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## The Problem of the GDR's Foreign Policy Identity in the Context of Initiatives in Africa in the 1960s — 1980s

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to an examination of the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) foreign policy identity in the context of its policy in Sub-Saharan Africa. The relevance of this topic is primarily determined by the fact that the African vector of the GDR's foreign policy course still influences the current state of the German state's agenda in the region under study. The objective of this study is to identify the characteristics of the GDR's foreign policy course in Sub-Saharan Africa in the context of three dimensions: narrative, performative and emotional. As a theoretical basis, it is proposed to test two alternative points of view, the realist/neorealist and the liberal. These theories imbue the notion of foreign policy identity with diverse meanings, offering researchers the opportunity to test them on historical and relevant cases. Critical theory, which is also included in the theoretical discourse of this work, has tried to go a little further by considering the role of alliance formation for the state identity. The scientific novelty lies in by the fact that most studies on the identity of East Germany describe the sociological aspect, while the specifics of foreign policy initiatives remain outside the brackets. The following research methods were chosen historical and chronological, which allowed not only to study the dynamics of relations between the GDR and individual African countries, but also to assess the level of cooperation between them. In several cases, the comparative method was relevant for breeding the independent policy of the GDR and joint initiatives with the Soviet Union, as well as for comparing East German and West German initiatives. Finally, a content analysis of mutual visits between the GDR and African countries helped to find that the increase in the number of visits was due to the expansion of the areas of interaction between the sides — from primarily economic cooperation to security policy coordination. The author draws conclusions confirming certain theoretical postulates stated in the theoretical and methodological basis of the study and provides an assessment of all three dimensions of the GDR's foreign policy identity.

**Key words:** Sub-Saharan Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, USSR, critical theory, narrative dimension, performative dimension, emotional dimension of foreign policy identity

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## Проблема формирования внешнеполитической идентичности ГДР в контексте инициатив в Африке в 1960–1980-е гг.

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**Аннотация.** Рассматривается внешнеполитическая идентичность Германской Демократической Республики (ГДР) в контексте изучения ее политики в странах Африки южнее Сахары. Актуальность темы определяется, прежде всего, тем, что африканский вектор внешнеполитического курса ГДР до сих пор оказывает влияние на современное состояние повестки дня германского государства в исследуемом регионе. Цель исследования — выявление особенностей внешнеполитического курса ГДР в Африке южнее Сахары в контексте трех измерений: нарративного, перформативного и эмоционального. Методологически работа строится на проверке применимости двух альтернативных точек зрения: реалистской/неореалистской и либеральной — к анализу изучаемого предмета, поскольку указанные теории наполняют концепцию внешнеполитической идентичности разными смыслами. Сторонники критической теории, которая также включена в теоретический дискурс исследования, попытались пойти несколько дальше, учитывая роль формирования альянсов для идентичности государства. Научная новизна исследования определяется тем, что большинство работ по идентичности Восточной Германии описывают социологический аспект, тогда как особенности внешнеполитических инициатив остаются за скобками. В качестве базовых методов исследования выбраны историко-хронологический, который позволил не просто изучить динамику отношений между ГДР и отдельными африканскими странами, но и оценить уровень сотрудничества между ними; сравнительно-сопоставительный метод в ряде случаев был актуален для отделения самостоятельной политики ГДР от совместных инициатив с Советским Союзом, а также для сравнения восточногерманских и западногерманских проектов на африканском направлении. Наконец, контент-анализ взаимных визитов между ГДР и африканскими странами помог установить, что рост числа визитов был обусловлен расширением сфер взаимодействия сторон — от преимущественно экономического сотрудничества до координации политики в сфере безопасности. В заключении автор приводит выводы, подтверждающие отдельные теоретические постулаты, заявленные в теоретико-методологической базе исследования, а также дает оценку всем трем измерениям внешнеполитической идентичности ГДР.

**Ключевые слова:** Африка южнее Сахары, Союз Советских Социалистических Республик, СССР, критическая теория, нарративное измерение, перформативное измерение, эмоциональное измерение внешнеполитической идентичности

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### Introduction

Foreign policy identity plays an important role in shaping the priorities of a state even when it possesses all the necessary attributes of sovereignty. It is directly related to the perception of those processes and phenomena on the world political arena that occur in a certain historical period. Concurrently, the concept of ‘identity’ in relation to foreign policy is becoming increasingly prevalent within the

theoretical discourses of various schools of international relations.

### Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of the Study

Already in the formation of major theories, such as realism and liberalism, some attention was paid to foreign policy identity. The realist approach, in particular, acknowledged the impact of identity on international relations, albeit in a

very limited way. H. Morgenthau (1948) and R. Niebuhr (1947) put forth the argument that it is only individuals who can demonstrate identity, as it is intrinsically linked to the moral aspects of the individual. At the state level, identity can only be inherent in a 'collective entity' that possesses and exercises full power.

