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Rethinking Peace, Peace Research and Peacebuilding

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We develop our argument in five steps. The first section retraces the evolving interaction between peace research and politics. It recalls some of the central features of critical peace research as well as the articulation between norms and causal assumptions. The second and third sections expound what we call the bureaucratisation of positive peace by governments and NGOs at both the institutional and ideational levels. We draw attention to how peacebuilding has been institutionalized in diplomatic and aid organizations and how it propagates a set of received wisdoms about peace. In the fourth section we problematize a number of paradoxes of state sponsored peacebuilding from the viewpoint of critical peace research. Finally, we offer a number of concluding observations on the role of peace researchers and some suggestions how a tradition of critical peace research could be reinvigorated to fruitfully engage with contemporary peace issues.

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