transfer of human rights concepts through development is, as Bachmann Medick (2013) explains, the idea that Western beliefs can be spread globally through translation is no longer unquestioned: “It is beginning to be filtered through global, reciprocal translation processes” (p. 190). Bachman-Medick (2012a) adds that translation, as an analytical category, must progress to deepen discussions on human rights by critically examining the complex conditions of communication and interaction. Accordingly, she identifies human rights as a contested translation and contends that the global debate over Western-driven human rights declarations highlights the need to delve deeper into the process of adapting laws, including examining pre-translations, self-translations with local adjustments, and interactions between global and local legal practices (Bachman-Medick, 2012a, p. 336, my translation). This means examining how global human rights standards and local legal practices influence and shape each other.

Applying international human rights in the local context is an issue in the Palestinian context that has a Muslim majority shown in the context chapter. Regarding this reciprocal influence of the international and local perspectives, Santos’s views are pertinent to the Palestinian context. Santos (2005) suggests that despite differing conceptual frameworks, translating between knowledges and cultures involves identifying shared concerns and aspirations. For instance, human dignity is valued across cultures but expressed differently: in the West as human rights, in Islamic culture as *umma* (community), and in Hinduism as *dharma* (cosmic harmony). Santos (2005) explains that the work of translation, conceived of in its more extensive meaning, can

highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each concept from the others' perspectives, fostering dialogue and understanding. For example, from a dharma perspective, human rights lack a connection to the cosmic order, while from a human rights perspective, dharma may overlook individual rights and democratic principles. Similarly, the concept of umma emphasizes collective duties over individual rights, posing challenges to Western notions of individual human rights. This comparative analysis opens space for mutual learning and practical collaboration across cultural divides, as explained by Santos. By identifying common goals such as human dignity, a more inclusive dialogue can be fostered and shared actions and practices can be established eventually promoting a respectful fair approach to human rights and dignity.

As previously articulated, Bachmann-Medick (2009) posits that one of the conditions under which the expanded translation concept can result in a “translational turn”, thus be used as an analytical concept is that it goes through “a methodological refinement, provoking a conceptual leap and transdisciplinary application” (p. 4). Thus, using translation as an analytical category requires a precise and systematic definition and translation methods so they can address complex issues in many contexts. Basalamah (2018) maintains that to expand the theoretical potential and interdisciplinary scope of TS, it is essential to redefine the object of study from a philosophical standpoint. Basalamah (2012, 2018, 2022) calls for establishing a subdiscipline of translation studies focused on a conceptual research, such as a “philosophy of translation”. Conceptual research, as Basalamah explains, entails contemplating the fundamental ideas that underpin a field of study and it “allows all empirical research to exist and be given direction and a theoretical framework” (Basalamah, 2022, p. 283). Consequently, for this research, a clear conceptualization of the interdisciplinary role of the translation concept in analyzing and giving insights into

development is essential to guide the interpretation of the findings and make sense of the empirical data obtained by this study.

Furthermore, Basalamah (2018) argues for a "philosophy of translation" that views translation as a fundamental paradigm for human relations and communication. In 2012 and 2022, he also discusses the concept of "social translation" as a way to understand and bridge differences between conflicting (political) religious and secularist worldviews in a post-secular age. The "social translation" concept, as Basalamah explains, involves translating between different social groups and representations, like majority and minority cultures, as well as reciprocal efforts to translate frames of reference, discourses, values, and identities (Basalamah, 2012b). Examples given include translating Islam for the West and vice versa which can involve both representing Muslim perspectives in secular terms accessible in the West and incorporating Western values like pluralism and democracy into Muslim discourse. Translation of frames of reference among social, cultural, or religious groups as suggested by Basalamah, aligns with Bachmann-Medicks's argument that translation can offer a methodological and epistemological approach that can benefit various disciplines by promoting a translational perspective that helps in managing differences, mediate between contexts leading to a broader mode of thinking known as the 'translational turn' with concepts like 'border thinking' and 'in-between thinking'" (2013, p. 187). Translation as a way of thinking and consequently acting is described by Basalamah (2018) as a heuristic tool. The next section delves into the translation concept as a heuristic tool that can guide interactions and understanding between cultures.

4.3.3 Translation as a heuristic tool

Basalamah (2018) explains that the translation concept is used in areas like the philosophy of language, hermeneutics, or analytical philosophy because of its ability to reveal language

paradoxes and serve as a “heuristic conceptual tool” for better understanding of interpretive processes in language, culture, and beyond as well as for its capacity as a cognitive device to challenge common beliefs, offering insights beyond superficial perceptions (p. 478). However, Basalamah cautions against conflating the use of translation in philosophy with the idea of a comprehensive philosophy of translation, emphasizing the need to distinguish between these specific applications and a broader philosophy dedicated to the study of translation. Therefore, Basalamah (2012, 2018) calls for the establishment of a philosophy of translation within Translation Studies (TS), which “should incorporate not only the various perspectives on translation as an object of study but also its uses—metaphorical and beyond—and a broad vision of TS’s potential in terms of what it could contribute to human knowledge as a whole” (2018, pp. 480-481). Within the philosophy of translation, as Basalamah explains, scholars could explore its potential contribution to a deeper understanding of translation as a heuristic tool across diverse knowledge cultures and not to the Humanities alone. To achieve this, “the concept of translation cannot be defined as a mere object of study exclusive to TS but rather must be viewed as an archetypical concept that pervades many fields of knowledge” (Basalamah, 2018, pp. 481-482). Viewed as an archetype, translation can be considered a universal template for phenomena characterized by connectedness, articulation, negotiation, transfer, and transformation (Basalamah, 2018). Basalamah’s argument recognizes the broader significance translation could have and the far-reaching implications and applications across different fields of study especially when translation is considered as a purposeful regulated activity in intercultural or interdisciplinary interactions and consequently a way of acting when people find themselves between different or conflicting contexts and ways of thinking.

Basalamah (2012, 2020, 2022) provides practical examples of translation as connectedness and transformation. Basalamah (2020) uses translation as a philosophical paradigm that extends beyond the realms of language and culture, thus broadening the concept of translation and considering it as a lens to study transformative phenomena such as the educational processes: “Translation is moving toward a paradigm that would be encompassing enough to consider translation not only as an object of study beyond language and culture but, more importantly, as a paradigm itself (Ricœur 1996; 2006) to serve as a lens to look through and study various transformative phenomena” (Basalamah, 2020, p. 1). For Basalamah, using translation as a lens to explain education as a transformative phenomenon yields, for instance, a mutual transformation process of teachers and students to become mutually comprehensible to each other. According to him, using translation in the educational context can free individuals from inequity, leading to the bidirectional transformation of the involved identities. Thus, acquiring knowledge is not a top-down but a two-way process. In addition, the act of retranslation implies that while an initial idea may be borrowed, the way it is reinterpreted is unique to the individual. This personal interpretation is what imbues the idea with novelty. Through the lens of the individual's experiences, insights, and creativity, the original idea is transformed into something new and distinct.

Innovators differentiate their creations from the original by reinterpreting an existing idea in their own terms. This differentiation is crucial in establishing the novelty of the invention. It is the unique twist, perspective, or application that distinguishes the new idea from its precursor and qualifies it as an innovation. Appropriating knowledge involves converting it into one's own words: “The claim of any invention or novelty starts with the appropriation of another's initial idea retranslated in one's own terms” (Basalamah, 2020, p. 5). The conceptualization of translation as

a philosophical paradigm fundamentally seeks to promote equality to achieve equilibrium, foster an ethos of humility, and establish a bilateral translational dynamic that transcends hierarchical structures. This transition moves from a unilateral, authoritative approach towards an egalitarian, mutual exchange. Bachmann-Medick (2012a, p. 358) clarifies that the goal of a translational perspective on human rights is not merely the local implementation of global ideas and programs but a fundamental change in the production and practice of global knowledge which requires a shift towards a more realistic approach to translation, one that focuses on differences, inequalities, and cultural misunderstandings, and leverages them for a new understanding of human rights. Rather than homogenizing diverse practices under a global standard, a translational perspective fosters generating new insights and approaches to human rights that are more inclusive and representative of diverse experiences.

This paradigm shift is particularly significant in the international development context, previously discussed as characterized by asymmetric power relations between donors and recipients of aid and knowledge. A translational perspective on human rights calls for a change in translation methodology from the conventional emphasis on localizing global standards to one that is more realistic and nuanced. To promote a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of human rights, this approach places a higher priority on disparities, inequities, and cultural misunderstandings. It seeks to revolutionize the creation and use of global knowledge by utilizing these features, promoting a human rights discourse that is more egalitarian and pertinent to the current situation.

Basalamah's call for using translation as a paradigm and a framework that guides the process of acquisition of knowledge in a reciprocal way and in a manner that rejects power differences aligns with Bachmann-Medick's definition of translation in the translational turn as "a

methodologically operative approach (in research as well as cultural practice itself) for negotiating differences, re-evaluating misunderstanding and exposing power asymmetries” (2013, p. 187). Hence, the translation concept is used to manage misunderstandings, mediate between conflicting cultures or values, and confront power asymmetries. Using translation in this sense represents translation as an attitude or a way of thinking about doing and approaching translation between cultures and different knowledges. This understanding is also coherent with Santos’s views where he maintains that a pre-requisite of translating between cultures is a stand that “presupposes both a non-conformist attitude vis-vis the limits of one’s knowledge and practice and the readiness to be surprised and learn with the other’s knowledge and practice” (Santos, 2005, p. 20). In addition, Santos offers extensive reflections on how to approach translation and the preconditions necessary for ensuring that the process is fair and inclusive of all forms of knowledge, thereby promoting epistemic justice. The following sections will review Santos's perspectives on intercultural translation, which can guide our inquiries and enhance our understanding of the translational context in question.

4.3.4 Translation for epistemic justice

Even though different uses of the concept of translation may reflect varying scholars' perspectives or research scopes, they primarily emerge as responses to evolving societal landscapes and demands. These uses aim to address contemporary challenges by positioning translation as a field that navigates and deliberates differences between languages, cultures, and contexts. This evolution has been pivotal in reshaping translation's role in contemporary settings characterized by globalization, migration, conflicts, crisis, and various encounters across diverse cultural and linguistic terrains. Numerous scholars outside the field of translation studies have employed the concept and utility of translation as a concept to express multifaceted objectives in

human communication, extending beyond linguistic translation to promote comprehension, cooperation, solidarity, and justice.

For Santos (2014), The need for intercultural translation arose due to the emergence of social movements rooted in non-Western cultures, their divergence from Western critical traditions, the breakdown of internationalism centered on the working class, and the decline of universal theories. Thus, Santos argues that grand narratives and overarching theories that once aimed to provide a one-size-fits-all explanation for social phenomena started to lose their relevance and often failed to account for the diverse and context-specific experiences of different societies. The existence of differences among languages and cultures is not the main issue, as these differences can be discussed, and reconciled, and common ground can be found between diverse cultures and knowledges. The fundamental issue, for Santos, lies in the entrenched belief that certain forms of knowledge are more valid and universally applicable than others. This conviction leads to cognitive injustice, manifesting in several detrimental consequences. It marginalizes individuals and communities, rendering them invisible and depriving the world of the valuable and useful knowledge and experiences they possess and produce. Santos explains that “the work of translation enables the social movements and organizations to develop a cosmopolitan reason based on the core idea that global social justice is not possible without global cognitive justice” (2005, p. 21). Cognitive injustice results in a hierarchy of knowledges, where only the perspectives of those deemed capable of producing valid knowledge are considered, while others are dismissed or undervalued. This not only perpetuates inequality but also represses the potential for rich, diverse contributions to global understanding and problem-solving.

Consequently, the purpose of engaging in mediation and dialogues is challenged in the context of this study if participants are not open to learning from each other and do not regard each

other's knowledge as equally valid or even available. Effective dialogue and mediation, as will be elaborated in Santos's concept of the 'the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergencies' require a recognition of the equal worth of all knowledge systems and a willingness to engage with and learn from diverse perspectives. Without this mutual respect and openness, the process becomes one-sided and ineffective, failing to address the root issues of cognitive injustice and continuing to marginalize those whose knowledge is undervalued. Therefore, Santos calls for social grassroots movements to conduct an anti-hegemonic intercultural translation in contact zones developed to minimize asymmetric power relations.

Santos's understanding of translation is both action- and target-oriented, emphasizing the necessity for social movements to identify common concerns and objectives and agree on common practices that resist hegemonic authorities. This approach is particularly relevant and essential for fostering cooperation among LNGOs, as well as between LNGOs and their donors, a topic that will be further elaborated upon in this research.

In summary, Santos argues that true intercultural dialogue and translation can only occur when all forms and origins of knowledge are given equal validity and importance, paving the way for more inclusive, just, and enriched global discourses and practices. Santos (2016) explains that "the problem is that after five centuries of 'teaching' the world, the global North seems to have lost the capacity to learn from the experiences of the world" (p. 19). Therefore, Santos's basic idea behind the epistemologies of the South is that theoretical thinking in the global North has been based on an invisible "abyssal line" that divides metropolitan societies from colonial societies. This line creates distinctions, for example, between legal and illegal, and between scientific, theological, and philosophical knowledges (2016, p. 20). For the past five centuries, this division has influenced our theories, which are developed based on experiences and realities from the

metropolitan side, while the colonial side remains unacknowledged and “invisible” (ibid). Santos explains that,

As this abyssal line is as basic as it is invisible, it allows for false universalisms that are based on the social experience of metropolitan societies and aimed at reproducing and justifying the normative dualism metropolis/colony. Being on the other, colonial, side of the abyssal line amounts to being prevented by dominant knowledge from representing the world as one’s own and in one’s own terms (2018, p. 6).

Santos’s sociology of absences and emergencies (2014, 2016, 2018) offers concrete methodologies for revealing and fostering the unacknowledged and invisible knowledges. Santos explains that, by engaging in the sociology of absences, it is recognized that the understanding of the world far exceeds the Western perspective. This broader understanding reveals that transformative perspectives may come from outside critical Eurocentric theory. To capture this reality, the sociology of emergences represents what is necessary manifesting as possible. This process symbolically develops alternative ways of understanding and transforming society. When this viewpoint is used for development and human rights, it suggests that there are several approaches to achieving human dignity as well as several ways to build societies outside of the modernist framework. This viewpoint contradicts the widely held belief that modernity—as defined by Western standards—is what emerging cultures should strive for above all else. Rather, it recognizes and honors the diversity of human rights practices and developmental trajectories that have their roots in many historical, social, and cultural settings.

Santos (2018) explains that the ecology of knowledges and intercultural translation are tools that convert the diversity of knowledges, revealed by the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences, into empowering resources. This process enhances the understanding of oppression and resistance, allowing for broader articulations between struggles against different forms of domination. Santos (2014) clarifies that “at the core of ecologies of knowledges is the

idea that different types of knowledge are incomplete in different ways and that raising the consciousness of such reciprocal incompleteness (rather than looking for completeness) will be a precondition for achieving cognitive justice” (p. 212). The ecology of knowledge is a way of thinking and an attitude that shows an openness to learn from the other. At the same time, it includes an exercise of identifying key bodies of knowledge relevant to social struggles which in turn can highlight aspects of the struggle and thus suggest ideas and perspectives that are incomprehensible to some of the groups involved (Santos, 2018). At this point comes the work of translation as the alternative and the replacement of any general theory because it is symbolical of the “negative universalism” and ‘the procedure that allows for mutual intelligibility among the experiences of the worldwithout jeopardizing their identity and autonomy, without, in other words, reducing them to homogeneous entities” (Santos 2005, p. 16). For Santos, the work of translation is an exercise where different movements are open to understanding other perspectives and the different reference systems, they come from considering them equally valid.

The central problem addressed by this research is the integration of universal concepts and values into diverse contexts through development and traditional translation practices, rendering translation a unidirectional and imposed process that disregards local knowledge. Santos posits that the work of translation can serve as an alternative to the hegemonic model of unilateral thinking. He advocates for translation as the process to achieve global justice through cognitive justice, which recognizes and validates the knowledge systems of all cultures worldwide.

Debates and dialogues shape the essence of translation work aiming at fostering mutual comprehension of differing perspectives and delineating both the commonalities and divergences among movements to discover what unites them more than what separates them: “Through translation work, diversity is celebrated, not as a factor of fragmentation and isolationism, but

rather as a condition of sharing and solidarity” (Santos, 2005, p. 17). Reciprocal horizontal learning can lead to constructing collective meanings and facilitating unity among different movements, guiding their actions toward the most suitable avenues for achieving their envisioned aspirations such as human dignity and social transformation. This way, as Santos (2005) explains, people are more powerful and united to make the changes that lead to justice and equality.

Therefore, translation can be defined here as an attitude that requires people to admit their incompleteness, and readiness to understand other perspectives and learn from them. Discussing differences aims at sharing knowledge and thus solidarity. Translating is also an activity done with the intention and deliberation to identify human common goals and unite practices to achieve them. Conveying knowledge and values from one context to another requires a rationality of recognition and respect for diverse ways of knowing and understanding the world. This perspective underpins global justice, appreciating the importance of diverse knowledge systems in building a just and inclusive society.

In the realm of development within the Palestinian context, the purely linguistic transfer of developmental and human rights concepts, absent mutual negotiation or shared comprehension among development stakeholders, not only risks imposing Western, universal knowledge and values but also undermines local knowledge, experience, and the aspirations of the local populace, to make them invisible. Therefore, this study aims to foreground local actions and experiences in the pursuit of human rights and self-development. Additionally, increasing scholarly attention has been devoted to examining translation as a conceptual tool for advancing justice, ethics, and solidarity, which will be explored in the following section.

4.3.5 Translation as an ethical responsible action

So far, efforts to redefine translation have emphasized the critical roles of negotiation, mediation, and reciprocity in the translation process between development partners, to optimize development outcomes in alignment with local aspirations. Nonetheless, this broader conceptualization of translation also encompasses an ethical dimension, particularly within international development and crisis contexts, where there is a profound need for solidarity, justice, and equality.

Translation as an ethical action refers to the responsibility that translators carry in mediating meaning across languages and cultures while recognizing the power dynamics, cultural differences, and human implications involved in the process. It extends beyond technical accuracy to include respect for the values, identities, and worldviews of both the source and target cultures, ensuring that the act of translation does not distort, marginalize, or oppress any group. Moreover, ethical translation acknowledges the role of the translator as an active agent in the communication process. Translators make interpretive choices that affect how a text is understood, and this agency comes with ethical responsibility.

Ricoeur (1996) argues that the self can only be understood through interaction with others. He rejects the idea of self-sufficiency and emphasizes the importance of dialogue, interpretation, and action. Ricoeur's philosophy is fundamentally about navigating complex relationships, where human action and responsibility come to the forefront. He explores these concepts by connecting ethics, justice, and identity. Through his hermeneutics, he argues that understanding is a continuous process that requires engaging with different viewpoints, which in turn leads to ethical responsibility toward others. Ricoeur addresses the future of Europe, framing it as an issue of political imagination. He discusses the need for Europe to move beyond the traditional model of

the nation-state without replicating its structures at a supranational level. Instead, he proposes a post-national state, where imagination is needed to create new political structures. He emphasizes the importance of changes in attitudes and ethos among individuals and groups to make these shifts in political sovereignty successful.

Ricoeur introduces translation as a metaphor and model for Europe's integration, especially given its linguistic and cultural diversity. Ricoeur argues that translation goes beyond language transfer; it is a fundamental principle of communication and cultural exchange. The act of translation, as he sees it, involves not just linguistic hospitality but also a spiritual and cultural ethos. It requires understanding and welcoming the "other" into one's mental universe, accounting for their customs, beliefs, and values. In this way, the spirit of translation can serve as a model for how Europe can build unity amidst diversity. A substantial body of scholarly work such as (Basalamah (2012b), and (Maitland (2017) draws upon Paul Ricoeur's philosophy of translation and ethics as a theoretical framework to elucidate and navigate the complexities of intercultural exchange. This theoretical lens has been instrumental in exploring how intercultural interactions can be framed as a process of ethical mediation, where translation serves as a metaphor for broader social and cultural exchanges. By applying Ricoeur's insights, researchers have been able to critically examine the tensions and asymmetries that often characterize intercultural communication, particularly in contexts marked by power imbalances and historical injustices.

