



The New Spirit of Technocracy? Ordering Practice in United Nations Peacebuilding

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Abstract

Whether global order is drifting towards democratic or technocratic modes of governing is a contested issue. This thesis takes up the challenge of investigating how trends towards global democratization or technocratization play out in the field of United Nations peacebuilding. To do so the thesis argues that democratic optimism and technocratic pessimism should not be evaluated as competing paradigms, but as panoramas whose interplay needs to be investigated in empirical research. A pragmatist standpoint, conceptualized as “critical optimism” is taken and a framework drawing on sociological theories of practice developed. To scrutinize democratizing and technocratizing tendencies the study of everyday ordering practices in different organizational sites is proposed. In adopting an interpretative research strategy three sites are scrutinized empirically: The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations Peacekeeping Best Practice Section and the Afghanistan Compact and its Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board. The interplay of different political practices at these sites is reconstructed. The discussion reveals the importance of democratic and technocratic ideas, yet demonstrates that no clear-cut tendency towards one mode can be observed. Instead, different practices work in parallel, sometimes support each other and sometimes conflict with each other. Taken together, the importance of scrutinizing the difficile interplay of practices is highlighted and the significance of taking pluralist standpoints in studying the social life of world politics is demonstrated.

The thesis makes three core contributions to the literature. Firstly, the thesis is one of the first attempts at seeking a dialogue between critical and liberal theories of global governing, otherwise often seen as competitors. Secondly, through its development of theory it makes a contribution to the debate on how sociological frameworks drawing on theories of practice can be used to study the international. Thirdly, its empirical results contribute to the research agenda on how peacebuilding is organized in practice,



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Bio

Christian Bueger graduated in Political Science from the Goethe University Frankfurt. Prior to his Doctoral research at the EUI he was a research associate at the Institute of Social Research (Frankfurt am Main). During his Doctoral research he was a visiting scholar at Cornell University, Department of Government and conducted field research at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA. Bueger's articles have appeared in the journals *International Studies Perspectives*, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* and *Security Dialogue*. His research interests include International Organizations with an emphasis on the United Nations family, Critical Security Theory, Sociology of Science, the Politics of Expertise and Theories of Practice. Presently he is working on a project on the sociology of the discipline of International Relations and preparing a post-doctoral research project on the epistemic foundations of the maritime counter-piracy regime.