Ordering and Responsibility in the Shadow of Hierarchies
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Ordering and Responsibility in the Shadow of Hierarchies

INEF's research activities concentrate on the interface of the three fields of peace and conflict research, development research and global governance research. The unifying empirical focus is on structures of violence, poverty and lack of rights, which particularly affect fragmented societies in the Global South. An emphasis is placed on problems arising from the efforts of the Global Northwest to control or even influence these structures internationally.

From October 2018 onwards, the new research programme will build on the work of the previous research programme but will develop it further in a more focussed way. It is largely geared to the situation of precarious or insecure poor and vulnerable groups in the Global South and to the crisis and transformation of fragile states. INEF's leitmotif, "Ordering and Responsibility in the Shadow of Hierarchies", places special emphasis on unequal power and power structures by examining how under these conditions existing orders are questioned, further developed and newly formed through social practices. At the same time, it takes the power of actors seriously and focuses on relational approaches for conceptualizing moral agency. Empirically, it deals with (neo-)liberal paradigms of intervention from a critical perspective. From these complementary approaches, INEF works on three thematic areas:

1. **Transnational governance and the responsibility of private actors** (Focus: Implementation of human rights; Internet regulation)
2. **Development partnerships in times of SDGs** (Focus: Poverty reduction and political participation in Sub-Saharan Africa)
3. **Intervention, resistance and the disruption of political orders** (Focus: Near & Middle East; Sub-Saharan Africa)

The transfer of research findings into practice is also an important characteristic of INEF and comprises a broad portfolio (policy advice, scientific support of policy advice, networking and multi-stakeholder exchange; information transfer and commenting on developments in the media and via formats aimed at a broader public such as the publications "Global Trends. Analysis" and "Friedensgutachten" (Peace Report) – a collaborative project of the four leading German research institutes. A significant proportion of these transfer activities takes place within the framework of institutionalized cooperation with actors active in the policy-related or policy-advisory field (Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Working Group on Peace and Development (FriEnt)).
The Leitmotif „Ordering and Responsibility in the Shadow of Hierarchies“

Between 2018 and 2021, INEF research will be guided by the leitmotif "Ordering and responsibility in the shadow of hierarchies". The starting point is the recognition that both the formation and justification as well as the controversy and deconstruction of normative and political-institutional orders are shaped by formal and informal hierarchies in which the rules of the game are defined along power asymmetries. Regulatory authority in numerous policy areas has become increasingly fragmented and blurred in the face of processes of ordering which are very often disruptive. Moreover, the spheres claimed overlap regularly. Hence, conceptually, order can no longer be understood within the framework of a multi-level architecture following the principle of subsidiarity or as hegemonic product. In many cases, transnational polycentrism has developed, which is expressed not least in overlapping legal systems. These structures are permeated by complex hierarchies. In close connection with the Chair of International Relations and Development Policy (Prof. Dr. Tobias Debiel) at the Institute of Political Science and its leitmotif "Inequality and Hierarchies in World Society", two questions are of particular importance:

a) To what extent are hierarchies maintained or altered by dominating, but also subordinate, actors referring to prevailing norms or discourses on normative orders by confirmation or dissent?

b) How are unequally distributed power relations reflected in forms of global and transnational governance over fields with controversial regulatory control?

Another issue related to this is the development of moral agency, i.e. the ability of actors to act responsibly autonomously and be accountable accordingly. Time and again, the more powerful are forced into justifications and negotiation processes, the powerless are not at the mercy of hierarchies as passive subjects but know how to use existing leeway. Here, too, two questions are at the forefront:

a) How do different actors justify, negotiate, share and delegate responsibility in a globally interdependent world?

b) How can power asymmetries and deficits in accountability be countered with increasingly polycentrically structured forms of governance?
Implementation of the Leitmotif in the Three Thematic Areas

Research Area 1
Transnational Governance and the Responsibility of Private Actors
(Focus: Implementation of Human Rights, Internet Regulation)

Even before the current crisis of multilateralism, global ordering increasingly took place outside international organizations and far from state authority. From defining problems to designing concrete policies, in many fields global governance takes the form of "polycentric" and fragmented governance networks, in which not only private but also state actors are in search of new roles that are negotiated and established. INEF’s empirical work in this area focuses on the implementation of labour, social and environmental standards in global value chains (e.g. in the textile sector), the implementation of the right to health in global health policy or the role of the state in global Internet governance. As our previous work has shown, private actors are increasingly gaining political authority through transnational governance arrangements by using these processes of self- and external attribution of responsibility in terms of power and legitimacy politics, creating generally binding transnational regulations. The example of global value chains also shows how strongly governance practices are based on the development of (transnational) epistemic networks. The specific forms of "knowledge politics" that become recognizable also reflect underlying power relations.

In this polycentric governance architecture, meta-governance (the governance of governance), plays an essential role in the institutional design of governance and its practice. Meta-governance has long ceased to be the domain of state actors but has developed in the interaction between state and private actors as well as inter- and transnational institutions. Meta-governance encompasses values, norms and principles that guide problem-solving and serve as a benchmark for evaluating governance performance. INEF work in this field focuses strongly on the implementation of human rights such as the right to health or the regulation of the Internet.