For example, O'Mathúna & Hunt (2020) examine ethical issues in crisis translation through the lenses of philosopher Paul Ricoeur's work on translation and ethics. As O'Mathúna & Hunt explain Ricoeur saw translation as more than transferring words—it involves revealing oneself to others and bridging distances between people. This interpersonal dimension was applied in their

research to crisis translation. Ricoeur's concept of 'linguistic hospitality' means approaching translation with openness and humility, dwelling in the language of the other, even if not fully grasped, so O'Mathúna & Hunt argue that his understanding of translation can build trust in crises. Linguistic hospitality promotes learning from others, inclusion of minorities, and justice. It sees translation as an exchange, not just an information transfer. Ricoeur reminds us that translation involves relating to others ethically. This promotes dignity and justice in crises when linguistic divides arise. Practical implications, as O'Mathúna & Hunt, explain include two-way learning between responders and affected people, ensuring translation access for planning meetings, and balancing linguistic hospitality with pragmatism.

4.4 Interdisciplinarity and Translation Studies (TS)

In the previous sections, I showed how the concept of translation is developed to ensure that it is not seen as exclusively a linguistic exercise but as a perspective and action analytical tool capable of addressing complex issues in various fields, such as cultural transfer and knowledge production. Bachmann-Medick (2009) posits that for the expanded concept of translation to facilitate a "translational turn" and serve as an analytical concept, it must undergo a "methodological refinement", which would provoke a "conceptual leap" and enable its transdisciplinary application.

Transdisciplinary application involves the integration and application of translation concepts and methodologies across different academic fields, facilitating collaboration and the exchange of ideas allowing translation to contribute to and benefit from various disciplinary perspectives. The following section reviews some research projects on disciplinary dialogues with translation studies. Afterwards, the interdisciplinarity between translation studies and development studies is explained as viewed by this research.

Gambier and Van Doorslaer (2016) led a project to explore border-crossing dialogues between TS and other disciplines. Even though they discussed the challenges and complexities that can face interdisciplinary research, such as the institutional borders and structures of different disciplines and the difficulties of cooperation between sciences, they stressed the potential of transdisciplinary research “to better understand or enlarge our understanding of realities by providing new knowledge, suggesting a new mode of thinking, overcoming prejudices, dogmas, strong assumptions and cognitive categories, and allowing a critical distance” (Gambier and Van Doorslaer, 2016, p. 11). So, while they admit that interdisciplinary research poses challenges—such as the need for effective collaboration among scholars from different disciplines and backgrounds—they see that potential rewards are extensive. Firstly, interdisciplinary research can uncover insights that may remain hidden within the confines of a single discipline. Second, suggesting new modes of thinking is crucial for advancing knowledge. Thirdly, Interdisciplinary research promotes a culture of openness and adaptability, where researchers are encouraged to question established assumptions and explore alternative viewpoints. In this section, I outline some interdisciplinary research carried out between TS and other disciplines.

Kujamäki and Footitt (2016) explore the intersection of military history and translation studies, emphasizing the importance of considering the role of translators and interpreters in wartime contexts and highlighting the impact of cultural and social factors on military history. The concept of "translation culture" is introduced, emphasizing the significance of understanding norms and values in translation activities during conflicts. While traditional military history often overlooks the role of translation, recent studies have shown its importance in military operations, especially in counterinsurgency efforts. Kujamäki & Footitt (2016) concluded that the study of

military translation cultures can provide insights into multilingualism and multiculturalism in wartime settings, challenging traditional narratives of identity and belonging in times of conflict.

Rundle and Rafael (2016) reflect on translation's inter/trans-disciplinary potential as an object of historical research. They discuss the overlaps and exchanges between their research, such as looking at translation as an event that is embedded in relations of power. They discuss how their different disciplinary backgrounds inform their research. Rundle's research has focused on translation in early modern Europe, especially religious translation in the context of the Reformation. He is interested in how translation shapes language, truth, and power debates. Rafael's research has examined translation in the context of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines. He has looked at how translation was used as a tool of conversion and conquest but also appropriated by the colonized for their own ends. They consider how research on translation can productively bring together perspectives from history and translation studies, as well as contribute to debates in other disciplines like cultural studies and postcolonial studies. Rundle & Rafael (2016) conclude that translation is a rich object of study for understanding historical processes, power dynamics, and the politics of language and cultural exchange. Their interdisciplinary dialogue underscores the importance of integrating diverse perspectives from diverse disciplines to understand real life events. Their work underscores how translation affects and is affected by political, social, and historical contexts. They also position translation as an analytical tool for understanding historical processes and power relations.

Buzelin and Baraldi (2016) examine the intersections and divergences between Translation and Interpreting Studies (TS) and sociology. They draw numerous conclusions regarding the relationships between TS and sociology. Firstly, they found an asymmetry in the relationship, with TS frequently seeking sociological explanations, while sociology shows occasional interest in

translation. They observed that TS often seeks sociological explanations to deepen its understanding of translation practices and phenomena. This reflects TS's recognition of the value of sociological theories and methods in explaining the social dimensions of translation, such as power dynamics, cultural contexts, and institutional influences. Conversely, sociology demonstrates only occasional interest in translation. While sociologists may sometimes explore translation to address specific research questions or case studies, translation is not a primary focus within the field. According to Buzelin and Baraldi (2016), this results in a situation where sociology gains insights from translation studies (TS), but TS does not get enough support or collaboration from sociological studies. This lack of collaboration limits new ideas and innovations that could come from studying translation within the field of sociology. Secondly, they suggest that a simple combination of sociological theories for studying translation may be insufficient and potentially misleading if sociology does not include translation as a systematic object of research. They emphasize the need for sociology to recognize and incorporate translation as a subject of systematic study rather than merely applying existing theories. Thirdly, they contend that the challenge for sociology lies not in creating a specific sociology of translation or interpreting but in constructing systematic sociological studies examining how translation and interpreting function in diverse social contexts and systems. For example, they underscore the potential benefits of integrating sociological research on interpreting with studies of interpreting as social interaction, emphasizing the significance of language mediation in dialogue interpreting and the application of conversation analysis in institutional settings. Finally, they propose that sociologists might be interested in intercultural communication, particularly in analyzing cultural differences as social constructions rather than pre-existing structures. The dynamic nature of cultural identities and the focus on cultural hybridization in interpreter-mediated interactions are highlighted as key areas of

interest, as Buzelin and Baraldi (2016) explain. However, hybridization may not always reflect the reality of communication in contexts where cultural identities are deeply rooted and resistant to change. Moreover, the focus on hybridization could downplay the importance of preserving cultural specificity and authenticity in interpreting practices, which might be essential for maintaining clear and respectful communication across cultures.

The above instances serve as illustrative examples of a disciplinary discourse between TS and various other academic disciplines. These engagements underscore the emergence of novel research trajectories through interdisciplinary collaboration, and proponents emphasize the valuable perspectives that TS can contribute to other fields. However, in this project, Gambier and Van Doorslaer (2016) did not clarify how interdisciplinary research works. They gave different researchers the space to decide how every discipline can interact with translation. The resulting projects have used the act of translation or interpretation to understand or highlight historical, social, or other events. Gambier and Van Doorslaer explain that “Interdisciplinarity is often an incantation against the compartmentalization of disciplines, while it is a more or less controlled process of borrowings in order to have access to new ways of decoding, explaining and understanding social reality” (p. 10). Their conception of interdisciplinarity is rooted in the idea that disciplines borrow concepts, theories, and methodologies from one another to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of social phenomena—an understanding complex problems might be unattainable within the confines of a single disciplinary framework. While their project acknowledges the inherent challenges that arise when disciplines interact, particularly due to the divergent epistemological foundations that distinguish one discipline from another, it does not engage deeply with these issues. Instead, they leave open-ended questions of what specific interdisciplinary approaches should be taken and how they should be implemented. They argue

that there is no one universal or fixed definition for concepts like interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity because these concepts are fluid and context-dependent. Gambier and Van Doorslaer (2016) explain that “Therefore, no essentialist definition of interdisciplinarity (or transdisciplinarity) is valid” (p. 10). This open-ended approach can be looked at as a dynamic process that allows for flexibility and ongoing exploration of interdisciplinary engagement. However, it doesn’t provide insights on how to face the challenges of interdisciplinary research. On the other hand, Post et al. (2020) confirm that interdisciplinary research is challenging due to the different theories and assumptions underlying different disciplines. However, they introduce a framework of the integration of disciplinary knowledge to produce new, interdisciplinary insights as a key feature of interdisciplinary research. This thesis adopts Post et al.’s approach to interdisciplinary integration, positing that the shared epistemological foundations between translation studies (TS) and development studies (DS) render their collaboration and interaction conceptually productive for both fields. The subsequent section will explore the common theoretical ground between TS and DS, upon which this study constructs its argument.

4.5 Disciplinary Common Ground between TS and DS

A good body of research, such as Bronstein (2003), Maguire (2015), Menken & Kestra (2016), and Post et al. (2020), argues that interdisciplinarity arose to solve complex real-world problems that require the integration of insights from different disciplines. However, a main challenge, as stated earlier by Gambier and Van Doorslaer (2016), is that “the complex process is based on competing epistemological and methodological assumptions, logics and temporalities which do not overlap between disciplines” (p. 10). This thesis argues that TS and DS share a significant overlap in theories, assumptions, and concepts, which can serve as a foundation for a meaningful dialogue between the two disciplines. More importantly, when disciplines align in their

concerns and objectives, they have the potential to integrate their insights and work collaboratively towards solving a problem or achieving a common goal. This integration can lead to addressing complex issues that intersect both fields. Post et al. (2020) confirm that a major complexity of interdisciplinary research can be conflicting or opposing insights and different methodologies and assumptions. However, they argue that,

Insights derived from different disciplines often appear to be incommensurate, conflicting, or diametrically opposed. The foundation of interdisciplinary integration is the awareness that a discipline operates on specific assumptions, concepts, and theories, and that these differ from discipline to discipline. Through the willingness to embrace ‘the new’ and the identification of shared concerns, the challenge of interdisciplinary integration can be faced (p. 56).

Therefore, in this chapter, we find that the integration approach presented by Menken & Keesstra (2016) and Post et al. (2020)—two parts of a manual compiled for to the MSc Course Research Methodologies as taught at the Faculty of Aerospace Engineering at Delft University of Technology—can help in initiating a disciplinary dialogue between TS and DS. I will start by presenting some main concepts as defined by this manual and then explain how insights from this manual can support the interdisciplinary work of this thesis.

Post et al. (2020) explain that “although there is no single accepted definition of interdisciplinarity, and the term is sometimes used interchangeably with multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity.... Interdisciplinary research literally means research between disciplines, referring to the interaction of disciplines with each other.... Such interaction may range from the mere communication and comparison of ideas, through the exchange of data, methods, and procedures, to the mutual integration of organizing concepts, theories, methodology, and epistemological principles” (p. 21). In this manual, they adopt the following definitions: multidisciplinary research involves multiple disciplines without integrating their insights;

interdisciplinary research integrates concepts, theories, and methodologies from different disciplines, and the results are integrated; transdisciplinary research combines academic knowledge with insights and values from stakeholders outside academia to address problems collaboratively. “Although in theory multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinarity can be distinguished, in practice, researchers often switch between these approaches—sometimes within the same research project” (p. 22). In this thesis, the interdisciplinarity between TS and DS can be considered the transdisciplinary type when the views of LNGOs are integrated into the results.

Having established some key concepts so far, this section will elucidate the interdisciplinary process employed in this thesis. It is crucial to reiterate that the commonalities between TS and DS were consistently highlighted, particularly in the literature review chapter, where development theories were examined, and in this framework chapter, where translation theories were analyzed. This emphasis stems from the interdisciplinary approach adopted, which is grounded in the identification and comparison of theoretical assumptions and paradigms across both disciplines.

The first step in the interdisciplinary research process is to identify a problem that requires the integration of insights from different disciplines to solve and then identify the underlying assumptions and paradigms. Menken and Kestra (2016) clarify that,

Interdisciplinary integration can be defined as the synthesis of two or more disciplinary insights – drawn from different perspectives – into new knowledge. An important step in integration is to identify which disciplines are necessary for a complete understanding of the problem. Then, one has to uncover which assumptions underlie each discipline. More generally, what are the disciplines’ paradigms? (p.42).

This thesis centers on the critical examination of the assumption that development concepts, particularly those related to human rights, are universally applicable across different

societies. The concept of universality in development suggests that the ideas and practices originating from one context (often Western or developed nations) can be seamlessly integrated into other contexts without significant modification. This perspective assumes the inherent validity and superiority of the transferred knowledge, potentially marginalizing or undermining local knowledge systems that are crucial for achieving sustainable and contextually relevant development. Therefore, in this thesis, translation in development needed to move to a different paradigm and thus had to be reconceptualized not as a mere neutral conduit but as an active and analytical concept that critically examines how development concepts are understood and transformed into the target society. Translation also had to be redefined as both a practice and a perspective that means negotiation and reciprocal learning. This approach challenges the traditional role of linguistic translation, which often unilaterally imposes foreign development ideas on local communities, resulting in externally driven development that neglects the self-determined needs and aspirations of the local population. Through this re-envisioned lens, translation is posited as a mechanism to support a more context-sensitive and participatory development paradigm aligned with self-development principles. Consequently, this thesis advocates for a paradigm shift in translation and development theories to foster self-development through the reconceptualization of translation as an analytical tool. However, this shift should align with and support development paradigms and assumptions rather than contradict them. In other words, translation and development must speak a common language and share the same concerns and objectives, such as the objective argued by this thesis, which is moving to a negotiated self-development process model.

Therefore, I attempt to identify the shared assumptions and theories of translation and development that can lead to a one-sided and imposed development process and oppose them to

the shared theories and assumptions that can lead to a negotiated self-development. When interdisciplinary dialogue is integrated with the local NGOs' views on how translation is performed on the ground, it is hoped to reveal whether translation is practiced on the one-sided traditional model of development or rather as an empowering negotiated self-development in the Palestinian context. Menken and Kestra (2016) explain that the integration process refers to the synthesis of disciplinary insights from different academic fields to create new knowledge. This process is central to interdisciplinary research and involves combining concepts, methodologies, or theories from multiple disciplines. The integration process begins with communication across disciplinary boundaries, revealing both differences and commonalities. It is a cognitive process where relevant disciplines, uncover underlying assumptions and modify components of their disciplinary insights to reconcile differences. The ultimate goal is to form a new, shared understanding of a complex problem that cannot be fully addressed by a single discipline alone: “Newell (pers. comm., 3 December 2013), for example, states that integration can take place at the level of concepts, theories, and methods. All these levels involve parts of disciplinary paradigms, and when creating common ground between them, one can subsequently truly integrate and form new, interdisciplinary insights” (as in Menken and Kestra, 2016, p. 46).

It is crucial to emphasize that linguistic translation is not the sole factor or paradigm responsible for the imposition of universal development models and the resulting marginalization of local knowledge systems, which often leads to unsustainable development outcomes. While translation can indeed play a role in the uncritical transmission of development concepts, both translation and development are embedded within a broader constellation of sociopolitical, economic, and institutional forces that collectively influence knowledge production and dissemination dynamics in development contexts. Moreover, development practices are shaped by

diverse underlying paradigms that contribute to a complex dynamic that may also reinforce universalities or global norms.

For Translation Studies (TS) and Development Studies (DS) to engage in meaningful interdisciplinary dialogue, it is essential to identify common ground and establish a framework for collaboration that fosters self-development. This necessitates an alignment—or at least a non-contradiction—of their foundational assumptions and paradigms. Such synergy would enable both disciplines to work together more effectively in promoting development practices that are contextually relevant, culturally sensitive, and sustainable.

I will start by underscoring examples that illustrate the commonalities between TS and DS, particularly focusing on the shared and opposing theories and assumptions that either facilitate or hinder their interdisciplinary dialogue. Following this, I will endeavor to identify common grounds and objectives that can reduce the challenges in integrating their coordinated implementation.

First, both TS and DS are considered inherently interdisciplinary for many reasons. For example, they both draw upon and integrate concepts, methods, and theories from multiple academic disciplines to address complex, real-world issues from multiple perspectives. These issues cannot be fully understood or resolved through a single disciplinary lens. In Translation Studies, scholars often engage with linguistics, literature, cultural studies, sociology, philosophy, and even technology to explore the complexities of translating languages, texts, and cultures. Similarly, DS seeks to understand and address global development issues such as poverty, inequality, and sustainable development through using insights from economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, and environmental science. Despite the apparent potential for fruitful exchange between Translation Studies (TS) and Development Studies (DS), these two disciplines

do not traditionally view each other as neighboring fields, nor do they typically see the crossing of disciplinary boundaries as beneficial. As shown in the literature review, translation within the context of international development is often overlooked, inadequately planned, and rarely budgeted for. Although research indicates that translation is vital to the success of development initiatives and that overlooking its role in development can lead to the marginalization of development partners and beneficiaries, translation remains an underappreciated and chaotic process. International development stakeholders frequently operate under the assumption that translation is not a critical factor in achieving developmental success.

Second, translation and international development are two fields that typically involve engaging with multiple languages and cultures. Both fields often operate within contexts characterized by asymmetric power relations, where disparities influence the transfer of ideas, knowledge, and resources influenced by disparities in power and authority. Translation is fundamentally about mediating between languages and cultures. This mediation often occurs when one language or culture holds more power or prestige than the other. When the original text originates from a more prestigious or powerful culture, it often carries with it an inherent authority and cultural capital that makes it challenging to replicate in translation. The prestige associated with the original work lends it a certain aura of authenticity and legitimacy that is difficult to fully convey in another language or cultural context. This creates an imbalance in the exchange between cultures, as the translation is often perceived as secondary or derivative, lacking the same level of respect or recognition as the original. International development often involves the transfer of resources—such as financial aid, technology, and expertise—from more developed to less developed regions. This transfer process operates under the assumption that the developed nations possess superior knowledge and a more advanced understanding of modernity, which positions

them as the standard-bearers of progress. Within this paradigm, the developing countries are expected to merely copy the developed nations, following their trajectory of growth as the only viable path to development. This perspective inherently assumes that developing countries are perpetually lagging and may never truly catch up to the developed world. It suggests a hierarchical relationship where the developed countries are always ahead, setting the benchmarks for success. In contrast, developing countries are locked in a cycle of imitation without the possibility of reaching parity. Consequently, when the modernity paradigm is applied in development practices, the linguistic paradigm can act as a reinforcing mechanism, perpetuating and legitimizing its underlying assumptions. Both paradigms—the linguistic in TS and the modernization in DS—share the common assumption that more powerful entities hold more valid and authoritative knowledge, which must be adopted or emulated by those perceived as less knowledgeable, modern, or powerful. This results in a unidirectional flow of knowledge, where the exchange is inherently unequal, with the developed world positioned as the provider of guidance, knowledge, and validation and the developing world cast in a dependent role.

To address this issue, it is imperative to abandon the top-down modernity paradigm and instead adopt a participatory and egalitarian approach to development. Such a shift would support and be commensurate with the adoption of a translation paradigm that supports bidirectionality, where translation becomes a tool for mutual learning and validation, facilitating a more equitable exchange of knowledge. In this context, a translation would not purely serve to transfer knowledge from the developed to the developing world but would also allow for the recognition and incorporation of local knowledge into the global discourse. This approach would empower communities in the developing world to contribute actively to the development process, ensuring that their voices, experiences, and knowledge systems are validated. For Translation Studies to

achieve parity with Development Studies in terms of breadth and transformative potential, it must broaden its concept of translation to encompass processes beyond unilateral linguistic and cultural transformations. Translation Studies should adopt a new paradigm that accommodates conceptual, worldview, epistemological, legal, and sociopolitical dimensions.

