

**TITLE PAGE**

**AN INVESTIGATION OF SMALL STATE INTERVENTIONS:  
TOWARD A CRITICAL SYNTHESIS BETWEEN REALISM AND  
CONSTRUCTIVISM**

*A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
of the University of New England*

**By**

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## ABSTRACT

The field of contemporary international relations theory is dominated by the various realist approaches, which together constitute the realist tradition. As a theoretical account of the dynamics of interstate relations and international politics however, realism exhibits some serious limitations, which constrain its general appositeness and its ability to provide accurate and sufficient explanation and prediction. In particular realism's great power centrism and its exclusively materialist conception of power, interests, and structure, constrain its ability to adequately account for the actions of small and middle powers, and the normative and ideational dimension to politics within the international community.

Constructivism offers an alternate research tradition that is founded not in a material but in an ideational conception of state behaviour, systemic structure, and international relations. It too however offers only a partially satisfactory account of interstate behaviour, and has yet to announce a comprehensive theory of international relations. There exists consequently a 'theoretical space' between these discordant and often contradictory accounts into which this dissertation proposes a new and critical synthesis is both necessary and possible.

In order to elucidate this new way, three case studies of small state intervention are examined as convenient *via media* between the two research traditions, demonstrating the need to move beyond the limitations of realism's structural, materialist, and causal explanation, and constructivism's ideational, cultural, and constitutive conceptualisation, to acknowledge the dialectic and mutually conditioning relation between the two.

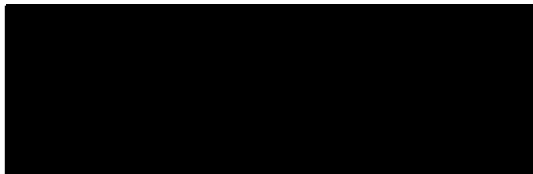
# CERTIFICATION

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*I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.*

*I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.*

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