

GPACS Colloquium Series

Presents

Heidi Hardt

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“Lessons in Failure: Institutional Memory in International Organization Crisis Management”

Abstract: International organizations have carried out hundreds of crisis management operations aimed at ending violence. Yet one strategic error in an operation can have deadly consequences. Scholars have widely examined organizational learning without examining the pre-condition for learning: institutional memory. This book explains how international organizations acquire memory from their failures at a time of increased turnover. The book argues that organization elites use informal processes facilitated by the secretariat to socially construct institutional memory of strategic errors. Informal processes include transnational interpersonal networks, private documentation and scenario-based exercises. Surprisingly, existing formal processes - such as lessons learned offices and databases - prove ineffective at retaining relevant knowledge. The book adopts a mixed-method approach to test the argument in NATO. Methodologies include structured interviews with 120 NATO elites, a survey experiment in the field and case studies of crisis management in Afghanistan, Libya and Ukraine.

Thursday, December 1, 2016

12:30 – 1:30pm

SST 777

(light lunch served)