In addition to the common assumptions and theories, translation (studies) and international development, in practice, have commonly assumed roles: First, both fields are supposed to facilitate communication and understanding. Translation studies seek to bridge linguistic and cultural divides, and development studies aim to foster understanding and cooperation between different societies and communities. Second, both disciplines are problem-solving oriented. Translation studies address language barriers and intercultural communication challenges while ensuring the accurate representation of diverse perspectives. Development studies tackle issues related to poverty, inequality, and sustainable development, addressing critical barriers that impede equitable global interactions. This means that both fields, in theory and practice, engage with processes of mediation and transformation that are essential for fostering mutual understanding and cooperation in complex, multicultural, and transnational contexts. The interdisciplinary potential of TS and DS lies in their shared commitment to facilitating understanding and problem-solving in a complex, interconnected world. By recognizing and building upon these commonalities, scholars and practitioners from both fields can collaborate more effectively to address the critical issues addressed by TS and DS, such as cultural marginalization and global inequality.

Finally, for TS and DS to collaborate effectively in promoting a transition from development to self-development, they must not only align their assumptions and paradigms but ultimately define common concepts and goals to achieve this end. Since we have started to define

self-development as the process of empowering individuals and communities by enhancing their agency and participation, the concept of ‘agency’ is key to achieving this goal. Agency, as a concept, is employed in both TS and DS. However, it is understood and applied in distinct ways within each discipline due to their differing theoretical frameworks, objectives, and contexts.

Chesterman (2009) explains that Translator Studies, as a new subfield in TS, focuses specifically on studying translators and interpreters as primary subjects rather than merely examining translations as textual products. He adds that this approach emphasizes the agency and role of translators in shaping texts and meaning, which contrasts with more traditional research that often marginalizes the translator's influence (Chesterman 2009). Therefore, ‘agency’ refers to the ability of translators, interpreters, and other cultural mediators to make choices within the translation process. It encompasses the ability to shape meaning, negotiate cultural differences, and decide how to represent the source text in the target language and culture. This concept acknowledges that translators are not passive conduits but active participants who engage with texts critically and creatively. Our research that translators and cultural mediators can make decisions on when to adapt or resist certain elements based on cultural, ethical, or political considerations. Agency in TS also involves ethical responsibility, as translators must consider the implications of their choices for both the source and target audiences. They have the power to either support or challenge power structures through translation. Their agency allows them to either enable hegemonic discourses or advocate for including alternative perspectives.

In DS, Amartya Sen's influence has significantly shaped international development discourse, pushing for a broader understanding of development that encompasses not just economic indicators but also human rights and freedoms (Uvin (2007)). Sen has also influenced the understanding of agency in the Human Development approach: Sen (2013) defines agency as

the ability of people to act as agents who can do effective things based on their commitments. Drydyk (2016) explains that the focus on participation in development has shifted towards expanding people's agency, as highlighted by thinkers like Sen and Crocker. Drydyk adds that this evolution views empowerment as not just participation but the ability of individuals to shape their own development outcomes. However, there's a concern that the concept of empowerment has become too individualistic, detaching it from its original intent of addressing power relations. (Drydyk 2016). The focus on agency and empowerment in development has, in many cases, become overly individualized. The risk here is that empowerment, originally conceived as a means to address systemic power disparities and structural inequalities, could be reduced to an individual's capacity to make choices, detached from the broader social and political context. This individualized understanding of empowerment may inadvertently overlook the importance of collective agency and the need to challenge entrenched power structures that restrict the freedoms and capabilities of many groups. While the emphasis on individual agency and choice is vital, it should not obscure the collective dimensions of empowerment and the structural barriers that individuals face. In the context of this study, agency must be closely linked to concepts of empowerment, participation, and self-determination, emphasizing the role of the local populace in shaping their social, economic, and political environments. Agency in self-development, as defined by this study, is about empowering communities to define and pursue their own development goals rather than having external agendas imposed on them. It involves creating conditions where individuals and groups can participate meaningfully in decision-making processes. Agency also encompasses the capacity to resist and transform existing structures of power and inequality. It highlights the ability of communities to contest and reframe dominant development discourse and practices that may not align with their context, needs, and values.

The differing definitions of agency in TS and DS reflect their respective disciplinary focuses but also provide opportunities for interdisciplinary dialogue. By exploring these nuances, both fields can deepen their understanding of how agency functions across different contexts and scales. An interdisciplinary approach could integrate the individualized agency emphasized in TS with the collective agency foregrounded in DS. This integration can help to develop models of agency that recognize both individual and communal capacities to shape meaning, resist domination, and foster self-representation. In practice, this could mean developing collaborative methodologies that empower translators, cultural mediators, and development workers to work together in ways that enhance the agency of the communities they engage with. For instance, participatory translation practices could be designed to include community members as participants in creating development project materials, thereby aligning with the participatory ethos of DS. This shared goal of empowerment underscores the importance of an interdisciplinary approach that leverages the strengths of both fields to address the multifaceted challenges and avoid contradictions in both theory and practice. Additionally, they must establish common goals, as working toward conflicting objectives that impede translation, as defined in this study, and hinder the progression of development into self-development.

Therefore, it is imperative to reconceptualize translation not only as a linguistic practice but also as a critical perspective and analytical tool. This re-conceptualization will enhance our understanding of development processes, particularly those that promote self-development. Subsequently, the ensuing section will provide a brief overview of the conceptualization of translation within the purview of this research, elucidating the rationale behind this definition and expounding its attendant advantages.

4.6 Conceptualizing Translation as Viewed by This Research

This research was primarily driven by my curiosity about the multifaceted nature of the concept of ‘translation’ as both a conceptual framework and a mode of action for managing differences and mediating between different cultures, religions, and knowledge systems. My interest in the scholars cited in this study lies in their exploration of translation as an anchor to encapsulate envisioned methodologies, values, and potentially ethical principles to address intercultural misunderstandings and conflicts. The underlying aspiration in employing the concept of translation as an interdisciplinary and analytical tool was directed toward fostering improved coexistence, justice, and the realization of human dignity while ensuring that cultures retain the agency to choose and decide how they want to live.

In the context of this study, the understanding of translation as both a conceptual framework and a practical application encompasses the amalgamation of the various meanings elucidated and conceptualized in the preceding discussions and aligns with the purpose of this research in adopting a translational perspective to foster self-development.

A translational perspective, as indicated by the title of this research, involves what we refer to as a translational lens and a translational way of action that underscore the multifaceted nature of translation that goes beyond, albeit including its linguistic aspects. This means that translation is a way of thinking and acting that can guide inter-difference encounters. The proposed research in this study entails conducting interviews with local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) in Palestine. The aim is to elucidate the translational actions that are currently undertaken and/or required within the development context. Additionally, the study seeks to determine the extent to which translational thinking and acting, as conceptualized herein, are implemented in the

Palestinian context, as well as to identify the challenges that hinder the application of such translational practices within the framework of development initiatives.

A translational perspective encompasses a framework for addressing interactions between differing entities. This perspective acknowledges that intercultural interactions are not simply the smooth transfer of ideas or knowledge from one side to another. Instead, it recognizes that engaging with the other, who possesses different kinds of knowledge and modes of thinking, presents a significant challenge and should not be taken for granted. Basalamah explains:

Gadamer presents the other as *Anstoss*, i.e. obstacle/clash and impulse/impetus at the same time (2004: chapter 5), which means that the interaction with the other is impossible. At the same time, however, it is the necessary prompt for all the different parties to converge around the search for intercomprehension (2020, p. 4).

As clarified by Basalamah, this *Anstoß* should not be an impediment but an invitation to mutual understanding. In the context of this research, it is imperative to discern that the translation of human rights and development concepts transcends the mere quest for linguistic and cultural equivalence. Rather, stakeholders are urged to pause and contemplate whether such concepts are inherently translatable. As previously discussed, conducting linguistic translation that overlooks the inherent differences between languages and cultures while assuming a pre-existing and seamless correspondence between source and target texts can facilitate the integration of concepts, ideas, and values into target cultures under the guise of universal applicability. This process can involve both intentional and unintentional deception, as it may obscure the cultural specificities and contextual nuances that are essential to a meaningful translation. This is why Santos sees intercultural translation as an “alternative to the abstract universalism that grounds Western-centric

general theories and to incommensurability between cultures”. While rejecting universalism, this perspective acknowledges that while some cultural elements may be difficult to translate, it can still facilitate meaningful exchanges and foster a deeper appreciation of diverse worldviews. Hence, the translation process for development should not be characterized by seamless localization; rather, it supposes engaging in a dialogue for reconciling disparities or finding viable solutions.

Second, translation is a process of mutual comprehension or a two-way process that challenges the conventional views of translation as a simple bridge or one-way transfer process (Bachmann-Medick, 2013) that must have effects on all sides by changing their knowledge and attitude towards the other—hence: “No act of translation leaves either of the partners intact. Both emerge from their encounter changed, different at the end of the act from what they were at its beginning” (Bauman, 1999, p. xlviii). Consequently, intercultural encounters are approached with the prior intention of exchanging knowledge, believing that all knowledge can be equally valid. As Santos (2005) explains, translation requires a conscientious approach underpinned by the antecedent recognition of the inherent incompleteness within one's own knowledge. It further mandates the willingness to embrace an alternative vantage point that entails perceiving one's own cognitive framework through the lens of divergent forms of knowledge. This acknowledgment of the provisional nature of one's understanding and the openness to the perspectives inherent in other knowledge systems become imperative facets in the conscientious translation practice. A translational perspective views difference and diversity as an opportunity to share knowledge and negotiate difference without losing identity: “Translation is the procedure that allows for mutual intelligibility among the experiences of the world, both available and possible, as revealed by the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences, without jeopardizing their identity

and autonomy, without, in other words, reducing them to homogeneous entities (Santos, 2014, p. 16). Santos further maintains that “As a living process, intercultural translation aims at reciprocity instead of worrying about source cultures and target cultures, cross-sourcing and cross-targeting” (2014, p. 214). Thus, he advocates for a model of translation that is not confined by the rigid distinctions of source culture and target culture. Instead, it embraces the idea of reciprocity, wherein the interaction between different cultural elements is viewed as a living, continuous, evolving process. A perspective that leads to our third and last point.

Third, translation, as defined by this research, involves embracing a deliberate form of "unfaithful" appropriation of the original ideas. This approach facilitates a creative reinterpretation of the source material by not adhering strictly to the literal or traditional interpretations. Such reinterpretation is a transformative process that generates new meanings and applications. Bachmann-Medick states that “here, too, cultural differences - it could be argued - could be kept open, especially through partial translations, for the purpose of stimulating action. In any case, they could become a gateway for a deliberately "unfaithful" appropriation behavior vis-à-vis the "original" ("faithless appropriation"), which would allow for the productive reinterpretation of the original (2012a, p. 345). The partial or/and unfaithful translation thus becomes a gateway to more dynamic interactions, enabling a more diversified understanding of the original work. This strategy highlights the potential of translation as a tool not only for cross-cultural communication but also for innovative cultural dialogue and the creation of novel interpretive frameworks. Basalamah states that “The claim of any invention or novelty starts with the appropriation of another’s initial idea retranslated in one’s own terms” (2020, p. 5). The act of "retranslating" an idea into one's own terms implies a transformative process where the original notion is not simply copied but is integrated into a new framework. This new framework reflects

the individual's unique viewpoint, thereby creating something original and innovative. This perspective emphasizes that creativity and novelty are not isolated phenomena but are deeply connected to the ongoing dialogue with and adaptation of existing ideas. Such a process underscores the iterative nature of intellectual development and highlights the importance of context and interpretation in shaping new contributions.

Consequently, translational actions encompass a spectrum of deliberate activities inspired by translational perspectives aimed at facilitating cultural mediation and mutual understanding among diverse knowledge systems. These actions manifest through endeavors like negotiations and debates, serving as conduits for navigating disparities. Additionally, translational actions extend to acts of resistance or appropriation to reclaim redress, embodying processes where disparate ideas and concepts are either contested or assimilated. These actions contribute to the intricate dynamics of intercultural comprehension and foster dialogue amidst the plurality of knowledge frameworks. Applying translation as conceived by this study in the realm of international development is expected to lead to self-development. Therefore, the theoretical aspects of translation as self-development that will be used by this study will be elucidated in the next section.

4.7 Translation as Self-development

Defining 'translation as self-development' is important to help answer the second sub-research question: 'How can current human rights development practices be adapted to better align with local contexts and aspirations when considered through the lens of translation as self-development?' The definition can help find ways to investigate whether this kind of translation is implemented in the context of Palestinian development.

Translation, in the context of this research, is understood as both a conceptual framework and a mode of action that facilitates managing differences and mediating between various cultures and knowledge systems. It goes beyond linguistic transfer, embodying a broader intercultural exchange and understanding scope. This understanding of translation is intricately tied to the self-development of the local development partners and beneficiaries, fostering justice and human dignity.

Translation, as conceptualized in this study, is a dynamic, reciprocal engagement that involves translational thinking and acting: This refers to the application of translation as a perspective, thus a way of thinking and acting that guides encounters across cultural and epistemic differences. It involves recognizing the complexities and challenges inherent in engaging with diverse knowledge systems and seeking mutual understanding despite these challenges. It facilitates the negotiation of meanings, values, and concepts, thereby contributing to a deeper appreciation of diverse worldviews and the reconciliation of differences. This concept highlights the transformative nature of translation, where original ideas are reinterpreted and integrated into new frameworks. Such creative reinterpretation fosters innovation and the generation of new meanings and practices, reflecting the unique perspectives of individuals and communities involved in the translation process. Therefore, exploring the role of translation in fostering self-development is multi-dimensional. The related actions are expected to influence local capacities, autonomy, and empowerment and to involve the following practices:

1. Community Empowerment: encouraging the Palestinian LNGOs to cooperate and engage in translational actions that can empower them to negotiate their own identities and values while engaging with external concepts and frameworks. This empowerment is essential for ensuring that

communities maintain their agency and autonomy in determining collectively how to cultivate local practices that enhance human dignity.

2. Intercultural Understanding and Justice: Translation, as a tool for intercultural mediation, plays a vital role in fostering mutual comprehension. By engaging in dialogues and exchanging ideas between the local and the international and by adopting and prioritizing the local knowledge and needs, translation contributes to more equitable and just interactions among the development partners.

3. Reciprocal learning: Local partners expect international collaborators to comprehend the Palestinian context and specific requirements, ensuring that these are articulated and reflected in project concepts and ideas.

Through interviewing LNGOs, this research investigates whether these translational practices, hence self-development, are applied in the Palestinian development context. The data and methodology chapter will elaborate more on how this study will investigate if translation as self-development is applied in the studied context. The last section of this chapter will discuss the adequacy and appropriateness of the suggested broadened translation concept to international development.

4.8 The Appropriateness of the Broadened Meaning of Translation to the International Development Context.

This research advocates that any new theory or conceptual framework should be firmly grounded in practical tasks that would allow for direct engagement with the subject matter. Such an approach ensures that theoretical constructs remain relevant and applicable to real-world situations. Pym emphasizes this point, noting that "unfortunately, our educational institutions tend

to separate theory from practice, often relegating ‘translation theory’ to a distinct course. While this separation is possible, it is crucial that theories and their implications emerge organically from a series of practical tasks, structured as discovery processes" (Pym, 2014, p. 5).

As highlighted in the literature review, translation in the context of development is often messy, unplanned, and frequently overlooked in project budgets. This oversight results in the exclusion of many stakeholders and hampers the ability of NGOs to meet their development objectives. This thesis contends that a significant barrier to self-development is rooted in issues of translation, particularly when translation is unidirectional and perpetuates the universalism of development concepts. Whether poorly executed or insufficiently planned, linguistic translation can exacerbate these challenges. To address this, the thesis proposes a broadened conception of translation, one that extends beyond linguistic concerns, to help mitigate these issues and foster self-development.

The research adopts an interdisciplinary approach, recognizing that one of the primary goals of interdisciplinary research is to tackle and resolve complex, multifaceted problems. Menken & Kestra (2016) assert that "complex questions and problems necessitate an interdisciplinary approach to research" (p. 13), particularly because these problems are multi-dimensional, with each discipline addressing a different aspect. Van Doorslaer (2018) explains that today, numerous phenomena and issues we aim to comprehend and address transcend the conventional limits of academic disciplines. This shift represents a natural evolution driven by practical needs and theoretical dissatisfaction.

Chapter 5: Data and Methodology

This chapter outlines the data collection and methodology employed in this research. To address the research questions on the interplay between the international development context and translation as defined by this research, a qualitative approach was chosen, utilizing interviews as the primary data collection method. Qualitative data through interviews provides rich detailed insights for exploring nuanced perspectives and experiences.

Consequently, the subsequent sections of this chapter provide a comprehensive overview of the qualitative analysis process, highlighting data collection methods, coding techniques, and analytical procedures. We will first explore the rationale for selecting semi-structured interviews and qualitative analysis and elucidate the steps taken to ensure an ethical research process.

5.1 Research Methodology

The chosen methodological framework, anchored in qualitative analysis and semi-structured interviews, offers a vigorous toolkit for illuminating the strategies, nuances, and challenges that arise in the process of translating and implementing HR development projects from the point of view of the local NGOs, including the socio-political aspects that influence translating HR development projects into the Palestinian context. The required data should help explore whether the development context in Palestine facilitates or impedes the translational actions of the LNGOs. By grounding this investigation in the practices and challenges faced by LNGOs, the research aims to assess whether translation processes in this context foster self-development and local self-empowerment or if they reproduce dependency on external frameworks. Furthermore, it evaluates whether these processes lean towards being source-oriented, privileging the perspectives of international donors, or target-oriented, prioritizing local needs and realities. This data is

required to answer the research questions investigating the interplay between translation practices and the context of international development.

I have chosen to obtain this data from local NGOs in Palestine because they work directly with international donors and closely with the international development beneficiaries. As clarified in the literature review, in the absence of official or governmental translation and implementation mechanisms of human rights, LNGOs work as mediators, translators, localizers, and observers of the implementation of development ideas related to human rights laws. Through my professional engagement with LNGOs in the translation of human rights, I have observed how these organizations struggle to reconcile the universal principles of human rights with Palestine's local socio-cultural, political, and economic realities. These observations were a pivotal motivation for this research and a key reason for choosing LNGOs as this thesis's primary data source.

Semi-structured interviews provide the flexibility to pose open-ended questions while allowing new questions to emerge naturally during the conversation. Saldanha and O'Brien maintain that in semi-structured interviews, “as in structured interviews, an interview schedule tends to be used, but more of the questions are open-ended, and there is more flexibility to allow variation in the order in which the questions are asked, as well as to introduce new questions” (2014, pp. 172-173). Open-ended questions encourage participants to express their reflections and experiences in their own words, leading to richer data. In addition, semi-structured interviews allow for key topics to be covered systematically so I can obtain the same principle information from every participant while also providing the flexibility to explore emerging issues. Wilson (2014) states that one of the strengths of semi-structured interviews is that they “[e]nsure that particular points are covered with each participant and also allow users and interviewers to raise additional concerns and issues” (p. 26). Wilson adds that semi-structured interviews “[p]rovide

some flexibility for interviewers and also allows some broad comparisons across interviews” (ibid). I ensured that interviews were conducted in a relaxed and conversational environment, allowing informants to express their perspectives openly. Rubin and Rubin (2005) state that the informal and flexible interview approach invites conversational partners to introduce topics, share concerns, and explore meanings that matter to them.

This approach is particularly relevant to my research since I recognize the value of creating a space for participants to share their experiences, articulate their nuanced insights, and give examples of translating development from their work context. This method also ensures the collection of consistent core information. It enables me to delve into the unique and context-specific ways these organizations mediate and adapt human rights frameworks. By using semi-structured interviews, I can better capture the diversity of their experiences and strategies, which are central to addressing the research questions of this thesis.

