Final external examiner’s report

PhD thesis “International Peacekeeping and Hybrid Order: UNIFIL II in South Lebanon” (final version of 22 August 2017),

written by Jan Daniel (Charles University Prague)

Jan Daniel has written a highly interesting, very well-structured and very well-argued thesis that makes a number of important and original contributions to knowledge. On a conceptual level, it offers a way of combining a Foucauldian governmental understanding of international peacekeeping as a form of policing of the international order with a practice-based approach, which takes into account the practices and legitimating narratives that occur in negotiations “on the ground”, when abstract international programmes are confronted with the hybrid social order that any area of intervention represents. On an empirical level, the thesis unpacks the notion of “the local” and its pertaining categories to show how social reality in hybrid social orders escapes neat differentiations, posing immense challenges to peacekeeping interventions and their mandates. Through its in-depth study of practices and narratives of UNIFIL II, the thesis also brings more nuance into a strand of work which claims that it is peacekeepers’ lack of local context knowledge that is to be made responsible for intervention failure. As the thesis is able to show, local context knowledge does indeed exist (to some extent), but it does not necessarily undermine the complicated logics and messy practices of the implementation of international programmes in a local hybrid context. The thesis thus makes important contributions both on a conceptual and on an empirical level and does a very good job in applying the theoretical discussion and methodological starting points to the specific case study of UNIFIL II in South Lebanon.

In his revisions of the thesis, Jan Daniel has taken all points raised in the first external examiner’s report into account and addressed them adequately. Especially the empirical chapters have benefitted a lot from the inclusion of more empirical material (interview excerpts etc.), which do a fantastic job in evidencing the claims made. There is also a much more comprehensive and convincing discussion of the limits of fieldwork in the introduction now, which helps the reader understand the challenges and attached limits of the thesis, without putting any of its merits into question. I am also satisfied with the way, in which the conceptual and literature-related points have been dealt with that were raised in the previous report. Overall, the thesis appears more coherent and clear in its main argument or “thesis of the thesis” now. The conclusions competently sum up the main contributions and findings of the thesis and spell out their meaning for the field of intervention research.
Through the revisions, the thesis has gained a lot by adding rigor to an important and original contribution to knowledge in the field of peacekeeping and intervention studies. I look forward to discussing this version in the final defence.

Dr Berit Bliesemann de Guevara

Director of Research, Department of International Politics
Director of the Centre for the International Politics of Knowledge
Reader in Peacebuilding, Post-War Reconstruction and Transitional Justice