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A Constructivist Approach to Post-reunification German Military Interventions: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Afghanistan

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University

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Abstract

Scholars and journalists have periodically referred to Germany and its military, the *Bundeswehr*, as normalizing. The trend, which is defined here as the increasing frequency and intensity of out-of-area military operations, is contested among international relations scholars, and this debate reaches the core of the three main theories outlining drivers of state behavior. This paper analyzes the underlying causation of normalization from these schools of thought by considering the decision-making process leading to Germany's participation in multilateral military operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.

Including neorealism, neoliberalism, and constructivism, these theories are first divided into rationalist and constructivist classifications. In the former case, this paper finds both supporting and contradicting evidence. This leads to the claim that an alternative theory is needed to more accurately explain state security decision-making. In the latter classification, the constructivist concept of political culture is tested as this alternative. However, where neorealism and neoliberalism fail to sufficiently outline what actors *actually* do, constructivism is equally disadvantaged in predicting what *should* do.

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