Meanwhile, this research aims to empirically examine and understand how translation, as conceptualized in this study, manifests in the implementation and localization of human rights projects by Palestinian LNGOs. Specifically, it examines how these organizations translate the universal human rights frameworks with Palestine's socio-political, economic, and cultural realities. Therefore, a qualitative analysis method was deemed most suitable. Richards and Morse (2013) view qualitative research as encompassing diverse approaches to exploring and interpreting data that would lose their richness and significance if explained in numbers. Unlike quantitative methods, which reduce data to numerical representations, qualitative approaches prioritize the preservation of the richness, depth, and context inherent in the information. Moreover, qualitative research helps explain the complexity and diversity of human experiences, ensuring that they are captured and analyzed.

Richards and Morse (2013) add that qualitative methods are designed to uncover understanding or provide explanations derived from the data itself rather than relying solely on pre-existing knowledge or theoretical frameworks; thus, these methods prioritize learning from the data and addressing its inherent complexity rigorously and deeply. This research depends on the data obtained from LNGOs to understand the complex interplay between translation and development as a context. After the data is collected, thematically coded, and presented, the findings will be discussed in view of the conceptual framework used in this study: translation as a perspective and an action analytical tool in development. Lochmiller (2021) states that “As an explanatory tool, thematic analysis can be used to infer meaning about experiences, perspectives, or belief systems through the lens of a particular conceptual or theoretical framework” (p. 2031). The choice of qualitative analysis stems from the need to bridge translation's theoretical and practical realms in the context of international development.

5.2 Data Collection

The empirical data collected for this study was obtained by conducting semi-structured interviews with the LNGOs working in the field of human and human women's rights development projects. Before initiating the process, I secured ethical clearance from the Ethics Department at the University of Ottawa, having fulfilled all requisite conditions for conducting interviews involving human participants (please see Appendix 1). The interviewed NGOs were selected by searching the directories of Institutions and Organizations working in Palestine, such as The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, PASSIA (PASSIA -, 2022), which provides information and contact details of all the international and local governmental and non-governmental bodies working in Palestine. I found that 71 organizations in Palestine work in the field of human rights. I consolidated my list by consulting the website of the Local Aid

Coordination Secretariat, which is the organization that provides information on the work of development in Palestine and is adopted by all international donors as a source of information and reports aiming at coordinating the development efforts in Palestine.

After that, I narrowed my list to the local organizations that receive donor funds. I filtered the list again to include the organizations that work on civil and political rights in general without specializing in one field, such as housing or workers' rights only. I ended up with a list of 35 organizations. I interviewed every organization that answered my phone call and agreed to participate in this research. The final list included 15 organizations (please see the list of interviewed LNGOs in Appendix 4). Some organizations are not from PASSIA or LACS websites, but I was referred to them by other organizations I called or interviewed. When I called an organization, I asked to interview the staff members who work directly on international donor-funded projects. Therefore, I was sometimes directed to talk with the director/ice or the project manager or coordinator. Sometimes, I had the chance to meet with both the director and the project manager/ coordinator in some organizations. At the beginning of the interview, I ask the informant to read and sign the consent form (Appendix 2). I also informed them that I would share the research results with them once published.

Some organizations generally work on human rights, and some work only on women's rights. In my final list, three out of 15 organizations work only on women's rights. All the directors of the Women HR organizations I interviewed were women. Among the other 12 organizations, one director and two project managers were women. I interviewed 19 persons, among them six women and 13 men. All of the informants I met have been working in the field of human rights for 10 to 30 years and in development projects for at least 10 years. Even though I did not specify the number of years of experience as a criterion, I was fortunate to meet people with long

experience in this field. So, the persons I interviewed had relevant expertise to my study and were qualified and willing to take the time to participate.

In this research, I call the people I interviewed ‘informants’ because they have contributed considerably to the knowledge that backed this research: “An informant is seen as a partner in the research and has a more active involvement in constructing the knowledge that is to be the outcome of the research process.” (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2014, p. 150). I met with all the study’s informants in the Westbank and Gaza from April to July 2023. I was amazed by the rich information, experience, and insights the informants shared generously with me. Every informant was keen to support this research and help in every way possible. Therefore, I am deeply grateful for the generosity of the people I met for this research.

5.3 Challenges and Limitations

The research process encountered some challenges and limitations, some of which are characteristic of similar studies, while others were unique to this investigation's specific nature and contextual conditions.

I will start with the limitations of conducting qualitative analysis based on semi-structured interviews. These limitations can affect both the data collection process and the quality of the analysis. Some key challenges include:

First, qualitative analysis is interpretive, and the researcher's personal perspectives, experiences, and biases may influence the interpretation of the data. Saldanha & O’Brien (2014) maintain that “qualitative interviewing is fraught with bias, and so is the data analysis” (p. 188). This subjectivity can affect the consistency and reliability of the findings. This is relevant to my work since my experience working with LNGOs may affect my interpretation of the data.

Therefore, I tried to include many direct participant quotes in the analysis. This approach ensures that my interpretations remain closely tied to the participants' own words and perspectives, providing a more transparent connection between the raw data and my conclusions. I aim to balance my perspective with the participants' voices by doing so.

Second, in analyzing semi-structured interviews, researchers might focus on specific themes or responses, unintentionally overlooking other essential elements or perspectives in the data. Therefore, in my analysis, I managed to include all perspectives since, in my data, all perspectives on how people work in the context of development and all experiences and study cases related to the strategies NGOs use to localize development must be included to express the variety of translational actions.

Third, semi-structured interviews are commonly conducted with a relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Nonetheless, in the context of my research project, I committed to interviewing representatives from 15 local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs). This number corresponds to all NGOs working on human rights issues identified through a preliminary survey conducted at the study's outset. Although my initial list of NGOs evolved throughout the research—due to some organizations being unresponsive or inactive at the time of the interviews—I was still able to maintain the target of interviewing representatives from 15 LNGOs. In some cases, the NGOs I interviewed referred me to additional organizations they believed were relevant to my research, leveraging their networks to help identify active and pertinent actors in the field. This dynamic approach to participant recruitment allowed me to adapt to the evolving landscape of human rights-focused NGOs while fulfilling the methodological rigor required for my research. My initial objective was to interview two representatives from each organization: a project manager and the director. However, in most

cases, interviewing a single representative—typically a project manager or the head of the organization—proved sufficient to acquire the necessary data for my research. This approach ensured that, despite the limitations of a smaller sample size, I could gather detailed and reliable information pertinent to the scope of my investigation.

Fourth, the findings could be considered highly context-dependent, making applying insights gained to other contexts or populations difficult. Although the context I am investigating is unique as it can be viewed as the only or one of the few cases of very long occupation, the translational perspectives applied can be generalized in other contexts. I provided a detailed description of the studied context in the context chapter while presenting the findings so that other researchers could decide the extent to which their contexts can be compared to this study. Maher et al. (2018) contend that “because qualitative research is specific to a particular context, it is important a ‘thick description’ of the particular research context is provided allowing the reader to assess whether it is transferable to their situation or not” (p. 3).

The context-specific challenges and limitations are mainly related to the data collection process. To do the interviews, I traveled from Ottawa to the occupied Palestinian Territories, where I conducted the interviews over four months. Although it is my homeland and I am used to the living circumstances, traveling between the Palestinian cities was not always safe and easy due to the existence of checkpoints and sometimes confrontations between the Palestinians and the Israeli settlers or army. The restrictions of movement and accessibility limited my ability to access certain areas, making it difficult to reach participants. These restrictions prevented the scheduling of some interviews. Traveling to unstable regions affected by ongoing conflict presents significant risks to personal safety. Therefore, I was able to avoid traveling to certain cities by opting to interview staff from other offices or branches of the same NGO. This approach optimized the logistical

aspects of data collection and ensured I could still capture the perspectives of organizations with multi-locational operations. By engaging with different branches, I gathered relevant insights while minimizing travel requirements.

In contexts of occupation, freedom of expression is typically constrained and, in some cases, actively suppressed. Informants may fear repercussions, such as arrest or office raids, for disclosing sensitive information. This environment of repression can lead to significant hesitation or outright refusal to participate in interviews, which subsequently limits the quality and quantity of data collected. Furthermore, it may impact the depth of communication, as participants might opt to share only non-sensitive or superficial information. However, in my research, the interviewed individuals showed remarkable openness in sharing data and were not reluctant to share their full views or experiences. Contrary to concerns about self-censorship, they were eager for their voices to be heard. Many viewed their participation not merely as an interview but as an extension of their advocacy work for human rights in Palestine, aligning with their organizational missions to advance the cause of Palestinian rights.

In conclusion, it is essential to acknowledge that my established connections within the development field and my academic affiliation with the University of Ottawa significantly enhanced the trust and credibility I could prove as a researcher. Each time I arranged a meeting with an LNGO, I followed up by sending a confirmation email from my University of Ottawa account, which helped to reinforce my professional legitimacy. Additionally, I expressed my gratitude after each interview by sending a formal thank-you letter. These practices not only facilitated access to the participants but also fostered a positive rapport, further contributing to the success of the data collection process.

5.4 Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using manual thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a powerful tool for understanding and analyzing qualitative data and getting valuable participant insights. Mayan (2023) states that qualitative content analysis is a flexible, interactive process of coding and categorizing data to uncover and refine underlying patterns. Also, Lochmiller (2021) explains that thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative research method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. This study follows Lochmiller's (2021) seven main steps for conducting thematic analysis: first, preparing data systematically, including transcription and anonymization; second, creating initial codes based on the dataset or pre-established theoretical frameworks where the descriptive codes help categorize data by participant roles, themes, or relevant topics; third, thoroughly reviewing the dataset to identify preliminary ideas and patterns without imposing interpretations; fourth, assigning initial codes to meaningful passages to reduce the dataset and highlight relevant ideas, refining categories, and identifying patterns; fifth, developing broader themes by aggregating categories and determining their alignment with the research questions; sixth, interpreting the data while ensuring themes are authenticated by participant perspectives; seventh, presenting the findings by organizing them around major themes and using participant quotes to substantiate themes.

Consequently, the main patterns that repeated and emerged from the interviews were categorized into main themes, and then sub-themes were chosen because they led to answering my research questions. Afterward, the themes were interpreted and presented in line with the informants' perspectives, and examples of localizing HR projects were included. Quotations from the informants were carefully selected to confirm or challenge the identified themes while ensuring

that the anonymity of the informants was strictly maintained throughout the analysis and reporting process.

Lochmiller (2021) explains that while thematic coding helps understand and explain qualitative data and provides clear linkages between data, categories, and themes, which enhance the validity of the analysis, it requires rigorous coding to avoid superficial analysis and well-formulated questions to guide developing themes. Formulating the interview questions presented a significant challenge, especially in the absence of guiding models or examples in translation studies (please see interview questions in Appendix 3). It was essential to design the questions to elicit responses addressing my research questions without directly prompting participants to reflect on whether translation, as conceptualized in my study, could facilitate self-development. This approach aimed to avoid guiding participants towards a particular conclusion that I might be inclined towards. Lochmiller

Additionally, the questions needed to be structured to discourage simple yes or no answers, thereby encouraging more elaborate responses. However, the informants were familiar with concepts such as ‘localization’ of development projects and HR principles. They used a concept in Arabic to describe the process of fitting development to the local context, ‘Tawteen,’ which can be translated back into English as ‘to accommodate or to settle.’ In those terms, I found that this concept reflects an aspiration to have human rights at the national level. Nevertheless, I clarified to the informants that my inquiry did not focus on evaluating the quality of the translation of development texts but rather on examining the local implementation process and any associated challenges. All informants possessed considerable experience with this process and its related challenges, and their responses demonstrated both a deep understanding and relevance to the data

I sought to gather. This finding is not unexpected, as this subject matter constitutes a routine aspect of their professional responsibilities.

I interviewed only Palestinian NGOs and organizations; the workers were Palestinian Arabic speakers. I translated the interview questions into Arabic, and the interviews were also conducted in Arabic. After collecting all the data, I translated the responses into English and performed coding and thematic analysis in English.

To address the first research sub-question, which aims to investigate the context influencing the translation of human rights in development, the interview questions were designed to explore whether LNGOs localize development ideas when necessary. Additionally, the questions sought to uncover any challenges or resistance these organizations face in the localization process. Participants were encouraged to provide examples of such challenges and elaborate on the underlying reasons for encountering these difficulties. The responses from the interviewees provided insight into the specific translational actions undertaken by the organizations, revealing how these actions were influenced and triggered by the development context.

The interdisciplinary research between TS and DS focuses on understanding how translation practices by LNGOs impact and are influenced by the development context. As defined by this study, translational actions are analytical tools to illuminate how development ideas and discourses are introduced and adapted within developing societies through translational activities. By examining these processes, the dynamics of how external development concepts are negotiated, translated, and integrated into local contexts can be understood, thereby shaping the development landscape. This approach enhances our comprehension of translation's role in development and

provides insights into how translation can affect and be affected by the socio-political dimensions of development work.

For the second research sub-question, which investigates whether translation as a perspective leads to self-development, the related interview questions were designed based on the definition of self-development and by deconstructing the concept into its components. Self-development is defined as a development process grounded in negotiation, bidirectional understanding, and learning, where locals have the agency and autonomy to translate development into their own terms, aligning with their needs and aspirations.

The related questions inquired about the origin of project ideas, specifically whether they stem from donors and if LNGOs can negotiate, modify, or reject these externally proposed ideas. Additionally, local NGOs were asked if they believe international workers understand the Palestinian context as defined by this study and what sources of information these international workers rely on to grasp the local culture and thus design project ideas. Local NGOs were also asked about the effects of development on Palestinian society to ascertain their opinions on whether the changes brought by development initiatives are desired by the LNGOs and the local community. Bidirectionality was investigated by asking the LNGOs if they could see changes in the donors' policies, language, or discourse due to their negotiation work with them.

Local NGOs were asked to provide examples of their efforts to translate and localize development ideas related to human rights. These narratives explain the translational efforts undertaken by LNGOs and how they can sometimes amalgamate international and local ideas and practices. Understanding these practices aligns with the sociologies of absences and the sociologies

of emergencies, which aim to reveal and elevate neglected knowledge and highlight the struggles of oppressed communities.

Through their examples, LNGOs showcased their ability to adapt and integrate global human rights concepts into the local context, reflecting a nuanced approach that respects and incorporates local traditions, values, and needs. This localization process involves a critical engagement with international frameworks, modifying and contextualizing them to ensure they resonate with and are effective within the local socio-political landscape.

The sociologies of absences seek to make visible the forms of knowledge and experiences that are often marginalized or ignored by dominant discourses. Similarly, the sociologies of emergencies focus on identifying and responding to urgent and critical issues oppressed groups face. By documenting and analyzing the translational practices of LNGOs, this research contributes to these sociological perspectives, highlighting the innovative and context-sensitive strategies local actors employ to promote human rights and development.

In this way, LNGOs' work addresses immediate HR challenges and contributes to a broader understanding of how localized approaches can inform and transform global human rights practices. This underscores the importance of recognizing and valuing the contributions of local actors in the global human rights movement, as their experiences and insights offer critical perspectives that can enhance the effectiveness and relevance of international development efforts. The next chapter presents this research's findings and answers the research questions.

Chapter 6: Presenting the Findings

This chapter presents the empirical findings obtained from interviews with LNGOs and answers the research questions. The NGOs' answers to the interview questions were organized according to the main themes that emerged from the discussions with the informants. The main themes have been further dissected into sub-themes, providing a comprehensive breakdown of the gathered information. The themes were sorted in a way that answers the research questions. This structured approach aims first at offering a clear presentation of the contextual factors influencing LNGOs' translational practices and interactions with the donors and the Palestinian society. This is because the first research sub-question investigates the interplay between translational practices and the international development context.

6.1 Thematic Presentation of the Findings

1. The contextual factors influencing the development landscape in Palestine.

1.a Dynamics of Established and Emerging Human Rights Organizations in Palestine

When inquiring whether the informants felt a need to localize development ideas related to HRs and whether they encountered challenges in doing so, all respondents indicated that a comprehensive understanding of the development landscape was necessary before they could provide meaningful answers. This understanding of the development context is crucial for addressing my first sub-research question.

The interviewed informants explained that within the Human Rights Organizations (HROs) landscape, a dichotomy delineates two distinct categories. The first category encompasses established, robustly structured LNGOs with long-standing histories sustained by proficient

management, rigorous auditing systems, and financial stability. Originating before or concurrently with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), these organizations serve broad segments of the Palestinian Community, commanding trust from many donors owing to their impactful contributions and sustained existence. Primarily emerged from volunteers' initiatives to oppose Israeli occupation, advocate human rights, and provide legal and consultation services to society. These organizations often have the latitude to set their projects priorities and ideas and implement initiatives tailored to the Palestinian context and requirements. These organizations are not dependent on external funds.

Contrarily, the second category embodies relatively newer LNGOs, many of which owe their inception to international funding. Struggling to maintain operational functionality, sustain salaries, and continue activities, these organizations heavily rely on diverse donors and their associated funding schemes for survival. Two interviewed representatives from these organizations expressed their candid acknowledgment of this reality. They said, "We hope we can financially pursue our goals autonomously, without dependence on external funding sources that impose constraints on our scope and strategic direction".

The coexistence of these two types of LNGOs presents distinct challenges. Established LNGOs tend to exercise greater discretion in project selection and accepting or rejecting donor-proposed ideas and concepts. In contrast, international funders frequently channel their project ideas through newer organizations. A representative from the first category said, "This dichotomy engenders a fragmentation among the local organizations, impeding cohesive agreement on common priorities and overarching concepts. Additionally, these dynamics foster an environment of competition rather than collaboration among the two categories of local organizations".

1.b The dual nature of funds: core funds vs. project-based

Another contextual factor that influences the ability to determine or choose development ideas is the nature of the provided fund. A pertinent issue arises due to the existence of two distinct fund categories: core funds and project-based. Core funds, flexible in nature, serve to sustain the overall strategic and operational priorities of development organizations, fostering long-term planning, organizational capacity enhancement, and adaptability to emergent needs. In contrast, project-oriented funds are allocated for specific programs, contingent upon predefined objectives and timelines, mostly necessitating comprehensive project proposals and budgetary details. An informant said, “These funds are primarily earmarked to propose and execute interventions aligned with the donor's specific ideas and priorities”.

The predominant tendency among international funding sources has leaned towards project-based funding over core financing, mainly due to its facilitation of donor-defined project ideas. An informant said, “Currently, project-based funds constitute the largest proportion of available funding. From the donors' perspective, these funds are easier to track and manage. However, for our organizations (LNGOs), these funds necessitate substantial administrative efforts and capacities. Many LNGOs cannot manage the required administrative tasks by donors, compelling them to rely on international NGOs. This dependency often results in these external organizations absorbing a significant portion of the allocated project budget”.

Furthermore, amidst allegations of corruption and ineffective management of international funds directed at the PNA, project-based funds offer a more controlled and auditable framework for donors concerning financial and temporal aspects. However, they impose substantial administrative burdens on LNGOs. An informant said, "This situation has exacerbated divisions

and competition among LNGOs and between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and LNGOs. More critically, it has intensified the rift between local and international NGOs. The international NGOs (INGOs) perceive themselves as more adept at handling the financial and administrative tasks required by project-based funds, consequently retaining a significant portion of the funds to cover these expenses”. This financial landscape often strains relationships between well-established organizations and donors, sometimes shifting their interactions from cooperative to competitive.

1.c Impediments in implementing Human Rights Agreements within Palestine.

The Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) endorsement of human rights agreements received significant backing from over 90% of Human Rights Organizations (HROs). However, criticism emerged from these organizations due to the PNA's decision to ratify these agreements without reservations, lacking national discussions or agreements. Most informants said, “The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) did not make sufficient efforts to explain these agreements, raise awareness about them, or initiate national discussions. This unilateral approach impeded localization efforts, relegating HROs to disseminating rights information without contextual adaptations. Without an active legislative body, specifically the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), these conventions were not translated into local laws”.

