Palestine’s Paradox: Consequences of Neoliberal Social Development
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ABSTRACT

In this explanatory case study, I examine the effects of a neoliberal development approach promoted by the United Nations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Through a neopluralist lens, I show this approach to conflict resolution is ineffective for two reasons. First, the development of a Palestinian civil society, especially as a means to protect human rights, does not protect them from the violations of Israel. The second expands on Sebille Merz’s claim that the transformation of Palestinian NGOs into missionaries of neoliberal agendas fragmented the Palestinian society. I go further by showing how a lack of solidarity amongst the Palestinian people contributes to the split in governance between Gaza and the West Bank. The competition of the corresponding political factions sends the territory into a paradox; this split in governance via the social fragmentation of citizens prevents the occupied territory from proving itself as a stable state, which was the point of the development of Palestine’s civil society in the first place. To resume the peace process, the neoliberal social development approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be reevaluated.