

## MASTER PROGRAMME PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

### New Article: "Laughing at Failure or Failing to Laugh: Humour as a Strategy for Dealing With Foreign Policy Failure?"

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Research Article

#### Laughing at Failure or Failing to Laugh: Humour as a Strategy for Dealing With Foreign Policy Failure?

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##### Abstract

The paper considers the role of humour in dealing with failure in foreign policy and brings insights together from the studies of policy failure, humour studies, customer service management and crisis communication. It investigates how research in customer service management and crisis communication points to the use of humour as an additional strategy for dealing with foreign policy failure. This research has provided valuable insights into the benefits of humour for dealing with minor service failure, reducing the level of damage done to the standing of the actor responsible for the failure. The paper transfers these insights into IR and investigates the benefits and drawbacks of self-deprecating humour by policy makers responsible for failure. To illustrate this, we consider the humour employed by US President George W. Bush at the White House Correspondents Dinner in 2004 when making fun of his administration's inability to find weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq. We argue that humour can be a tool to address policy failure only in front of a sympathetic audience when humour can be a means of addressing the cognitive tension between support for a policy and its empirical failure.

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›Prof. Dr. Alexander Spencer

([https://www.pacs.ovgu.de/Team/Prof\\_+Dr\\_+Alexander+Spencer-p-468.html](https://www.pacs.ovgu.de/Team/Prof_+Dr_+Alexander+Spencer-p-468.html)) in the article investigates how research in customer service management and

crisis communication points to the use of humour as an additional strategy for dealing with foreign policy failure.

## Abstract of the Paper

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