Subsequently, both J. Mearsheimer (2018) and S. Walt (1987; 1996), as ideologues of offensive and defensive realism, have also demonstrated some skepticism towards the study of identity. The reason for this is that most non-realist theorists believe that foreign policy identity is designed to train states to think of themselves not as discrete, exclusive, and therefore sovereign subjects of international relations, but as interdependent parts of a larger entity, i.e. the system of international relations (Mearsheimer, 1994, pp. 39–40). Whereas realists themselves believe that such an approach is generally not feasible due to the fact that states, even if they wish to integrate into the global international system, continue to behave as egoists in self-interested ways.

In contrast, liberals posit that the capacity of a state actor to embed itself in the global political community and to find in it the attributes necessary for its foreign policy course, speaks for it as an identical actor, respecting both 'common norms' and 'self-perceptions' (Deutsch, 1957, p. 36). The proponents of both viewpoints have historical facts to support their rightness and to refute that of the other.

Critical theory has advanced a little further, attempting to go beyond the world of security competition and war on the one hand and the formation of a pluralistic security community on the other. Identity for them is expressed in the ability to shape their own discourses through the pursuit of exceptionalism, to rely on alliances and to create their own spheres of influence (Fischer, 1992, p. 430). These are all integral parts of an independent foreign policy.

The assumption of the proponents of critical theory that identity is manifested not only in the process of representation of an individual or a group of individuals (society) about themselves, but also about the state representation, can be verified on the basis of studying the foreign

policy course of an actor whose sovereignty and foreign policy identity have been questioned. Foreign policy identity in this case is seen as a multidimensional model consisting of various aspects or efforts (individual or collective) to pursue an independent foreign policy course (Urrestarazu, 2015, p. 135).

It is proposed to investigate not the social, but the foreign policy aspect of the concept of collective identity (Doßmann & Niethammer, 2000, p. 19) by analyzing the policy of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) towards Sub-Saharan Africa in the period after the collapse of the colonial system of international relations (1960s — 1980s).

A number of researchers posit that the GDR lacked a distinct foreign policy identity due to the fact that it was dependent on the USSR, including in the process of formulating foreign policy towards third countries (End, 1973, p. 34). Moreover, some Western, primarily American, documents show that the USSR used the GDR for its own purposes to expand its influence in the Third World and to put pressure on Western Europe (Grundy, 1981, p. 595).

The usual form of studying the identity of the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) is either a study of 'West' and 'East' Germans' representations of themselves or an assessment of 'collective consciousness' (Allenova & Al-Dainy, 2021, p. 48). Consequently, 'East Germany' was seen as an alternative to 'West Germany.' On the one hand, the geopolitical context of the Cold War period and a divided Germany favored competition between the two states. On the other hand, on the political level, both German states defined themselves as the 'other' Germany: the GDR presented itself as the anti-fascist, progressive alternative to the pro-Western Federal Republic, while the Federal Republic portrayed itself as a liberal, democratic and economically more successful variant.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ganzenmüller J. Ostdeutsche Identitäten. Selbst- und Fremdbilder zwischen Transformationserfahrung und DDR-Vergangenheit. Deutschland Archiv // Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. 24.04.2020. URL: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/deutschlandarchiv/308016/ost-deutsche-identitaeten/#footnote-reference-22> (accessed: 04.04.2024).

Table 1

**Theoretical description of the studied measurements and their practical verification in the context of the realization of the GDR's foreign policy in Africa**

Measurement	Theoretical description	Practical test
Narrative	Intersubjective dimension of foreign policy identity: a historically constructed set of events that allows us to assess the actor's own historical development in the chosen field	To investigate this dimension, it is proposed to identify the importance of Sub-Saharan Africa in the GDR's foreign policy course. Using the historical-chronological method, the GDR's independent foreign policy actions in the region can be assessed
Performative	Performativity means that a state in its foreign policy can simultaneously be guided by both national interests, pursuing an independent foreign policy course, and the interests of a "collective subject," an alliance or association of which this state is a member	Most Western researchers study the GDR's foreign policy identity in the context of Soviet policy. The task of the performative dimension is to prove that, despite the fact that the USSR had foreign policy objectives within the framework of cooperation between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), Moscow helped Berlin in the formation and development of the foreign policy identity of the GDR, rather than limiting it
Emotional	This dimension considers the emotional manifestation of foreign policy identity based on the relationship between actors in opposition to each other	In the context of this study, this dimension can be represented by two vectors at once: along the GDR — FDR line and along the East — West line. By means of a frequency analysis of quantitative visits of GDR delegations to Africa and African delegations to the GDR, as well as a study of East Germany's efforts in the process of ensuring security in several African countries, it can be proved that the GDR's foreign policy course was based on the principles of assistance to the national liberation struggle of African countries

Source: compiled by N.V. Ivkina.