The absence of localization and integration of these agreements into local civil and political laws was due to two main challenges. Firstly, the effective paralysis of the Palestinian parliament since 2006 after Hamas won a majority in the Palestinian Parliament seats. The election results led to more political discord between major Palestinian parties, namely Fatah and Hamas. They thwarted any cohesive attempts at governance, further deepening the political divide and hindering

the formation of a functioning government. An informant said, “This parliamentary stagnation not only hindered the enactment and aligning of human and civil rights laws with the local laws but also led to the continued reliance on ancient legislations that were borrowed from French, British, and Turkish laws”. Most informants agreed that “The absence of a robust, self-reliant state infrastructure has not only hindered the effective implementation and enforcement of human rights but also highlighted the insufficient efforts by the PNA to localize and implement the endorsed agreements”. As a result, the Palestinian people are left with human rights that are endorsed on paper but neither translated into local laws nor implemented, enforced, or protected by the PNA. Consequently, the population is left with a patchwork of inherited foreign laws that neither align with universal human rights standards nor reflect laws that are tailored to the specific needs and context of the Palestinian people.

1.d Challenges to embracing human rights treaties by Palestinian Society

The majority of international human rights treaties ratified by the PNA, particularly those concerning civil rights and women's rights, such as CEDAW, remain mainly unexplained to the Palestinian people and, as a result, are widely unaccepted by many. This failure by the PNA to disseminate, promote, and explain these agreements has led to varied reactions and receptions within Palestinian society. The lack of national discussions and justifications has further fueled dissent and dissatisfaction among various societal groups toward these agreements.

Palestinian Human Rights Organizations (HROs) face difficulties in fostering widespread acceptance of human rights laws within the Palestinian society owing to the perceived lack of concrete advantages or results stemming from these principles. Most informants agree that “When these agreements are not implemented, and their benefits are not evident on the ground, people are

less likely to support them”. In addition, the Palestinian population observes a disconnect between the theoretical construct of human rights and its practical implementation within their specific circumstances, especially under the continuing occupation and enclosure (especially in the case of Gaza). This has resulted in a notable absence of tangible achievements in promoting universal human rights. The disappointment stems from a widespread belief that the application and benefits of human rights have been inadequate for Palestinians, leading to doubts about the significance and effectiveness of these principles in their everyday lives.

Two informants said, “The oppositions of many Palestinians to the endorsement of human rights agreements are exacerbated by the perception that Western nations played a significant role in developing and promoting human rights principles but are seen as applying these standards selectively when it comes to non-western Nations in general and the Palestinian population in particular. Most informants said, “This perspective fosters a sense of disillusionment and mistrust among the Palestinian population. It suggests that the perceived lack of consistent adherence to human rights standards is due to a politically biased framework influencing their implementation”.

Most informants indicated, "As HROs, we effectively employ the conceptual framework established by HR laws to advocate for and assert our rights. Nonetheless, a fundamental difficulty emerges due to our dependence on Western donors who paradoxically engage in behaviors that contravene the ideals they claim to uphold. Despite expressing support for human rights, donors' countries simultaneously undertake actions that hinder the achievement of Palestinian rights, especially by voting against resolutions on Palestinian human rights at the United Nations or maintaining measures that impede the exercise of core Palestinian rights, such as self-determination and the right to resist the occupation”.

Most informants add, "This situation requires us to actively seek partnerships with donors who support and advocate for our rights while also agreeing with our beliefs and goals. The incongruity between the publicly stated principles of these benefactors and their efforts to undermine the rights of Palestinians generates a tangible inclination within our institutions to collaborate with those who are wholeheartedly show solidarity, dedicated to campaigning for our rights and facilitating their fulfillment". An informant explained that "It is hard to work with donors who do not share with us the same goals and aspirations". He gave an example of "how Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission expressed congratulatory sentiments towards the Israelis on the occasion of celebrating the foundation of their state, praising their successful conversion of desert territories into blooming and articulating that we 'Europe' share the same values with the Israelis". He explained that "This attitude conveyed in the statement demonstrates a tendency to favor the Israeli narrative that Palestine was a land without people or civilization when they occupied it, while simultaneously neglecting the Palestinian existence and rights of the land". He adds that "The portrayal of the day that commemorates our 'Nakba', representing the forced relocation and deprivation of our native land, as a reason for festivity is deeply sad". He also explained that "The aforementioned narrative, embraced by prominent individuals, serves to discredit our historical concerns, and weaken our pursuit of justice and recognition of our rights, and he asks if that was because the EU shares the same values with the Israelis, and he wonders what exactly these values are".

As a result, the apparent discrepancy between the theoretical foundations of human rights and their actual implementation in the Palestinian context has fostered a sense of hesitancy and, in some cases, outright opposition within Palestinian society. This gap between what human rights are purported to represent and how they are applied undermines the credibility of international

human rights legislation. Consequently, many Palestinians struggle to fully embrace or endorse these ideals and principles, perceiving them as misaligned with their lived realities. This disconnect is further exacerbated by the lack of context-specific explanations and the failure to meaningfully engage local communities in discussions about how these rights can be effectively integrated into their social, cultural, and political landscapes. In other words, many Palestinians perceive universal human rights as abstract concepts. This perception arises, on the one hand, from a lack of sufficient awareness campaigns to elucidate these rights and, on the other hand, from the absence of visible implementation, which has prevented individuals from experiencing or recognizing their benefits.

2. Donors' understanding of the local context.

All informants agreed that there is a disagreement between the international and local NGOs on standard definitions of many rights. Most informants said, “For example, Palestinians have a recognized right under international law to resist occupation under Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions. This right is drawn from the principle of self-determination, which is enshrined in the UDHR and other international human rights accords. As aligned with international legal standards, Palestinians see it as essential to their struggle for independence and autonomy. However, many donors consider resisting occupation terrorism. At the same time, the Israeli violation of Palestinian human rights is seen as self-defense and a necessity for the security of the Israelis”.

As an example of the disagreement on some definitions and the LNGO's actions, USAID requires LNGOs to sign an Anti-Terror Agreement as a condition for receiving project funds. This agreement mandates that the LNGO must not use the funds to support terrorist activities or individuals involved in terrorism. As what is defined as terror by the USAID is defined as

legitimate resistance by the LNGOs, certain HROs initiated a boycott of USAID, rejecting its funding and abstaining from responding to their project proposals. However, USAID could still engage with Palestinian society by partnering with the PA and some LNGOs, which agreed to adhere to the conditions for receiving funding.

Over 80% of Human Rights Organizations (HROs) highlighted that donors exhibit varying levels of contextual awareness. An informant said, “Certain donors, like South Africa, display a deep understanding of the local context, aligning their initiatives accordingly probably because they went through a similar experience of tyranny and apartheid as the Palestinians”. Another informant said, “Even though most donors exhibit a great understanding of the context, they operate within the constraints of their country's policies”. These policies often dictate the parameters of funding and project implementation, limiting the flexibility needed to address specific local needs and realities effectively. Consequently, even well-informed donors may find their capacity to tailor interventions to the unique conditions on the ground restricted by overarching political and bureaucratic frameworks.

All Women HROs emphasized the donors’ insufficient understanding of the local context, reflected by their attempts to implement concepts and projects they applied in other countries. The local NGOs agree that women's economic empowerment, women receiving equal education and equal compensation for the same jobs, and women's equal participation in elections and political life are essential rights. However, an informant said, “Many donors are unaware that, in the West Bank and Gaza, the number of female university graduates exceeds that of male graduates, and the percentage of women engineers in Palestine is higher than in Germany and the United States. This means that the mentality of the Palestinians encourages females’ education and work more than that of men. However, women's employment rate is lower for reasons related to the cultural and

political realities faced particularly by Palestinian women. Culturally, for example, Palestinian women predominantly shoulder the responsibility of caring for elderly family members, with limited access to external caregiving facilities. This hampers their ability to leave home for work. Politically, barriers such as the separation wall, checkpoints, and fear of harassment from settlers prevent many women and girls from accessing work or training centers. Moreover, numerous mothers act as caregivers for their children under home arrest by Israeli courts, further restricting their ability to work outside their homes. Consequently, LNGOs strive to adopt economic empowerment initiatives to allow women to generate income from within their homes. Additionally, they're tailoring projects to support women who must fulfill both parental roles due to their husbands' incarceration as political prisoners". While development might emphasize measurable outcomes like increased economic activity or improved educational attainment, in the Palestinian context, it should consider empowerment as a process that involves changes in power structures that limit women's ability to access resources or influence outcomes, leading to a sense of powerlessness or marginalization. Donors' empowerment perspective overlooks the deeper systemic issues affecting empowerment and hindering genuine, sustainable change. Kuttub (2010) explains that the adoption of an instrumentalist definition of empowerment in the OPT is problematic due to the unique conditions of 'de-development' caused by long-term Israeli occupation. She adds that development analyses view the OPT as a post-conflict opportunity for structural adjustment. However, she explains that genuine empowerment is difficult to achieve in such a persistently oppressed context.

A male informant said, "Many parents do not allow their daughter to work outside the city or areas they live within because they do not want them to be exposed to humiliations or retardment

at night by the settlers or checkpoints. This reflects a protective attitude that the international organizations' workers often interpreted as contradicting gender equality”.

Most informants expressed dissatisfaction with donors' tendencies to attribute women's disempowerment primarily to cultural issues and to perceive economic empowerment as the primary solution. They argued that this perspective overlooks the root causes of disempowerment, which is inseparable from the broader context of societal disempowerment affecting the entire society. This reflected a disagreement on the definition of “women empowerment” among the local and the international. Kuttab (2010) explains that,

Women don't only want access to resources, but also control over them. They don't only want to participate in decision-making through quotas for women but with full rights as equal citizens. Women don't only want to work in any employment opportunity, but in protected and decent work. This is the situation where women become empowered and this is why this kind of empowerment cannot happen under colonial occupation and patriarchal domination (p. 252).

A significant challenge in designing projects to address context-specific issues lies in the "adoption of an instrumentalist definition of empowerment" and the presumption that the OPT was "a post-conflict situation," as Kuttab (2010, p. 248) points out.

3. Reconciling human rights, local culture, and development priorities

The overwhelming majority of HROs contend that the core principles encompassed within fundamental human rights, such as the protection of human dignity, the right to life, education, property, and other basic entitlements, are not incongruent with the values upheld within Palestinian society. They assert that these rights resonate within Islam and Christianity, thus harmonizing with local beliefs and laws. At the same time, Palestinians seek integration into the international community, utilizing human and international laws, notably the Geneva Conventions,

as guiding benchmarks for adherence. These Conventions set international humanitarian standards, particularly regarding the treatment of civilians and prisoners of war in conflict, including those in occupied territories.

When inquiring about whether the ideas and priorities of proposed projects align with the local context, over 95% of LNGOs expressed concern about the differing priorities of donors. LNGOs believe that donors tend to prioritize trendy or problematic issues in the West, such as climate change, sexual and reproductive rights, and LGBTQ+ rights. While acknowledging the legitimacy of these issues, the LNGOs argue that more fundamental rights urgently needed by Palestinians remain unaddressed. They highlight that Palestinian society faces immediate, life-threatening, and basic challenges stemming from context-specific and emergent situations related to the occupation and the blockade of Gaza. The deprivation of specific political and human rights prevents Palestinians from enjoying fundamental civil and political liberties such as the rights to property, housing, freedom of movement and expression, and many other rights.

One informant emphasized, "Extensive research and documentation conducted by Palestinian NGOs highlight prevalent human rights violations and underscore pressing issues necessitating attention. These organizations engage with civil society to identify critical societal needs, focusing on aspects such as the right to live in peace, security (including food and health security), freedom of movement, and other urgent needs that hinder their daily existence". All informants concurred, stating that "These pressing needs must be prioritized and addressed by international HR projects".

When inquiring about the source of information donors use to obtain information about the local context, most informants explained that "many donors engage Western consultants and

researchers to conduct assessments of Palestinian societal requirements for more decent living conditions. These consultants and external researchers often bring their own ideological perspectives and convictions, shaping their perceptions and guiding their interpretations of local society”. A project manager highlighted that "Orientalist viewpoints continue to influence how donors and consultants perceive local culture and its challenges. Predominantly, donors craft project proposals, referencing information about the local society from Western scholarship sources”.

4. Aligning HR projects with societal expectations

Most LNGOs stated, "Adhering to donor priorities is often necessary to access funding, yet we tread cautiously to ensure alignment with our national aspirations and cultural values. Some years after Oslo, and when the peace negotiations failed to achieve piece on the ground or envision a Palestinian state on the horizon, funds allocated to a two-state solution shrunk. However, we resist becoming mere instruments of donors seeking to alter our goals of self-determination and statehood”. An informant from the organizations that cannot survive without external funds said, “We implement donors’ project ideas while striving to innovate within our implementation strategies, aiming to address local needs and generate meaningful impact”.

Therefore, LNGOs undergo a two-stage process of developmental translation. The first stage involves translating the aspirations and needs of the local community into the donors' frame of reference. This often requires using the language and discourse of international laws to articulate and demand their rights. The second stage involves translating the donors' human rights projects into a language and context that resonates with local beneficiaries. This stage ensures the community understands, accepts, and implements these projects effectively. The following

examples from LNGOs demonstrate their efforts to align international human rights frameworks with local laws, societal expectations, and religious values.

Example 1: In balancing public will with human rights principles, several HROs have underscored the intricate scenario surrounding the death penalty. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) unequivocally condemns the use of the death penalty, a position firmly supported by Palestinian human rights organizations that advocate for its abolition within Palestinian law. However, this advocacy faces considerable societal resistance, as some segments of the population cite Islamic jurisprudence, which permits the death penalty in limited circumstances, which is intentional killing. According to Islamic law, murder and manslaughter are primarily considered private rights offenses (Qisas). Therefore, while courts usually impose the death penalty for murder or manslaughter, in Qisas cases, the victim's family retains the right to insist on the death penalty, accept financial compensation known as ‘Diyya’, or grant forgiveness. Despite this, Islamic law emphasizes forgiveness and reconciliation, presenting a more nuanced view that supports abolitionist arguments and makes forgiveness and mercy more rewarding by God (please see Qafisheh, 2012).

The current legal framework in Palestine includes numerous provisions that justify the death penalty, particularly within the political sphere. Local HROs believe that PNA has a limited capacity to conduct thorough investigations and guarantee fair trials, raising serious concerns about justice applications. Given these challenges, HROs are deeply engaged in advocacy efforts addressing societal beliefs and governmental policies. These efforts involve multifaceted strategies, including public education campaigns to shift societal perceptions, dialogues with religious and community leaders to emphasize the Quranic preference for forgiveness, and lobbying the government to reform legal statutes that permit capital punishment. HROs also

underscore the importance of aligning Palestinian laws with international human rights standards, thereby fostering a legal environment that prioritizes human dignity and the right to life.

Furthermore, HROs work to highlight the broader implications of the death penalty, such as its potential misuse in political contexts and its failure to address the root causes of crime. By framing the abolition of the death penalty as a step towards a more just and humane society, HROs aim to build a broader coalition of support across different segments of Palestinian society. This comprehensive approach seeks to harmonize the principles of human rights with the cultural and religious values of the community, ultimately advocating for a Palestinian legal system that upholds justice and human dignity. In this context, LNGOs mobilize community support and leverage ratified human rights laws to challenge the application of the death penalty by PA institutions. They work to bridge the gap between international human rights standards and local legal practices, advocating aligning local laws with globally recognized human rights principles. This approach seeks to influence legal reforms and aims to shift public opinion by contextualizing the issue within the community's values and beliefs. In this case, LNGOs act as intermediaries between the principles of international law and local beliefs, seeking to establish a middle ground between the two. However, they face significant challenges in contesting existing legislative frameworks, which often draw upon inherited laws and align with the interests of the political system of the Palestinian Authority.

Example 2: Certain HROs replaced "gender" with "inclusive society" to promote a broader understanding and acceptance within the local cultural context. The term 'gender' was often perceived as foreign or Western, carrying implications of unfamiliar or intrusive concepts, mainly due to its association with agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW. The rejection of CEDAW by various Palestinian groups,

previously discussed in the context of human rights, underscores the challenges related to introducing gender-related concepts within Palestinian society. For example, CEDAW calls for equality between men and women in everything. However, Islamic law is built on equity and differences between men and women based on rights and duties. For example, a man must provide for his family even if the wife brings an income. The husband has no right to his wife's salary earned from her own work; the wife has an independent financial status separate from her husband's finances. Economic integration is not a requirement of the marriage contract. Therefore, the Islamic heritage system is not based on equality between men and women but on the presumption of need. A project manager explained, "In a project aimed at achieving equal distribution of inheritance between men and women, we convinced the donor that, within our context, it is not feasible to alter the Islamic laws governing inheritance. Instead, our approach focused on ensuring that women receive equal access to inheritance and that Islamic courts oversee a fair distribution process. Often, the issue in the Palestinian context lies in men attempting to claim the most valuable portions of the land, leading to inequities". The informant explained, "We utilized an Islamic rule that grants equal shares to women when the inherited lands are located outside the town or require investment to be profitable. By leveraging this rule, we identified ways to operate within the existing framework rather than directly challenging Islamic law or rigidly adhering to the project's original scope. To implement this strategy, we engaged with local religious leaders and Islamic courts to promote awareness and adherence to these equitable practices. We conducted workshops and training sessions for community members and legal practitioners to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the relevant Islamic rules and the importance of fair distribution. Additionally, we developed guidelines and monitoring mechanisms to oversee the inheritance process, ensuring transparency and accountability". The informants

clarified that “This approach allowed us to address inheritance distribution issues pragmatically, respecting cultural and religious contexts while aligning with the project's broader goals of promoting gender equality. By working within the established legal and religious framework, we fostered community acceptance and cooperation, paving the way for more sustainable and culturally sensitive solutions to inheritance-related issues”.

In this case, local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) have successfully reframed the project for the local populace in a manner that respects local beliefs while simultaneously achieving the project’s objectives. These actions exemplify the expertise and understanding that LNGOs possess regarding local contexts and the complex processes they navigate to secure projects while providing essential services to vulnerable groups.

Example 3: Human Rights Organizations (HROs) navigate three significant fronts concerning LGBTQ+ rights. Two informants said, "We, firstly, ensure that we communicate to donors that we cannot promote these rights in our projects. However, we emphasize our focus on protecting LGBTQ+ members from violence rather than actively promoting their rights. Promoting these rights overtly might risk HROs' credibility and societal cooperation. Secondly, within Palestinian society, HROs cautiously address potential violence against LGBTQ+ members, as the society adamantly opposes the promotion or education of LGBTQ+ rights, especially in schools. Lastly, HROs engage with the government, which ratified human rights treaties without reservations but has not implemented international human rights agreements into local laws. Collaborating with government departments and courts, HROs strive to find viable solutions in this domain”.

All informants explained that finding a middle ground between international law, project ideas, societal norms, and local laws requires deep knowledge in all these areas, extensive networking, intensive work, and careful strategies. Specific topics, such as LGBTQ rights and cohabitation outside marriage, are entirely avoided by the LNGOs. Engaging in these topics can lead to LNGOs losing credibility and the cooperation of beneficiaries. However, issues like the death penalty, honor killings, and gender-based violence prompt extensive efforts from the LNGOs to reconcile Western and local concepts. Consulting religious figures, legal experts, and judges, along with conducting workshops for targeted audiences, aid in bridging these ideas. Local NGOs' efforts include employing local concepts to elucidate universal notions.

