



Stephen Craig, Recipient of The Firestone Medal for Excellence in Undergraduate Research

“Tamed Tiger or Restless Beast? German Foreign Policy in the Post-Unification Period”

As the fall of the Soviet Union restructured the international balance of power, neo-realist theorists predicted that Germany’s foreign policy would become more assertive in the wake of unification. However, these predictions failed to come to fruition, and a growing body of literature has attempted to explain German behavior along three distinct lines of analysis: influence-seeking behavior (modified neo-realism), domestic interest group bargaining (economic-institutionalism), and normative behavior (constructivism). Using case studies of German involvement in NATO operations in the 1990’s and German bargaining regarding the single currency area, this thesis demonstrates inconsistent explanatory power within the three alternative frameworks: German defense policy adheres most closely to modified neo-realism while constructivism and economic institutionalism are over-determined with regard to foreign economic policy. This paper aims to resolve the inconsistency in explanatory power by developing a two-level framework of analysis in which domestic preferences and German state interests influence policymaking. When German interests diverge from domestic preferences, policymaking results in sub-optimal outcomes as domestic preferences narrow the range of politically feasible foreign policy options. The paper concludes by testing the two-level framework against German responses to the Euro crisis, confirming that domestic political constraints have crippled German efforts to resolve the crisis.

Clay Ramel, Recipient of The William J. Perry Prize

“Reconsidering the Roots of Crude Coercion: a Policymaking Analysis of “the Oil Weapon””

In 1973-1974, several Arab oil-producing countries embargoed oil shipments to the United States while cutting oil production, in order to pressure the US to diminish its support of Israel. Despite expectations at the time, such large-scale use of “the oil weapon” has not become a commonplace policy. This thesis explores potential explanations for these changing patterns of use of “the oil weapon”, drawing on policymaking, neo-realist, and offensive realist frameworks, then employing various case studies to evaluate the explanatory power of such frameworks. This thesis finds that whereas a punctuated equilibrium model best explains the buildup to “the oil weapon” in 1973-1974, Kingdon’s multiple policy streams model best explains the deployment patterns for this policy from 1973-2003. In case studies of Venezuela, Iran, and Russia’s “oil weapon” use and rhetoric during the 2003-2008 period of heightened oil prices, Kingdon’s model best explains Venezuela case, an offensive realist framework best explains Russia’s, and a hybrid of the two models, Iran’s. The conclusion addresses the current EU-Iran oil embargo to gauge how “the oil weapon” might develop in the future. This thesis’ findings will help inform oil-importing countries’ calibrations of their policies for addressing oil-producing countries’ potentially hostile export policies.