ABSTRACT

This paper examines the evolution of narratives on the Westphalian Treaties (1648) from nationalist German historiography in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to a political theory in the mid-twentieth century. Juxtaposing the narratives popularized by German Historians such as Karl Woltmann, Leopold von Ranke, and Heinrich von Treitschke to that of the Political Scientists Leo Gross and Hans Morgenthau, the Author seeks to explore how, and most importantly why, the narrative evolved. The paper demonstrates that the author’s personal experiences and political ideals, as well as contemporary realities are the primary drivers behind the evolution of a historical narrative, by focusing on shifts in the narrative tone and historical interpretation of Westphalia. The historical narrative thus resembles a kaleidoscopic image intertwining the past it seeks to depict with the authors’ realities. It also illustrates that historical narratives can transform dramatically and quickly once the ideological factors sustaining the narrative no longer resonate with an audience.