An informant stated, "Our approach aims to reconcile Islamic principles with Western notions that are sometimes rejected due to a lack of conceptual and developmental translation. Concerns about Western values disrupting familial harmony and increasing divorce rates are prevalent. We navigate this complex terrain cautiously by engaging the community, judges, and lawyers, selecting concepts thoughtfully to promote our ideas." The informant added, "Communication tailored to the audience's comprehension involves framing, for example, women's human rights discussions within cultural and religious contexts. Instead of referencing specific agreements like CEDAW, we emphasize cultural and religious values advocating for the respect and dignity of women. Leveraging the compassionate and just spirit of Islam and Christianity becomes our approach." In this case, LNGOs not only reframed project ideas to align with the local context but also rejected specific project components that were not deemed acceptable within the local context.

Example 4: International human rights bodies such as the United Nations Human Rights Committee recognized the right to access safe and legal abortion as a component of women's rights

to health, privacy, and freedom from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. For example, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has advocated for the decriminalization of abortion and access to safe abortion services as part of women's reproductive rights. The PA has ratified CEDAW without any reservations. The Palestinian local laws follow Jordanian laws, which impose punitive measures on women who undergo abortions without a valid excuse, subjecting them and a person who helps them with the operation to imprisonment for six months to three years. This discrepancy highlights a significant divergence between religious beliefs and legal statutes in Jordan regarding abortion. Contrastingly, in Islam, abortion is not considered a sin that requires atonement. However, if the abortion occurs without a legitimate excuse, atonement is sought through seeking forgiveness from God. Thus, it is something between the woman and God. This implies that there is no statutory punishment for abortion within Islamic teachings. An informant stated, "It is true that international human rights are not implemented in local laws, and in this case, they contradict local laws. So, we approach judges using Islamic law, and we approach the PA institutions using international laws to try to support women not only in avoiding punishment but also in securing their right to seek medical help when they decide to undergo an abortion." In this case, the issue arises from the conflict between human rights principles and local legislation derived from various sources. These inherited laws often also contradict local beliefs. As a result, local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) play a crucial role in reconciling these contradictions, facilitating project implementation, and supporting women.

The presented cases show that LNGOs use different translational actions and strategies to implement projects and support the beneficiaries. The challenges arise mostly due to the absence of translating ratified human rights into local laws. The translational actions undertaken by the

LNGOs and the related challenges will be presented in detail while answering the first sub-research question.

5. Sustainability of development

Most LNGOs state that project ideas often exhibit transience, constantly shifting from one novel concept to another without cohesive continuity. Organizations perceive this dynamic as a limitation since each new project, restricted in duration and scope, tends to swiftly transition to the next idea without proper consolidation or development from preceding initiatives. Consequently, this approach to development is viewed as providing temporary relief to persistent problems, lacking in strategic foresight and sustainability. The lack of sustainability further perpetuates dependency on international funds and donors.

For example, numerous projects aim to bolster women's involvement in elections and political decision-making. However, an informant said, "Palestinian women often bear the dual responsibility of fulfilling parental roles and supporting their families due to their husbands' political imprisonment. Despite enduring greater challenges than men, they remain marginalized from the country's political decisions. International initiatives intermittently back women's political participation, such as during municipal elections, but this support diminishes for extended periods afterward". An informant said, "Palestinian society is indeed patriarchal in some respects, which contributes to more men participating in municipal and other elections. However, the life of Palestinian women under occupation significantly hinders their freedom of movement and access to resources. For example, women cannot participate in training and workshops because they must pass through checkpoints on their way home. In response, our organization successfully persuaded many workshop organizers to schedule earlier meetings. While this adjustment has helped, it does

not address the root cause of the problem—the unnecessary delays at checkpoints imposed as a form of collective punishment". Another informant stated, "While ambitious projects are proposed by a donor aiming to empower women through measures applied in other developing countries, we see that different measures are needed in our context to empower women under occupation. Our unique circumstances necessitate a tailored approach that addresses the specific challenges faced by women in our region. For instance, under occupation, women contend with restricted movement, limited access to healthcare and education, and heightened security risks. These issues require targeted interventions that are sensitive to the socio-political environment and the day-to-day realities of Palestinian women. Therefore, we propose a modified framework prioritizing immediate needs such as safe passage for women, healthcare access, and legal support to protect their rights. These measures, we believe, will more effectively address the root causes of women's disempowerment in our context, leading to sustainable and meaningful empowerment".

6. The effect of implementing human rights development projects on Palestinian society from the perspective of LNGOs

In exploring the impact of translating international legal frameworks into local statutes, the perspectives of Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs) reveal a complex process that requires strategic engagement on multiple fronts. One key aspect is their interaction with donors. LNGOs often find themselves in a position where they must accept project ideas as presented by donors, particularly when these ideas do not directly conflict with local culture, religion, or the broader aspirations of the Palestinian people, even if such ideas are not viewed as priorities by the LNGOs themselves. In these cases, the donors' priorities tend to be implemented as is. However, challenges arise when project ideas clash with local values or cultural norms. In situations involving sensitive topics such as LGBTQ+ rights or the distribution of heritage, LNGOs strive to

negotiate compromises that honor local traditions while also meeting donor expectations. When these negotiations reach an impasse, particularly on highly sensitive issues like the right to resist occupation, some LNGOs may choose to reject the funding or even boycott the donor altogether.

This divergence in responses leads to two significant outcomes. Firstly, donors can successfully integrate their ideas into the local context through the LNGOs that choose to accept the funds, thereby influencing local practices. Secondly, these dynamics foster fragmentation among LNGOs, as differing stances on whether to accept or reject certain donor-driven projects create divisions within the community of local organizations. This fragmentation does not only weaken collective action but also complicates the development of a unified approach to translating international human rights into locally relevant and effective laws. An informant said that “The competition for funds, coupled with the willingness of some LNGOs to fully align with donors' priorities and ideas have led to significant disparities, division, and a lack of consistent collaboration among human HROs. This fragmentation has hindered the development of shared positions, concepts, and terminology, ultimately weakening the collective capacity of many organizations and making them more vulnerable to donor influence”. This influence can shape policies, programs, and even national agendas toward the preferences or objectives of the aid-providing entities. Although many human rights organizations (HROs) play a crucial role in interpreting and implementing human rights in ways that align with the welfare and interests of society, they are often accused by locals of facilitating the integration of global agendas and ideas into the local context. This perception creates a tension between their efforts to promote universal human rights and the community's concerns about the imposition of external values that may not fully resonate with or address the specific needs of the local population.

The second critical front for Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs) involves engaging with the Palestinian Authority (PA) and its institutions, including security systems and courts. The Palestinian legal framework is a complex amalgamation of legacy laws from various sources. Since the PA has ratified seven international human rights agreements, LNGOs leverage these international legal frameworks to challenge PA actions and the inherited local laws that conflict with internationally recognized human rights standards. LNGOs utilize international law as a tool to address and reform problematic practices within the PA, such as the detention of individuals without trial and the mistreatment and torture of prisoners. By invoking international human rights agreements, these organizations seek to hold the PA accountable and push for legal and institutional reforms that align with global human rights norms, aiming to improve the PA's adherence to these standards and to protect the rights of individuals within the Palestinian territories.

The third front is the Palestinian populace, thus the beneficiaries of human rights projects who have varied perspectives. Some segments oppose the implementation of human rights because they perceive them as Western values that threaten family values, increase divorce rates, and reduce birth rates, potentially leading to an aging population. Other segments oppose them due to perceived double standards in the application of human rights by the West, feeling that these rights do not work in favor of Palestinians or protect them from Israeli violations. Additionally, many do not see the benefits of human rights because these rights are not yet applied to local laws. An informant noted, "Until these laws are effectively implemented, discerning the reactions and outcomes becomes intricate, as the actual impact and response within the local context remain obscured".

This highlights the complexity and challenge of implementing international human rights in a way that resonates with and is accepted by the local community while navigating the diverse and often conflicting expectations of donors, the PA, and the Palestinian populace. However, an informant said, “Our efforts to implement human rights have initiated ongoing discussions among HROs and between the HROs and the broader society. In addition, LNGOs started to convene regularly, engage with lawyers and human rights activists, and organize workshops to develop united actions and common statements. These initiatives are focused on addressing the PA and international HROs, urging them to consider our specific concerns and demands.”

This increased collaboration among LNGOs and the broader local community has led to a more cohesive and concerted effort to address human rights issues. It has also facilitated the development of unified strategies and statements, reflecting a collective voice that seeks to influence local and international stakeholders. For example, as an informant said, “The Palestinian HROs united their effort to influence Amnesty International to adopt the term ‘apartheid’ in describing the practices of the Israeli occupation”. Although the united actions among LNGOs have not yet fully established definitive shared national visions and strategies, ongoing discussions within these organizations are making progress. These dialogues are beginning to influence international donors, encouraging them to support the priorities of LNGOs and to adopt local interpretations and meanings in their projects and initiatives.

6.2. Answering Research Questions

Addressing this question requires a deep understanding of the development context within which LNGOs operate and how this context shapes the translation of human rights projects’ ideas and concepts.

The first sub-research question is: **what acts of translation, triggered by international development, are undertaken by local NGOs in Palestine to address local challenges associated with translating human rights, and how does the development context impact these translation efforts?**

When I asked the LNGOs about their actions to implement international human rights in the local community, they insisted that I first understand the context that justified their actions. This context-driven approach, which is translational in nature, is crucial because it reveals how specific elements of the Palestinian development landscape trigger unique translational actions by LNGOs. Consequently, as derived from the interviews, I dissected the following key translational actions resulting from specific contextual aspects of development in Palestine.

1. Framing and reframing human rights Language:

Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs) in Palestine often employ donor language to ensure that their projects are seen as legitimate and in alignment with international human rights norms. This strategic use of language is essential for maintaining international support and funding, given the dependency of many LNGOs on external financial resources. In the Palestinian context, where international financing plays a crucial role in sustaining civil society initiatives, aligning projects with the expectations and frameworks of international donors becomes a survival strategy for LNGOs. They frame their activities using the language of global human rights discourse, which is perceived as a standard of legitimacy and accountability in the eyes of international stakeholders.

However, these organizations face different challenges and priorities when engaging with local communities and beneficiaries. The global human rights language, often rooted in Western liberal

values, can appear abstract, irrelevant, or even oppositional to local cultural and religious beliefs. To bridge this gap, LNGOs engage in a significant translational process that extends beyond, while not excluding, linguistic conversion. They reframe the language of human rights into culturally relevant terms and perspectives that resonate with the local population's lived experiences, values, and worldviews.

This translational work involves carefully negotiating between the global and the local, adapting concepts such as gender equality, freedom of expression, and individual rights into narratives that align with local understandings of community, family, and social responsibilities. By doing so, LNGOs can foster broader acceptance and support for their initiatives among the local population

2. Translating HR local requirements into the international frame of reference

Local Non-Governmental Organizations (LNGOs) in Palestine strategically utilize universal human rights frameworks and international legal conventions to advocate for Palestinian rights globally. By referencing United Nations resolutions, such as those affirming the rights of occupied populations to resist occupying forces, as stipulated in the Geneva Convention, these organizations position Palestinian demands within a universally recognized legal and moral framework. Moreover, LNGOs invoke fundamental human rights principles to assert Palestinians' rights to life, adequate housing, access to resources, fair trials, protection from torture, and freedom of movement in both the West Bank and Gaza.

This approach involves a complex process of translating the specific human rights challenges Palestinians face into arguments and practices that align with the values and legal standards upheld by the international community and donors. By framing Palestinian struggles in terms that resonate with internationally accepted norms, LNGOs seek to garner support and legitimacy for their advocacy efforts. This translation helps articulate the urgency and legitimacy of Palestinian rights claims. It ensures that these claims are communicated compellingly and recognizably to the international community, facilitating sustained support and solidarity from global actors.

3. Mediation

Local NGOs play a crucial role as cultural mediators, navigating the complex terrain between the international frameworks of human rights and the local cultural, political, and religious contexts. This intermediary role involves a nuanced approach to advocacy and communication. For example, when addressing sensitive topics such as gender equality, LNGOs often avoid direct references to contentious international treaties like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This convention has been met with mixed reactions in Palestinian society due to perceived conflicts with local values and religious teachings. (Thawabteh, 2022).

Instead of directly promoting gender equality as defined by these international frameworks, LNGOs strategically draw on religious teachings and cultural values that resonate more deeply with the local populace. They frame their advocacy within the moral and ethical principles of Islam and Christianity, such as justice, compassion, and the protection of human dignity. By referencing these local values, LNGOs effectively communicate the importance of respecting women and

upholding their rights in a culturally relevant manner and less likely to be perceived as foreign or imposed.

For instance, rather than using the term "gender equality," which may be seen as a Western concept, LNGOs might speak about the shared responsibility of men and women in upholding the family and community as prescribed in religious texts. They highlight Quranic verses or biblical teachings that advocate for the protection and dignity of women, presenting these principles as inherent to the local culture and religion rather than imported from external sources.

This approach allows LNGOs to bridge international human rights standards and local cultural norms, creating a space where global principles can be understood and embraced within a familiar cultural framework. By aligning their advocacy with local values, they enhance their legitimacy and acceptance among the community and foster a deeper understanding of human rights that is more likely to be sustainable and impactful in the long term. It is essential to mention that the differences between international and local perspectives are navigated not by altering the ultimate goals but by adapting the language, form, and frames of reference used to communicate these goals, ensuring that they resonate meaningfully with the intended audience and by finding compromises between the international and the local.

4. Discussions and Negotiations

Many local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) engage in a complex process of negotiating project ideas and using language with international donors. This process involves an act of translation that seeks to reconcile global human rights concepts with local Palestinian priorities. For instance, while a donor-funded project might focus broadly on addressing gender-based violence, LNGOs might negotiate to exclude elements like gender education in schools,

which could be contentious in the Palestinian context. This compromise allows them to address critical issues without alienating local communities.

Such negotiations are essential for ensuring that international projects are relevant and culturally sensitive. LNGOs often advocate for project modifications that better reflect local realities, such as emphasizing community-based approaches to human rights rather than imposing external models. However, sometimes, the rigidity of donor requirements poses a significant challenge. Most human rights projects are tied to project-based funding, with predefined goals and expectations limiting LNGOs' ability to implement projects that genuinely resonate with local communities.

Faced with these constraints, LNGOs must make difficult decisions: either accept the projects as presented, thereby risking a disconnect between the project's goals and the community's needs, or refuse the funding altogether. When LNGOs reject projects due to misalignment with local contexts, donors may partner with other organizations willing to comply with their terms, further complicating the situation.

This dynamic creates a competitive environment among LNGOs, fostering fragmentation and competition instead of collaboration. To counteract this, LNGOs recognize the need for internal dialogue and coordination to develop unified priorities and strategies. These internal negotiations are crucial for presenting a coherent stance to donors and resisting divisive tactics that might weaken the sector. LNGOs aim to advocate more effectively for projects that genuinely address Palestinian needs by strengthening their internal cohesion.

5. Bidirectional translation

LNGOs engage in a nuanced process of bidirectional translation, whereby they adapt international project language to reflect the unique socio-political realities of Palestine while also attempting to influence donors to recognize and incorporate their perspectives. This bidirectional effort is evident in how they modify terms and concepts in project proposals and reports. For instance, instead of using the standard term "women empowerment," which could be seen as disconnected from the local context, LNGOs often reframe it as "empowerment of women under occupation". This rephrasing not only grounds the concept in the specific conditions faced by Palestinian women but also highlights the intersecting struggles of gender and political oppression.

Furthermore, LNGOs actively work to reshape donor narratives by advocating for terms that more accurately capture their lived experiences. They push for language in donor reports and websites that describe violations of Palestinian rights by Israelis as occurring within an "apartheid colonial context". This choice of terminology is significant as it conveys a clearer picture of the systemic nature of the oppression faced by Palestinians and their legitimate right to resist occupation. Some LNGOs have even successfully appended documents to project contracts that acknowledge their commitment to international human rights laws while explicitly recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to resist occupation.

This strategic modification of language is more than a linguistic adjustment; it is a profound act of asserting agency and identity. As one informant articulated, "Our concepts are our identity, and we do not accept any concept that is far from or does not validate our struggle and right to resistance." This statement underscores the importance of maintaining conceptual integrity,

ensuring that the terms used in project documentation align with and affirm the Palestinian struggle.

Through this bidirectional translation, LNGOs not only adapt external ideas to resonate with their local context but also attempt to influence donors to adopt their own framing of the conflict. This process allows them to assert their identity and narratives within the constraints of international development discourse, seeking to ensure that the projects they implement are not only relevant but also reflective of their community's lived experiences and aspirations.

6. Rejection

Many LNGOs have taken a stand against donors requiring them to sign Anti-Terror Contracts (ATCs), which are intended to ensure that international funding aligns with global anti-terrorism efforts. These contracts typically demand assurances that no funding will support organizations or individuals associated with terrorism. However, the broad and often politically charged definitions of terrorism embedded in these agreements can clash with local understandings of resistance and liberation movements. In the Palestinian context, for instance, groups or actions viewed as legitimate resistance to occupation by locals might be labeled as terrorism by international standards.

This fundamental disagreement has led many LNGOs to refuse collaboration with donors who insist on these agreements. Boycotting such donors is a significant decision, often made by organizations that are less dependent on international funding. These LNGOs, due to alternative funding sources or strong community support, have the flexibility to reject donor conditions that undermine their principles or misrepresent their reality.

By refusing to comply with ATCs, these LNGOs assert their autonomy and reject external attempts to dictate the terms of their operations. This stance protects their organizational integrity and reinforces their commitment to advocating for their communities on their own terms. However, the situation is more complex for NGOs that lack diverse funding streams and rely heavily on international support. They are often compelled to accept such agreements, despite the contradictions with their mission, to secure the resources necessary for their survival. The ability to resist donor-imposed ATCs reflects a broader issue of power and dependency within the international development sector. It highlights the challenge LNGOs face in balancing the need for funding with the imperative to uphold local perspectives and priorities.

7. Different levels of translation with different actors

LNGOs operate under considerable internal and external political and cultural pressures. Internally, they are tasked with addressing human rights violations committed by both the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israeli forces. In addition, they need to deal with cases of local rejection of international human rights. Externally, they must navigate the political agendas of international donors that align with the foreign policies of influential Western governments in the region. These pressures require LNGOs to perform a delicate balancing act in their efforts to translate and implement human rights. Therefore, LNGOs translate human rights ideas across three levels and adapt diverse strategies when engaging with different actors: donors, Palestinian Authority (PA) institutions, and the beneficiaries or local populace.

At the PA level, LNGOs frequently remind the PA of their obligations under international treaties, holding them accountable for ensuring fundamental human rights, such as fair trials, humane prison treatment, and democratic elections. At the second level, LNGOs must carefully

manage their relationships with donors, using the language and discourse of international human rights laws to translate and advocate for Palestinian rights. This use of human rights treaties serves as a strategic tool for LNGOs: it allows them to press the PA to comply with international standards and to claim human rights for Palestinians. At the third level, LNGOs translate the international HRs in a way that aligns these global frameworks with local languages, realities, and needs, ensuring that human rights projects are donor-compliant, culturally sensitive, and locally relevant. The multi-level translational approach allows LNGOs to maintain credibility with international donors while fostering acceptance and support within the local communities and ensuring compliance from PA institutions.

In conclusion, the translational actions undertaken by LNGOs have provided valuable insights into the development context and the associated challenges in implementing human rights projects. These translational efforts have not only facilitated the adaptation of human rights concepts to the local context but have also served as an analytical tool for understanding the complexities of developmental practices and the broader landscape in which they operate. Through translation, it has become possible to critically assess the interplay between external influences and local realities, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the development process in Palestine.

The investigated practices from the first sub-research question highlight the translational practices of LNGOs to translate human rights in Palestine. These practices are deeply influenced by the development context, which shapes the strategies and approaches that LNGOs use. The investigated translational actions are expected to help answer the second sub-research question by trying to understand them in a translational perspective.

The second sub-research question is: **When considered through the lens of translation as self-development, are the current human rights development practices translated in a way that aligns with local contexts and aspirations?**

In this research, translation was employed as an analytical framework to investigate how human rights development concepts were interpreted, adapted, and implemented by local NGOs within the Palestinian context. Addressing the first research question yielded a detailed account of the translational actions undertaken to localize development practices. To assess whether these translational actions have contributed to self-development, it is crucial to compare them with our conceptualization of translation as a practice intended to promote self-development within the Palestinian setting.

