

The Structural Power in Israeli-Palestinian Relations: A Case Study of Water Resource Management

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In the long process of confrontation and cooperation, Israel and the Palestinian Authority have gradually formed an asymmetrical power relationship. During the Oslo peace process, Israel and the Palestinian Authority signed agreements in areas of relatively low sensitivity, and established practical cooperation mechanisms in security, customs duties, taxation and resource management. However, the cooperation mechanisms led to greater Palestinian dependence on Israel and shaped the structural power in their bilateral relations. Although the Oslo Accords have been declared “dead” many times, and the peace talks stalled for years, the cooperation mechanisms remain in effect.

In my paper I will examine water resource management as a case study to show how structural power relations developed into an asymmetrical relationship between the two sides. Water resource management is one of the focal issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel has placed itself on a highly advantageous position in the control and utilization of regional water, asymmetric power gives Israel the room for negotiation and concession in the Palestine-Israel issue, which makes it impossible for Palestine to put pressure on Israel through "decoupling." As a result, it becomes harder for the Israeli-Palestinian problem to be solved under a two-state solution.

This paper should help to explain the intricate cooperation and confrontations in the practical areas of the Israel-Palestinian relations. In addition, it will explain how the asymmetrical relations between the two parties impedes the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.