

## Abstracts

*Daniel Göler/Lukas Zech*

**»Keep your feet still« and »no disturbance at home«:**

**An IR-film analysis of Germany's strategic culture**

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The article provides a theoretical contribution to the debate on the relevance of film analysis (Filmpolitologie) to the field of International Relations (IR). The potential of this emerging research agenda is illustrated by embedding film analysis in the strategic culture approach. Using content analysis and film semiotics, the article investigates what normative and cultural attitudes towards the use of military means are depicted in two German films about the Afghanistan mission. Additionally, the article discusses the outcome of the empirical analysis in light of existing research on German strategic culture. Finally, the authors assess the proposed framework to contribute to the theoretical grounding of film-analysis in IR as well as to the debate on the value of integrating popular culture into the strategic culture approach.

**Keywords:** strategic culture, IR-related film analysis, cinematic IR, Afghanistan mission of the German Bundeswehr, popular culture

*Hanna Pfeifer/Michael Reder*

**»I Swear to You, this Land of Syria is *barakah*, a Pure Blessing«:**

**Postmodern approaches to religion and *dā'ish* videos**

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This article asks how recent religious phenomena in international politics can be addressed adequately. Until today, most approaches in this debate – notably the work inspired by Jürgen Habermas – operate with conceptual differences that stem from a liberal tradition. In this article, we first point to the weaknesses of such approaches, in particular with regard to their conceptualisation of Islamist actors. We then introduce postmodern readings of religion as an alternative and more adequate mode of framing, focusing on the work of Jacques Derrida. We illustrate the strengths of such understandings of religion by analysing two biographical videos depicting Canadian and German converts who joined *dā'ish* as foreign fighters. The first-person narrative of both fighters reveals the inter-discursivity of liberal and Islamic narrative strands. The oscillation of their discursive constructions between different poles also exposes the tensions inherent to religion.

**Keywords:** religion and International Relations, postsecularism, Jürgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida, ISIS

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**EU-scepticism on the Bosphorus?**

**Argumentative strategies in Turkish civil society on Turkey's EU-accession**

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This study examines the argumentative strategies of leading representatives of Turkish civil society organisations regarding their attitudes towards EU-Turkey relations. The argumentative strategies are derived from 16 semi-structured interviews conducted in 2012. The analysis distinguishes two dominant argumentative strategies: in the government-critical camp, the accusation prevails that the EU either did not perceive or even consciously legitimised the authoritarian reversal pursued by the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP). As for the pro-AKP camp, the argumentative strategies prevail of constructing of a normative distinction and demarcation from the EU as well as searching for foreign-policy options beyond closer reliance on the EU.

**Keywords:** EU-Turkey relations, argumentative strategies, interdiscursivity, EU cynicism, EU scepticism, civil society organisations

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**Of Agents, Actors and Structures in International Relations:**

**Contours of an Empirical Approach to Agency Research**

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Discussions about the agent-structure dilemma have a long tradition in International Relations. Over the past decade, this field has become stale in that it has mostly eschewed empirical research and has never managed to overcome the dilemma theoretically. We argue for a renewed approach to agency beyond the agent-structure debate and in light of recent innovations in practice theory and materialist theories. There are also lively debates about agency in various empirical research fields, despite differing terminologies, such as on the agency of international organizations, African agency, the agency of non-governmental organisations and youth agency. This article summarises the interdisciplinary state of the art, develops possibilities for agency research across ontological boundaries and sketches the contours of a research programme on agency in International Relations.

**Keywords:** agency, agent, structure, practice theory, new materialism