This research posits that for translation to effectively facilitate a shift from externally driven development to self-development, it must involve processes of negotiation, mediation, and reciprocal understanding. In this context, translation is conceptualized not as a faithful replication of original ideas, but as an appropriation and innovation of concepts that align with local contexts. Self-development, as defined in this study, refers to a form of development that authentically reflects the needs and aspirations of the people it serves. It involves empowering people to have the agency to decide what development is. Moreover, it involves a transformation of all parties engaged in a way that they learn from each other and reduce the power differences. Within the Palestinian context, self-development is understood as sustainable progress aimed at achieving independence, countering the perpetual reliance on foreign aid, and ultimately working toward establishing an autonomous state. This approach to development is the type of development people want since it means upholding their dignity and freedom. Consequently, the research question will be addressed by evaluating whether the translational practices observed in this study align with the

concept of translation as defined here and whether they contribute to advancing self-development in the Palestinian context.

The developmental landscape in Palestine is characterized by a heavy reliance on external funding, a fragmented network of competing LNGOs, and a predominantly project-based funding model. The financial dependency significantly limits the ability of many LNGOs to negotiate the terms and ideas of project proposals, as their financial sustainability often depends on conforming to the priorities of external donors. In contrast, LNGOs with financial independence—often achieved through access to alternative funding sources—are better positioned to critically evaluate and reject projects that may be unsustainable or misaligned with local cultural contexts. This ability to be selective allows these financially autonomous LNGOs to adopt a more discerning approach to development initiatives.

However, the disparity in financial independence among LNGOs exacerbates disparities within the sector, making it difficult for these organizations to collaborate effectively. The fragmented nature of the LNGO landscape further impedes the ability to reach consensus or engage in unified strategies for translating development in ways that could lead to authentic self-development. This fragmentation weakens the collective capacity of LNGOs to advocate for development models that truly reflect local needs and aspirations.

The project-based funding model, prevalent in the Palestinian context, indicates that the majority of project ideas are predominantly proposed and dictated by donors. These dynamics position the international community as the primary decision-makers regarding which human rights initiatives are pursued in Palestine. Consequently, the international community often prescribes what human rights are deemed necessary for Palestinians, based on perspectives that

may not fully align with local realities. These human rights initiatives are frequently influenced by current trends in the West or shaped by the international community's economic or orientalist interpretations of what developing regions, such as Palestine, require. This external imposition of priorities can lead to a disconnection between the human rights projects implemented and the actual needs and aspirations of the Palestinian people, thereby limiting the potential for genuine, context-sensitive development.

In terms of mediation, LNGOs play a crucial role in bridging the gap between international human rights ideas and local cultural contexts. They actively engage in dialogue and collaboration with religious figures and legal experts to ensure that proposed project ideas are both legally sound and culturally sensitive. This collaborative approach is particularly important when addressing deeply rooted issues such as the death penalty and gender-based violence. By involving key community stakeholders, LNGOs work to ensure that these initiatives are not only sustainable but also have the necessary support from within the community. This process of mediation helps to align international human rights concepts with local values and norms, fostering a more effective and contextually appropriate implementation of development projects.

In unidirectionality and mutual understanding, there are often significant disagreements between local LNGOs and international donors on various concepts and ideas. This tension arises from differing perspectives on key issues, with LNGOs sometimes rejecting funds or boycotting donors as a form of resistance against externally imposed agendas. Such acts of resistance reflect the LNGOs' commitment to preserving their autonomy and ensuring that development initiatives align with local values and aspirations.

Notably, there have been instances where LNGOs have successfully asserted their own terms, compelling donors to adopt language and concepts that resonate with the Palestinian struggle and the right to resistance. For example, LNGOs have advocated for the use of terminology that accurately reflects the Palestinian experience and have pushed back against culturally misaligned ideas, such as certain approaches to gender education. These successes demonstrate the ability of LNGOs to exercise a back influence on the discourse around human rights and development, ensuring that international support does not override local priorities but instead supports them in a manner that is respectful and effective.

Accordingly, to better align current human rights development practices with local contexts and aspirations through the lens of translation as self-development, we need to consider a few key strategies:

First, translation as self-development begins with understanding the local culture, history, socio-political dynamics, and aspirations. This can be done through dialogues between the universal and the particular, where local actors have the agency to accept, adapt, or reinterpret human rights principles in ways that resonate with their lived experiences. The international must approach these discussions to benefit from and acknowledge local knowledge systems and practices that may align with or conversely challenge international human rights norms. This way, instead of a universal one-size-fits-all approach, human rights norms should be critically examined for their relevance and applicability within the local context.

"Translation as self-development" promotes participatory methods by actively involving local communities in the interpretation and implementation of human rights within their specific contexts. This collaborative approach ensures that human rights are not merely imposed from the

outside but are instead co-created through dialogue and negotiation. By engaging local communities in defining and adapting these rights, LNGOs foster a sense of ownership and relevance, aligning international standards with local values and aspirations. This process not only strengthens the legitimacy of human rights initiatives but also facilitates a more balanced power dynamic between donors and local actors. By placing both parties on a more equal footing, it allows for genuine partnerships where the perspectives and needs of local communities are respected and integrated into development projects. This way, human rights practices become more effective and sustainable, reflecting the unique social, cultural, and political realities of the local context. Human rights practices should be seen as living, evolving concepts that require constant translation and retranslation as contexts change. This means being open to revising approaches based on ongoing feedback and reflection, ensuring that practices remain relevant and effective. Local aspirations must guide the development agenda where projects are initiated from within the community. External support should aim to enhance these efforts rather than overshadow them.

Local actors should be encouraged to reclaim and redefine human rights in ways that resonate with their cultural and social practices. This can lead to the development of hybrid models that incorporate both local traditions and international human rights standards or other innovative models from within societies.

Aligning human rights practices with local contexts requires long-term commitment and partnership. Quick fixes or short-term projects often fail to achieve meaningful translation. Sustainable partnerships that evolve are more likely to result in practices that are deeply rooted in local contexts and aligned with local aspirations.

By approaching human rights development through the lens of translation as self-development, we move towards a model where local communities are not just passive recipients of aid but active agents in shaping their own development trajectories. This model emphasizes the co-creation of knowledge, mutual respect, and the continuous evolution of practices to ensure that they truly serve the needs and aspirations of the local communities.

Chapter 7: Discussion, Conclusion, and Further Steps

7.1 Introduction

My research interest was initially sparked by the observation of divergent strategies employed by Palestinian NGOs in translating international human rights development project ideas. While some local NGOs (LNGOs) attempted to implement these projects in the local context with minimal alterations, others have critically engaged with these concepts, rigorously examining their applicability and viability to ensure that they are appropriately adapted to the unique socio-political landscape of Palestine and aligned with the development aspirations of the local population.

As a translator for development projects, I have observed that linguistic translation is not the only translation used in the development context. Local NGOs undertake varying translational actions and strategies to translate and implement what is often considered universal norms and practices, such as human rights. Moreover, linguistic translation grounded in the natural equivalence paradigm is believed to facilitate the accommodation of new concepts into target cultures, operating under the assumption that equivalent terms or ideas already exist within the target culture.

Consequently, this research advocates for a broader conceptualization and practice of translation that is more attuned to the development context as a contact zone between differing worldviews. This expanded concept of translation encompasses negotiation, bidirectional understanding between local and international actors, and respect of local knowledge and aspirations. This translation concept can also operate as a concept for unveiling, rather than obscuring, the power dynamics inherent in the development process. Moreover, the suggested concept should support engaging critically with the untranslatable and the universal, rather than

seamlessly blending them. In line with this, I have discussed translation as both a heuristic and an action-oriented analytical tool. The actions of LNGOs, functioning as cultural mediators, provide valuable insights into how translation, as conceptualized by this research, can facilitate the transition from externally imposed development to self-directed development.

Imposed development, in this context, is characterized by a smooth, uncritical process that avoids the complexities of renegotiating concepts and practices. In the geometrical sense, this translation is a sliding over or transferring with minimal or no changes. This approach risks creating a disconnect between development projects and the local populace, as such projects may be perceived as foreign impositions, potentially undermining their effectiveness and sustainability. Furthermore, there is a danger that these projects may only superficially address the issues they are intended to tackle, given that they are not tailored to the specific socio-cultural and political nuances of the local context.

In contrast, translation that fosters self-development is grounded in the discussion and negotiation of project ideas and concepts, ensuring that interventions are culturally relevant and sensitive. This can enhance their impact and acceptance by the local community. Projects that are adapted to the local context are more likely to be sustainable because they address the community's specific needs and aspirations. However, this approach poses challenges for LNGOs in securing funding, as international donors may perceive deviations from established norms and standards as a lack of alignment with their objectives. Moreover, the process of negotiating and adapting initiatives to local contexts can be time-consuming, potentially delaying the implementation of time-bound interventions.

Consequently, the translational efforts of Palestinian NGOs, whether they adopt project ideas as they are or critically adapt them to the local context, are shaped by various factors, including the broader development context and the specific goals, objectives, and interests of both international donors and local NGOs. This interaction between translation and international development offers valuable insights into the interdisciplinary cooperation between the two fields, demonstrating how their practices and underlying paradigms can influence and enhance each other.

This chapter will focus on the translational efforts carried out by NGOs within the context of development. Their actions will be analyzed to explore how they catalyze a dialogue between Translation Studies (TS) and Development Studies (DS). By examining the interactions between these two fields, this chapter aims to illustrate how their interdisciplinary collaboration can yield more effective strategies for tackling development challenges, particularly in translating human rights concepts into local contexts. The chapter will conclude by reflecting on the findings of this research and suggesting further steps that could be taken to foster a more equitable and participatory approach to development, where the translation of human rights and other development concepts is conducted in a way that truly resonates with and empowers local communities.

7.2 Discussion and Conclusions

This research sought to investigate the translational actions employed by LNGOs in the implementation of development projects, using these actions as a lens to analyze, comprehend, and provide insights into the developmental landscape of Palestine. To this end, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of various LNGOs, especially those focused on HR and WHR. The findings revealed that LNGOs employed various translational strategies, from directly transferring international development ideas to outright rejecting certain concepts and

projects, including boycotting specific donors. These translational actions offered valuable insights into the development context of Palestine, highlighting how this context shaped and triggered these translations. Consequently, the interplay between translation and development provided a deeper understanding of how the two practices interact and influence one another.

The development context in Palestine is marked by a dependency on external funding and competition and fragmentation among local NGOs and between LNGOs and international NGOs. This landscape, coupled with the complex socio-political circumstances of the region, has made it exceedingly difficult for LNGOs to engage in discussions and negotiations with donors as equal partners or to set their development priorities. In response, local NGOs have often found themselves either implementing donor-proposed projects while attempting to reframe them to align with local acceptance or striving to mediate between the international and the local, thus finding common ground between donor expectations and local needs. In more extreme cases, some LNGOs have been compelled to reject the translation and implementation of projects that not only fail to align with local aspirations but also directly contradict them.

These translational efforts can be observed as different degrees of either resisting or conforming to the goals and agendas imposed by donors and the universal principles underlying development concepts. However, these actions can also represent different strategies LNGOs employ to enable Palestinians to realize certain human rights. The latter view is evident in how they engage with various actors, including instances where they reject certain concepts or projects.

When LNGOs use the same language and discourse of human rights as the donors, they align themselves with the international community's ideas and values. This allows them to communicate more effectively with donors, secure funds, and challenge donors to uphold the

human rights standards they promote. By reframing human rights concepts or finding a balance between international and local perspectives, LNGOs make these concepts more relevant and acceptable within the local context. In engaging the local community, LNGOs perform crucial translational work by facilitating collaboration among community leaders, beneficiaries, and experts from human rights organizations. In this collaborative process, LNGOs draw upon local culture, traditions, and religious values to formulate human rights concepts and practices that are not only locally relevant but also resonate with the lived experiences and belief systems of the community. This effort reflects a deep commitment to ensuring that human rights are not perceived as foreign impositions but are instead rooted in the local context.

Moreover, when addressing the Palestinian Authority (PA), LNGOs invoke international human rights treaties to remind the PA of its obligations to incorporate these rights into local laws. Even when LNGOs refuse funding that comes with conditions that could undermine their mission, they are asserting the Palestinian right to self-determination and resisting external influences that might compromise their fundamental human rights efforts. These actions highlight the complex role of translation in development work, where LNGOs navigate between local needs and international expectations to advocate for and protect the human rights of Palestinians.

However, when evaluating whether the translational actions undertaken by LNGOs were truly fostering self-development—that is, whether they involved dialogues, negotiations, reciprocal understanding, and the inclusion of local contributions—the answer is not straightforward. It cannot simply be reduced to a ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

The complexity of this issue arises from the varied nature of the translational actions themselves, and the different actors involved. For example, in cases where LNGOs successfully

adapted human rights concepts to align with local cultural norms and values, these actions could be seen as fostering self-development. These actions involved discussions and exchanges between the LNGOs and the local communities, ensuring that local knowledge and perspectives were integral to the process. However, the translational actions undertaken by the LNGOs reveal insufficient discussions with donors, notably since many LNGOs have reported that discussions often resulted in dead ends or the cancellation of various projects. Consequently, most discussions were internal between the LNGOs and the community or among the LNGOs. Although these discussions are neither systematic nor organized, their existence is promising. It is hoped that these conversations will eventually lead to a consensus between the LNGOs and the Palestinian community on unified ideas and practices for translating and implementing development. This consensus would be crucial for effectively obtaining human rights and engaging with donors more coherently and strategically. A consensus would allow local voices and perspectives to be given due consideration and respect.

Regarding bidirectionality, there have been significant instances where LNGOs incorporated their concepts and discourse into donor proposals and reports. These successes were not primarily the result of effective negotiation and collaboration with international actors but stemmed from moments when LNGOs united to articulate shared demands. Thus, the critical factor in these achievements was the collective unity of LNGOs in clearly defining their objectives and presenting a unified stance. By working together, LNGOs could present a coherent and unified perspective that resonated with donors, allowing them to influence how the Palestinian context was described. This counterflow empowered the LNGOs and demonstrated their ability to shape the development agenda rather than merely being passive recipients of externally imposed projects.

This collaborative approach highlights the potential for LNGOs to act as active agents in the development process, ensuring their voices are heard and their local knowledge and priorities are incorporated into international development frameworks. It also underscores the importance of solidarity and cooperation among LNGOs in achieving these outcomes, as unity strengthens their bargaining position and amplifies their influence in negotiations with donors. Through these efforts, LNGOs can ensure that development initiatives are more contextually relevant and better aligned with the actual needs and aspirations of the local population.

The explored translational actions undertaken by the LNGOs reflect a strong commitment to implementing human rights in Palestine. However, the primary motivation for these actions is deeply rooted in addressing Palestinians' fundamental human rights needs, such as the right to life and existence, housing and property, freedom of movement, and self-determination. These rights are seen as essential prerequisites for the broader goal of establishing a Palestinian state that is not only capable of conducting free and fair elections but also of activating a parliament that can fully integrate human rights into its legal framework.

In this context, the Palestinian definition of development is intrinsically linked to emancipation and self-determination. For Palestinians, development is not merely about economic growth or social improvements but about achieving the freedom and autonomy necessary to exercise self-governance and establish a sovereign state. The local NGOs working towards these goals perceive themselves as operating within a colonial context, where external domination severely hinders any genuine progress toward development. They argue that only through emancipation—breaking free from colonial oppression—can other development elements, such as economic stability, social justice, and political representation, be fully realized. Therefore, their efforts in translating and advocating for human rights are not just about aligning with international

standards but are fundamentally about securing the foundational conditions necessary for genuine self-determination and sustainable development in Palestine.

In contrast, international donors' priorities and objectives in implementing human rights may not align with the local needs and aspirations understood by LNGOs and the Palestinian community. Their conception of development tends to be economic and instrumental, reflecting a perspective that sees their work as part of a post-colonial framework.

The alignment or divergence of these goals plays a crucial role in shaping the approach taken by the LNGOs. When the objectives of both international and local stakeholders align towards achieving sustainable outcomes that are acceptable to the local populace and resonate with their aspirations and values, a strategy of negotiation and adaptation to local conditions could be adopted. This would involve a more collaborative and context-sensitive approach, where the implementation of human rights projects is not just about transferring concepts from one context to another but about engaging in meaningful dialogue, negotiation, and adaptation to ensure that these rights are realized in a way that is understood, relevant and beneficial to the local community.

Conversely, a significant divergence in objectives can lead to tensions and challenges in the implementation process, as the LNGOs may have to navigate between the expectations of donors and the realities on the ground. In such cases, the potential for a genuinely participatory and context-sensitive approach to development may be limited, undermining the effectiveness and sustainability of human rights initiatives in Palestine.

While writing this chapter, it becomes increasingly evident that the Palestinian aspirations for self-determination, peace, and establishing an independent state appear more distant than ever. Despite being articulated as essential goals and development targets since the inception of the

peace process, particularly following the formulation of the Oslo Accords in the 1990s, these aspirations have yet to materialize in any meaningful way.

The Oslo Accords, while initially fostering a sense of hope and possibility, have largely failed to translate into tangible outcomes for the Palestinian people. The intended framework for peace, which was meant to lead towards the realization of a sovereign Palestinian state, has instead led to ongoing frustrations and setbacks. The commitment to these aspirations has been undermined by a complex interplay of political, social, and economic factors exacerbating the situation.

Moreover, the United Nations resolutions on the rights of Palestinians have often become mere historical footnotes, overshadowed by political maneuvering and geopolitical interests. Resolutions that call for the establishment of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders and uphold the right of return for refugees have not been adequately enforced or acted upon. Instead of serving as foundational pillars for peace, these resolutions have been relegated to the background, reflecting a growing disillusionment among Palestinians regarding the international community's commitment to their rights and aspirations.

This disillusionment is compounded by a persistent lack of meaningful dialogue and negotiation processes that would address the underlying issues of occupation, settlement expansion, and the socio-economic challenges facing Palestinian communities. As a result, the dream of peaceful coexistence and a self-determined future feels increasingly elusive, leaving many Palestinians grappling with a reality that seems to drift further from their collective aspirations. While the language of self-determination and peace continues to echo in diplomatic circles, the lived experiences of Palestinians reflect a stark contrast. The historical promises made

through various agreements and resolutions serve as reminders of the profound gaps between rhetoric and reality, emphasizing the urgent need for renewed commitment and action toward realizing Palestinian rights and aspirations.

The interplay between translation and development highlights the complexities and challenges of reconciling conflicting objectives and assumptions. These conflicts emerge not only in practical applications but also in both disciplines' underlying assumptions and paradigms when they intersect in interdisciplinary research. As defined by various scholars, interdisciplinarity is rooted in the need to solve complex, real-world issues that single disciplines cannot adequately address. This concept is particularly relevant in fields like Translation Studies (TS) and Development Studies (DS), where integrating insights from different academic disciplines can provide a more comprehensive understanding of global challenges. The challenge, however, lies in the inherent differences between disciplines—each operates on distinct assumptions, methodologies, and epistemologies. This thesis posits that despite these differences, TS and DS share common ground in their theoretical underpinnings, which can be leveraged to create a meaningful interdisciplinary dialogue.

Translation Studies, traditionally focused on linguistic and cultural mediation, and Development Studies, centered on social change and human potential, both seek to bridge gaps between languages and cultures or between developed and developing societies. The thesis suggests that when these disciplines align their objectives and underlying assumptions, particularly in contexts like international development, they can collectively address issues more effectively. For instance, transferring human rights concepts from one cultural context to another is not just a linguistic challenge but also involves negotiating different worldviews, values, and practices. This negotiation is where the interdisciplinary integration between TS and DS becomes crucial.