Despite the increasingly important role of private governance initiatives, the role of the state in global governance remains central in many areas. Not only in the case of concrete failure of self-governance and market failure is the state still the legitimate representative of the public interest. In meta-governance at the latest, state representatives must assume responsibility for designing governance networks. In some areas, such as Internet governance, states are faced with the task of having to make a new or stronger contribution to areas that are already privately regulated. Since such state meta-governance can only overcome the weaknesses of hierarchical control by means of reflexivity, INEF also examines how state actors succeed in ensuring adequate knowledge diffusion in order to build up the necessary regulatory capacities.
Research Area 2
Development Partnerships in Times of SDGs
(Focus: Poverty Reduction and Political Participation in Sub-Saharan Africa)

In the thematic area of "Development partnerships in times of SDGs", the focus is on the responsibility formulated in the SDGs for selected goals, in particular poverty reduction and food insecurity. The challenge of this normative order for development cooperation for the next one and a half decades between 2015 and 2030 is great.

Central questions are: Where can good practices for poverty reduction and food security be identified in existing projects of development cooperation that are effective, sustainable and can contribute to a reorganization of development partnerships? Is the responsibility of Western donors really defined relationally in terms of ownership and self-responsibility on the ground, or is it rather defined as top-down? The research has interfaces to global inequality research at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21). The empirical analysis focuses on the integration of participatory, gender-oriented and socio-culturally sensitive dimensions into the normative structures and operational practices of development cooperation, with a regional focus on sub-Saharan Africa alongside Southeast Asia.

In addition, research in this area raises the question of how existing models of development partnerships are challenged by "new donors", such as China in particular, but also India. This is not only about power rivalries between "old" and "new" donors fought out by means of development cooperation, as emphasized frequently. In fact, also the normative and procedural standards which the OECD countries have developed within the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) are put to the test. Will this new contestedness of normative and institutional orders lead to further fragmented development partnerships? Or will novel chances arise that "new" donors will take over responsibility extensively for implementing the SDGs in the Global South?

In contrast to economic, social and cultural human rights, the SDGs take civil-political human rights, as defined by the United Nations Civil Pact, rather casually into account. Only SDG 16 on "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" has a corresponding focus. However, only relatively few sub-goals of SDG 16 explicitly demand that civil-political human rights, such as freedom of information, should be protected and independent national human rights institutions be established. Accordingly, issues of democracy promotion and the protection of human rights are largely irrelevant. However, what trends and trade-offs can be observed? What form does development cooperation take with partner states that follow the "developmental state" model, which is neither based on a liberal understanding of democracy nor on individual participation and plural representation of interests? In view of the implicit premise of the SDGs that it is primarily a matter of social and economic development, is a new normative order emerging here whose "tunnel vision" is to achieve the SDGs at the expense of civil-political human rights? INEF research in this area combines the analysis of macro data with case studies of practical bilateral cooperation.
Research Area 3

Intervention, Resistance and the Disruption of Political Orders
(Focus: Near & Middle East; Sub-Saharan Africa)

Since the 1990s, external interventions have increased significantly. This includes either military operations against the will of the respective governments (with and without a mandate from the UN Security Council) or UN peace operations consensually negotiated with all parties concerned. In addition, there are also increasing norm-building processes and corresponding intervention practices at regional level, e.g. within the West African community of states ECOWAS. External initiatives of governing and stabilizing fragile states clash with institutional and societal structures characterized by fragmentation, policies of ethnically or religiously defined identities and deeply rooted conflicts of interests. Very often, intervening states and organizations have contributed to accelerate dynamics of disintegration and violence. There, it is crucial to reconstruct the underlying concepts of the intervening parties. As a rule, interventions meet with local and transnational resistance. These can proceed peacefully, for instance by not meeting agreements or exploiting external resources instrumentally for one’s own end. Resistance can also become violent taking the shape of insurgencies or terrorist attacks. The resulting escalation spirals also contribute to the disruption of state and para-state political-institutional orders. Resistance also challenges forcefully the legitimacy of Western self-attributions of responsibility for aiding and protecting fragile states reflected for instance in the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) or in charitable and humanitarian claims by UN organizations or transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as in nation-building efforts.

As far as mandatory measures are concerned the empirical focus is on the Middle East, where externally induced regime change has taken place since 2003, particularly in Iraq and Libya, and where a warlike disintegration and regional reorganization can currently be observed. Subsequently, causal analyses, especially how and why external military and civilian measures and their implementation contribute to disintegration processes – and how this is interacting with internal socio-political structures and processes –, are of paramount importance. In addition, we focus on the following questions: What might succeed the disintegration of the Westphalian state order in this region? What kind of responsibility will international, regional, national or transnational actors assume? Can all the problematic and rivaling claims of legitimacy associated with the manifold conflicts be accommodated constructively in a post-war order?

As far as peace operations of the UN and regional organizations are concerned, our empirical focus is on sub-Saharan Africa. With reference to post-liberal approaches, we analyze socio-technocratic projects of conflict transformation and internationalized control, which are usually based on liberal-universal stocks of knowledge and understanding of responsibility. Crucial questions are: What kind of effects do these interventions have on the typically hybrid political orders in the Global South? How can universally grounded notions of order and responsibility be accommodated with the everyday life and social practices in the crisis regions which are very often quite different if not contrary? Special attention is paid to local agents who are increasingly breaking away from post-colonial dependencies or pursuing their own agendas as well as countering the Western concepts with their own ideas of order and security at the interface of national, local and transnational governance.