

## **Abstract**

The master's thesis deals with the issue of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) out-of-area interventions, specifically focusing on the case of NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999. The alliance's decision to intervene against severe violations of human rights in Kosovo despite the lack of a legal mandate to do so was criticized heavily by the international community. This thesis aims to examine the narratives NATO used to justify its involvement in Kosovo. By adopting a theoretical framework of social constructivism, the research aims to examine the role of two constructivist concepts, collective identity and international norms, in the alliance's decision to intervene. To do so, the thesis adopts a discourse-historical approach (DHA) to critical discourse analysis, as established by Reisigl and Wodak (2009). This approach emphasizes the significance of the social, political, and historical context of discourse practices. By adopting the DHA, the thesis seeks to uncover the discursive strategies employed by the alliance to justify and legitimize the intervention in Kosovo. The research is conceived as a case-specific qualitative analysis, which is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the correlation between changes in the official discourse in NATO and the international norm of human rights. The second part of the analysis addresses the role of NATO's assumed collective identity in the discursive practices of individual member states. Despite the broad academic debate concerning the role of human rights and humanitarianism in NATO's decision to intervene in Kosovo, the thesis contributes to the debate by generating new knowledge about the organization's motivations.