Menken & Kestra (2016) and Post et al. (2020) offer frameworks for understanding interdisciplinary integration, which this thesis applies to the intersection of TS and DS. They emphasize that multidisciplinary research involves combining insights from different fields and a deeper synthesis of concepts, theories, and methodologies to create new knowledge. This process begins with identifying a problem that requires such integration and then uncovering the underlying assumptions of each discipline involved.

In the context of this thesis, the problem identified is the assumption of the universality of development concepts, particularly human rights, which often disregards the local context and knowledge systems. Translation, as traditionally understood, facilitates the transfer of these concepts but usually reinforces the hierarchical relationship between the developed and developing world. By reconceptualizing translation as a negotiation bidirectional process and a critical and analytical tool—not just a linguistic practice—this thesis argues that translation can support a more participatory and context-sensitive approach to development. This approach aligns with the principles of justice and autonomy through self-development, where local communities actively contribute to the development process rather than merely receiving externally imposed ideas.

However, the proposed translation framework encounters significant challenges when development practitioners assume the translation is a purely linguistic process. This perspective fundamentally conflicts with the translation concept, which emphasizes negotiation and bidirectionality. Furthermore, a development approach that adheres to a top-down, unidirectional paradigm is incompatible with translation practices that rely on interactive, reciprocal exchanges.

Ultimately, this interdisciplinary approach enhances the understanding of development processes and promotes a paradigm shift towards more equitable and sustainable development

practices. Through the lens of this reconceptualized translation, the thesis advocates for a collaborative effort between TS and DS in practice and conceptually to address the complex challenges of international development.

7.3 Lessons Learned

I must share my experience going through this research, as it contributes to the essence of the conclusion I am drawing. As I started this research, I was fully confident of my familiarity with translation theories and practice and my experience in the development environment. As I began grappling with analyzing and synthesizing ideas across different fields—translation studies, development theories, and human rights, among others—I realized that my work profoundly embodied the challenges and complexity of translating between different views and knowledges.

One of the most striking parallels between my research journey and translation is that I needed to decide if the complexity of the task should hinder me from understanding how development is theorized, how human rights work, and how to connect all that with translation. The numerous aspects of the research, combined with the many factors influencing translation, development, and human rights, together with the complexity of the context, posed a significant challenge that often led me to question my ability to approach them successfully. What motivated me to persist was my enduring belief that people around the world can overcome complexities and unknowns and show readiness and curiosity to learn about each other and from each other while considering the other as equal human beings. Therefore, as I learned through my own research and from the studies I consulted, complexity and strangeness should not be seen as an insurmountable obstacle. Instead, if we approach it with the humility to recognize our own ignorance and incomplete knowledge as expressed by Santos, it becomes a challenge we can navigate. This

awareness allows us to remain open to new insights. Our mindset is key to any problematic human or ethical endeavor.

Ricoeur's philosophy of interdisciplinarity resonates deeply with my experience. As I sought to interpret and translate concepts between fields, I found that my perspectives constantly evolved. Engaging with development theory reshaped how I understood translation studies and vice versa. Ricoeur's assertion that interdisciplinary work modifies one's self-understanding is accurate: "Interdisciplinary work can be both risky and rewarding. It is risky because one may seriously fumble a translation, or an interpretation may challenge some treasured aspect of one's self-understanding. The potential reward, however, comes from the hope for an appropriation of new self-understanding that liberates one towards greater meaning and significance" (Reynhout, 2013, p. 155). My original intentions and hypotheses were continuously reshaped as I absorbed new ideas and reevaluated previous assumptions. This transformation is perhaps one of the most rewarding aspects of interdisciplinary scholarship—it forces us to challenge our preconceptions and expand the scope of our understanding. In conclusion, my research journey through this interdisciplinary landscape is a risk. However, it is worth taking, as the potential for a new worldview and personal transformation is profound.

7.4 Further Steps

This research advocates for recognizing translation as a bidirectional, heuristic practice of negotiation that serves as a critical factor in the success of international development efforts. While Development Studies is inherently interdisciplinary, traditionally integrating perspectives from economics, political science, sociology, and philosophy, it often overlooks the significance of translation as a linguistic practice. Despite substantial evidence indicating that effective translation plays a pivotal role in the success of international development by fostering inclusivity and

preventing the marginalization of local partners, it remains an underappreciated, unstructured, and frequently unbudgeted aspect of development projects. Consequently, this research underscores the need for a more systematic integration of translation within the framework of development studies, suggesting that its proper implementation could significantly enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of international development initiatives.

Development and translation practitioners must challenge the prevailing assumption that translation is solely a linguistic activity within the context of international development and other intercultural engagements. When approached as a negotiation and mutual learning process, this reciprocity implies a more collaborative approach to translation and development, where the interaction between languages and cultures is seen as mutually enriching. It challenges the notion of a dominant source culture imposing its norms on a subordinate target culture, instead promoting an understanding of translation as a shared endeavor.

This research highlighted the need for a more inclusive and context-sensitive approach to translation and development that empowers local communities to define and achieve their development goals and aspirations. This perspective values the contributions of all cultures involved in translation and development, recognizing that each brings its own perspectives, contexts, and practices. This broadened perspective on translation should be included in Translation Studies and Development Studies' educational programs, providing students with a more comprehensive understanding of global translation/development practices. Translation agencies and organizations should adopt policies that recognize and support the diversity of translation and development practices, ensuring that non-Western languages, cultures, and knowledges are represented and respected.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Certificate of Ethics Approval

Université d'Ottawa Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche	14/12/2022 University of Ottawa Office of Research Ethics and Integrity									
CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL										
Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number Titre du projet / Project Title	S-11-22-8519 Translating Palestine as self-Development: Thinking and Applying Translation in the Process of Implementing Human Rights Development Projects Thèse de doctorat / Doctoral thesis									
Type de projet / Project Type	Thèse de doctorat / Doctoral thesis									
Statut du projet / Project Status	Approuvé / Approved									
Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	14/12/2022									
Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	13/12/2023									
Équipe de recherche / Research Team										
<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Chercheur / Researcher</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Affiliation</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Role</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Rania JARRAR</td> <td>École de traduction et d'interprétation / School of Translation and Interpretation</td> <td>Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Salah BASALAMAH</td> <td>École de traduction et d'interprétation / School of Translation and Interpretation</td> <td>Superviseur / Supervisor</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Chercheur / Researcher	Affiliation	Role	Rania JARRAR	École de traduction et d'interprétation / School of Translation and Interpretation	Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator	Salah BASALAMAH	École de traduction et d'interprétation / School of Translation and Interpretation	Superviseur / Supervisor	
Chercheur / Researcher	Affiliation	Role								
Rania JARRAR	École de traduction et d'interprétation / School of Translation and Interpretation	Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator								
Salah BASALAMAH	École de traduction et d'interprétation / School of Translation and Interpretation	Superviseur / Supervisor								
Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments										

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Consent Form

Title of the study:

Translating for Palestine as self-development:

A Translational Perspective on Human Rights Development Projects

Supervisor:

Prof. Salah Basalamah
Associate Professor and Chair
School of Translation and Interpretation
University of Ottawa
70 Laurier East, Ottawa,
Ontario, K1N 6N5, Canada,
<https://uniweb.uottawa.ca/#!/members/411/profile>

Principal investigator:

Rania Jarrar, PhD candidate,
School of Translation and Interpretation
University of Ottawa
70 Laurier East, Ottawa,
Ontario, K1N 6N5, Canada,

Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in the above-mentioned research study by Rania Jarrar. This research is conducted in the context of a Ph.D. thesis.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to explore how international human and women's rights development practices can be more satisfactory to the local development partners and how the localization of development concepts and ideas can play a role in that.

Participation: Your participation will consist of answering questions in an interview concerning the localization and adaptation of human and women's rights development projects. The interview should take between 30 and 45 minutes. The interviews will be audio-recorded only. If you wish,

you will also be invited to contribute an anonymized copy of a translated project proposal or an impact report.

Risks: Your participation in this study will entail sharing your anonymous opinion about the localization of human and women's rights projects. The published results can include the organizations' names, but no data, information, or quotes will be linked to a specific organization. Therefore, there will be no way to identify in the published data from which organization or employee a piece of information, data, or quotes is obtained, and because the interviews will be anonymized, no unusual risks to you have been identified.

Benefits: Your participation in this study will encourage you to reflect on the localization of human and women's rights projects funded by international donors and how these can be more satisfactory to the beneficiaries. It is hoped that this project, once completed, will help decision-makers in the local and international development organizations better understand what Palestinians want from development projects and to what extent translation between the local and the international can lead to a better understanding of the development concepts, and the many complex factors that affect translating knowledge in the development context.

Confidentiality and Privacy: The information you will share will remain strictly confidential. The contents will be used only for the purposes of research publications and presentations arising from this research and your identity will be protected. Qualitative data will be presented in a combined format, and no individual complete interview will be presented. Quotations and examples from short answers may be used anonymously in presentations and publications. Anonymization of interviews will be carried out before submission, to ensure that the informant and NGOs are not identifiable. If any potentially identifying information remains in the documents

submitted via the interviews, it will be removed by the researcher before the documents are stored and analyzed.

Conservation of Data: The completed interviews will be kept electronically in a secure manner, in a password-protected document, in a password-protected Dropbox folder, and on a password-protected computer and external backup hard drive. No personally identifying information will be stored on the Dropbox, computer, or hard drive; instead, codes will be assigned to link the completed interviews to the documents submitted. The complete data will only be accessible to the researcher. The data will be saved for 5 years.

Voluntary Participation: You are under no obligation to participate and if you choose to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. However, once the interview is conducted and anonymized, your data will be unidentifiable and cannot be withdrawn. If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the researcher at the email provided above. If you have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity via email (ethics@uottawa.ca) or telephone (613-562-5387). Please print or save a copy of this consent form for your records.

Acceptance: To consent to participate in the interview, please sign below:

Name.....

Position.....

Organization.....

Date and place.....

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

Translating for Palestine as Self-development: A Translational Perspective on Human Rights and International Development

If you are willing to participate in this study, please read the consent form, and reply “yes” to the form that is attached to these questions.

Interview Questions:

1. Do you think that human rights projects carry new ideas? If yes, from where do these ideas stem? Local needs, international trends, others.....
2. Do you think donors' HRs development ideas consider the local context: History (political), Culture, Current situation (political, economic), People's hopes and aspirations: what people want?
3. is there work done to translate the project proposals' new concepts and ideas (if any)? Linguistic translation, Discussions, negotiations, others.....
4. Do you think the local and international organizations share the same development priorities and purposes?
5. What sources of information do INGO workers rely on to understand the local culture? Local resources, international resources, others.....
6. What do you think is the effect of implementing your human rights development projects on Palestinian society?
7. What challenges face the localization and implementation of human rights projects in Palestine? Are they legal? Cultural? Religious? Others.....

Appendix 4: The list of interviewed LNGOs

Organization	Website	Location established in	Nr. of persons interviewed	Date of interview
Independent Commission for Human Rights ICHR	https://www.ichr.ps	Ramallah 1994	2	04,13, 2023
Addameer Prisoners' Support & Human Rights Association	https://www.addameer.org	Ramallah 1992	2	06,18, 2023
Al-Haq- Laws in the Service of Man	https://www.alhaq.org	Ramallah 1979	1	04,17, 2023
Human Rights and Democratic Participation Center - SHAMS	https://www.shams-pal.org		2	05,17, 2023
Jerusalem Legal Aid & Human Rights Center JLAC	https://www.jlac.ps		1	05,21, 2023
Palestinian Medical Relief Society	https://pmrs.ps	Ramallah 1979	2	06,15, 2023 05,22, 2023
Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights	https://www.mezan.org	Gaza 1999	1	07,03, 2023

Palestinian Center for Human Rights PCHR	Palestinian Center for Human Rights PCHR	Gaza 1995	1	05,23, 2023
National Bureau for the Defence of Land and Resistance to Settlements	https://law4palestine.org	Nablus	1	04,13, 2023
Women, Media, & Development- TAM	https://tam.ps/newsite	Bethlehem 2003	1	05,15, 2023
The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy – MIFTAH	http://www.miftah.org	Ramallah 1998	1	06,08, 2023
SHIAM	https://www.globalcommunities.ps	Ramallah 2008	1	06,17, 2023
The Women's Affairs Technical Committee- WATC	Watcpal.org	Ramallah 1992	1	04,19, 2023
Women Social Affairs		Ramallah 1995	1	06,03, 2023
Women's Center for Legal Aid & Counseling (WCLAC)	http://www.wclac.org/		1	04,04,2023

Appendix 5: The Historical Context

This historical context is a summary obtained from Caplan (2019). I tried to include the information I thought relevant to the development context and that helps to understand the historical background that led to the status quo.

Caplan (2019) explains:

After World War I, in the place of the eastern Mediterranean provinces of the defeated 400-year-old Ottoman Empire, a number of sovereign countries and semi-autonomous territories would emerge, administrated as territories mandated by the newly created League of Nations to several Christian European powers. A new map of the Middle East would show a French mandate for Syria and Lebanon, and British mandates for Iraq and Palestine (p. 61).

This period was marked by the struggle of these countries against colonization. For the Palestinians, the struggle was not only against the British mandate but also with the Jewish immigrants who started to flow into Palestine, especially after the **Balfour Declaration**, issued on November 2, 1917, pledging British support for a ‘Jewish national home’ in Palestine. This illustrated the important role of powerful outsiders in the conflict (Caplan, 2019, p. 63). While Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon were granted independence between 1943 and 1946: “In February 1947, the British returned the Palestine problem to the United Nations General Assembly, who in their turn issued resolution number 181 that recommended the partition of Palestine into two states, one Jewish that would comprise 55% of the land surface of mandatory Palestine. (Caplan, 2019, p. 112). "Jerusalem was recommended to be an internationally administered city" (Caplan, 2019, p. 114), Caplan adds:

The outbreak of the war, known to Israelis as the War of Independence (*Milhemet ha-Atzma'ut*) and to Palestinians as the Catastrophe (*al-Nakba*), can be dated alternatively as November 30, 1947 (the day after the UNGA passed Resolution 181) or May 15, 1948, when the

Provisional Government of Israel declared its independence on the day of the departure of the British. (Caplan, 2019, p. 115). Caplan (2019) states that this first Arab–Israeli war resulted in the creation of the sovereign state of Israel, which was accepted into membership in the United Nations in May 1949.

He adds: After four General Armistice Agreements were signed with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon in 1949, the frontiers of the new state of Israel extended beyond those recommended in the UN partition plan to cover approximately 78% of the area of former Mandatory Palestine by the year 1967, and the territory that might have become a Palestinian Arab state under the 1947 UN partition plan now lay in fragments. Although British, American, and United Nations officials would continue for several years thereafter to refer in their documentation and speechmaking to an entity called "Palestine," by mid-1949, the territory once known under that name was parceled out among the new state of Israel, Jordan (the West Bank, annexed in 1950), and Egypt (the Gaza Strip) (Caplan, 2019, p. 117).

Caplan explains:

The Catastrophe (*al-Nakba*) left the Palestinians with the loss of a homeland, the destruction of their society, and the displacement (whether by flight or expulsion) of more than half the Arab population (between 650,000 and 750,000 people). These latter Palestinians became refugees, stateless, the wards of a new UN agency known as UNRWA. The refugees' right to return to their homes or be compensated was recognized in Article 11 of UN General Assembly Resolution 194, passed on December 11, 1948. But, for a series of complex reasons, the Palestinian refugees and their descendants still exist today, and their rights under this resolution remain unimplemented (Caplan, 2019, p. 117).

This period marks the beginning of the flow of international aid to the region to feed and shelter the Palestinian refugees. UNRWA began distributing food packages and providing health and education services to the Palestinian refugees who fled to the remaining 35% of Palestine

(West Bank) under Jordan's control and Gaza under Egypt's control, as well as to other neighboring Arab countries. Refugee camps, which are usually temporary shelters for displaced people, became permanent for the Palestinians after 1948. UNRWA still distributes food packages today. Most Arab countries hosting the refugees deny them citizenship or civil rights to avoid their integration into the societies, maintaining their right to return. Caplan notes:

Between 1947 and 1949, almost three-quarters of a million Palestinians became refugees. (Caplan, 2019, p. 120). Caplan further observes,

On maps, what had been Mandatory Palestine disappeared and was replaced by Israel, with smaller pieces of former Palestine becoming parts of Jordan (the West Bank) and Egypt (Gaza) (Caplan, 2019, p. 133).

He adds that,

In a surprise attack on the morning of 5 June 1967, Israeli fighter jets bombed Egyptian airfields, destroying most of the aircraft on the tarmac while Israeli Defense Forces IDF tanks and troops advanced into Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula, on 9 June Israeli forces were ordered to undertake a massive assault to conquer the Syrian-controlled Golan Heights. After six days of fighting, the IDF's rapid conquest of the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights added 430,000 km² to Israel's territory – an area three and a half times the size of the country between 1949 and 1967. The war also altered the shape of the conflict in several ways. Significantly, the new map removed Egypt and Jordan from their "tutelage" over the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, reuniting all the pieces of former Mandatory Palestine under Israeli rule (Caplan, 2019, pp. 147-148).

See map 1: (*Maps*, 2017) that shows the Palestinian loss of land since the UNGA partition plan 1947.



Map 1: Palestinians' loss of land since the UNGA partition plan in 1947.

Caplan explains that “after months of public debate and backroom negotiations at the United Nations, the Security Council on 22 November 1967 adopted Resolution 242, based on a consensus of what the drafters considered would make possible some movement toward peace” (2019, p.150). The resolution, built on the land for-peace idea, would become a benchmark for all future efforts to resolve the conflict” (ibid). He adds that “between 200,000 and 250,000 Palestinians, almost a quarter of the West Bank’s population was displaced during and immediately following the war, many becoming refugees for the second time since 1948” (Caplan, 2019, pp.149-150). Caplan, also explains that,

On November 20, 1967, UN Security Council Resolution 242 called for the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict,” but (significantly, some would argue) not the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the [i.e. all the] territories occupied in the recent conflict.” This omission of the definite article “the” gave tremendous bargaining leverage to the Israelis, who did not consider themselves obliged to withdraw from every inch of territories captured during the war (2019, pp. 150-151).

For many years of the conflict, where the West Bank and Gaza remained under the military administration of the Israeli Army, so many clashes and bloody incidents continued to happen between the Israelis and the Palestinians. At the same time, the Palestinians did not have a recognized political representation and were not included in the peace negotiations between the Israelis and the neighboring Arab countries. In 1964, The Palestine Liberation Organization PLO was founded to establish a Palestinian state as opposed to the Israeli, but “only in 1974, UNGA Resolution 3626 had recognized the Palestinian people as a principal party in the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Middle East” (Caplan, 2019, p. 172).

Finally, the Israelis and the Palestinians decided to end the state of war between them and sat at the negotiations table in Madrid in 1991. Nothing came out of this gathering. Again, they sat in 1993 in Oslo and then in Washington and agreed on the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements” [DOP] for Palestinian self-government and Israeli withdrawal. In what was called “Oslo 1”, both parties signed mutual recognition agreements. In 1994, Arafat, the head of PLO came back to Ramallah to establish and head the Palestinian National Authority PNA on less than 22% of historical Palestine (Caplan, 2019). Caplan explains that,

after a few years of attempts to implement the commitments outlined in the DOP, it became obvious that the new Israeli Palestinian Peace process was in trouble, too many deadlines were missed, talks broke down and cooperation lapsed, and Israel continued to build new and expand old Israeli settlements in the territories that were supposedly subject to final negotiations (2019, p. 209).

However, the Oslo Agreement is an important date for International Development because the international community showed the readiness to support the Palestinian Authority financially and technically to establish a notion of a state by supporting the economy and infrastructure, good governance, security, and the peace process.

The previous events summarized the history of the region which can explain the current situation, way of living, and the existence of the Palestinians. Currently, there are 68 Palestinian refugee camps, ten of which were established after 1967 (six days war) and the others between 1948-1950 with a total of 7 million refugees scattered around the world.

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