

Abstract:

The study analyzes representations of power and knowledge in the discourse of liberal Palestinian women's organization, and how liberal discourse is developed in these organizations to legitimize the combined powers of liberal discourse; namely, the colonial power of the world capitalist system, and the power of the local mediators' organizations.

The study also analyzes how it is that these two power systems collude and exclude any cultural system that is not of a liberal modernist style. The study attempts to dismantle and analyze the method of cooperation between the two power systems in accordance with this discourse which conceals political desires and goals through a knowledge system that legitimizes power under the name of rights and equality. The study was built on the hypothesis that the discourse of the surveyed organizations is derived from Western liberal feminist discourse. The local organizations that are the subject of this study, serve as an importer, and transferor of the liberalist culture, according to liberal market imperatives, that facilitate control by local organizations, that are in turn, controlled by Western capitalism.

The study is based on Foucault's methodology of discourse analysis, which helps to uncover domination patterns, and exclusion and control systems which are concealed behind knowledge. The study does not fully depend on Foucault's approach; especially since it is not just a deconstruction of discourse, but also seeks to analyze social and political realities, in the presence of colonialism. Therefore, the researcher was required to call upon and apply tools from the school of Marxism and from post-colonialist theories, which focus on colonization and exploitation which led to the application of Fanon's theories as a model of liberation in colonial conditions, and is heavily relied upon within the analysis. The use of Fanon's paradigm which allows the researcher to continue the analysis of liberal discourse beyond the deconstructionist tools of Foucault, using Fanon's model which allows room for resistance within a colonial context.

The study tries to show that the liberal discourse of local women's organizations is governed by the rules and strategies that strengthen colonial domination and subjugation of the Palestinian feminist and Palestinian women in general, in accordance with colonial rules that impose the liberal Western concepts as the ideal type, and emphasizes the inferiority of the local culture. The study shows that the consumption of liberal culture requires the exclusion and even the denial of the elements of the national cultural infrastructure. The study shows the patterns of exclusion within liberal discourse; namely of resistant cultures including the national and Islamic cultures, to be replaced by a new modernist liberal culture. The study negates the dominance of liberal discourse which invisibly denies and excludes priorities and national interests and feminist's interests in Palestine through its focus on individualism and individual rights while disregarding the existence and politics of settler colonialism that threatens the existence of nations and communities as a whole through the exercise of conditional political funding. The content of liberal feminist discourse leads to

establishing a culture of anti-liberation, even though it has slogans of freedom and equality. The study is questioning capitalist ideology, which brought these rights, and the researcher points out that these organizations, in their adoption of these rights, re-produce themselves as instruments to serve this system, and integrate within the system, more than integrating within Palestinian society.

The study attempts to clarify the changes and new concepts that have been disseminated and justified in the name of women's emancipation, under the name of international legitimacy for this discourse. The hidden agenda of this discourse eliminates national culture and positions Palestinian feminism within a complex situation of dependency. The local discourse, which is integrated in the global liberal system, embodies local subordination that is controlled by: power relations and domination, through political funding, and other tools and concepts of rights including women's rights, as new tools to serve the re-engineering of society and that promotes subordination.

The study analyzes power relations among Palestinian women who are divided as "agents of discourse" who promote and reproduce Western liberal discourse and as recipients of this discourse within the local population. The study shows that the discourse used by local women's organizations creates a gap and hierarchy between the two, through the representation of their "beneficiaries" which reproduce them as victims. The study reveals that liberal discourse, under the guise of emancipation, actually promotes a structure of oppression by detailing how the agents of discourse within these organizations who are themselves colonized, apply the same discriminatory methods and means used by Western colonialism which dominate and repress the women they claim they represent and serve. This refutes the arguments which claim that the organizations represent the needs and priorities of women which are in fact, lead and determined by the liberal agenda of the West. Accordingly, discourse analysis shows the internal contradictions contained in the discourse and how it excludes in the name of freedom and liberty, promising equality; but in practice, excludes and represses.

The study also analyzes the discourse of "agents of discourse who re-produce the Western liberal culture as both mediators and transferors of the discourse. The study shows that local agents either reproduce and promote the discourse openly and uncritically, or serve to promote the discourse in various forms with justification and qualification which the researcher argues, is where agents are self contradictory as they are critical of liberal discourse but at the same time, serve to reproduce it. This situation lead them to present a discourse that mixes liberal discourse with revolutionary leftist discourse, and to hide this contradiction consciously - calling for a revolutionary liberalist culture against the donor-funded programs at these organizations that they work for. Here lies the contradiction, between the adjustment and adaptation on the one hand, and duplication in the discourse and practice on the other hand. These organizations are the platforms which facilitate actors' communication with the West. The study concludes that the conscious reproduction of liberal

discourse by agents who both critique and oppose western hegemony in fact contributes to strengthening the liberal system and not terminating it. Local actors believe that they criticize and resist the system; however, as long as their resistance remains within the framework of the discourse system, they remain structurally linked to it since they are working for organizations which are part of the liberal system. Therefore, the resistance remains within what the system allows. The discourse does not just produce structural rules, but also the rules underlying the criticism.

The researcher raises the question of the type and form an alternative feminist project should take; a question that arises naturally from the study, with the realization that it is beyond the mandate of this study. In conclusion, the researcher argues that the question of an alternative feminist project, while crucial, is one that should be addressed and developed as a collective, and not by an individual.