However, a sociological approach would not allow testing the foreign policy component of the GDR's identity, that's why this study puts forth an analysis of the GDR's foreign policy in Sub-Saharan Africa to test the hypothesis that the state's national interests could be realized independently.

In order to test the practical realization of the theoretical assumptions, it is proposed to identify the narrative, performative and emotional dimensions of the GDR's foreign policy identity using a range of quantitative and qualitative methods (Urrestarazu, 2015, p. 137) (Table 1).

Thus, verifying the realization of each of these dimensions will provide insight into the GDR's foreign policy identity.

### African Countries in the GDR's Foreign Policy

Africa as a subject of the study is primarily attributable to Germany's special interest in this continent throughout the colonial period (Ivkina, 2021; 2022). However, after the end of the Second World War, the colonial claims of a divided Germany finally collapsed. The academic literature offers no clear answer to the question of whether the FRG and the GDR had their own foreign policy courses in general, but, according to Article 6 of the GDR Constitution of 1968, "The country, faithful to the interests of the people and its international obligations ... pursues a foreign policy serving socialism and peace, international friendship and security."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Constitution of the GDR (April 6, 1968) // GHDI. URL: [https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=79](https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=79) (accessed: 01.04.2024).

Moreover, the GDR was committed to opposing imperialism and its colonial regime.<sup>3</sup> All this suggests that within the Soviet sphere of influence, the German state pursued a distinct foreign policy at the declarative level.

Russian scholars have highlighted the significant importance of examining the GDR's policy in Africa given that this topic appears to be a significant gap in both Soviet and modern Russian historiography (Lileev, 2011, p. 38). It is also noteworthy that the developing countries of Sub-Saharan Africa were part of the GDR's sphere of interests in connection with the general anti-imperialist struggle for peace, freedom and social progress (Rehmer, 1985, p. 22). The GDR expressed active solidarity with all peoples engaged in the struggle for national liberation, and opposed colonialism and any form of external interference in their internal affairs.

The year 1960 proved to be a pivotal point in the intensification of the GDR's policy in Africa. In particular, speaking to the diplomatic corps, the head of the GDR State Council, W. Ulbricht, proclaimed the country's principles towards Africa. The primary assertion was that East German policy should be based on the traditions of the German working class and German humanists, who had always despised colonial oppression and any form of exploitation (Schleicher, 1991, p. 32). The actual foreign policy proposals in the region included the slogan "Africa for Africans," which was in direct contrast to the policy of the FRG, which upheld "the worst Western traditions of German colonizers and militarists" (Schleicher, 1991, p. 32). In this context of ideological and political confrontation with the FRG that the GDR's policy in Sub-Saharan Africa began to take shape.

The GDR's political contacts with the countries of the region began on November 17, 1958, when independent Guinea concluded its

<sup>3</sup> Constitution of the GDR (April 6, 1968) // GHDI. URL: [https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=79](https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=79) (accessed: 01.04.2024).

first international treaty — the Trade and Cultural Agreement with East Germany with the prospect of mutual opening of representative offices and consulates.<sup>4</sup> It can therefore be asserted that the GDR had become an independent player in the region.

The reaction of the FRG to such actions was predictable: officials of the West German state began to declare their unconditional right to represent all Germans in the world political arena. This was explained by the fact that in the FRG the government was elected, while in the GDR it was imposed by the Soviet Union. This was repeatedly mentioned by Chancellor Adenauer following his election (Morsey, 1991, p. 18).

This stance was also reflected in the Hallstein Doctrine, which aimed to prevent international recognition of the GDR, according to which the FRG considered any action by third states to establish diplomatic or other relations with the GDR as an "unfriendly step."<sup>5</sup> The only exception was the Soviet Union. To reinforce its position in the region, the FRG initiated the opening of trade missions in Africa (in Algeria, Ghana, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, and Zambia) and consulates-general (in Egypt, Guinea, and Tanzania) (Winrow, 1989, p. 303). Thus, the FRG endeavored to prevent the GDR from acquiring international legal sovereignty.

In such a situation, the GDR government was forced to pursue a more flexible policy aimed, on the one hand, at strengthening its position in the African region and, on the other hand, at not jeopardizing the newly acquired sovereignty of the former African colonies. Some Western scholars attribute this policy to the reluctance of the Soviet Union

<sup>4</sup> Dokumente zur Außenpolitik der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1945–1954. Vol. 1. Berlin: Rutten and Loening, 1954. S. 505–506.

<sup>5</sup> 1955: Die Hallstein-Doktrin // Bundesarchiv Deutschland. 1957. URL: <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Content/Virtuelle-Ausstellungen/1955-Die-Hallstein-Doktrin/1955-die-hallstein-doktrin.html> (accessed: 09.04.2024).

to help a diplomatically recognized state to become more active in Africa (Winrow, 1989, p. 304).

There is no real justification for this assertion, as bilateral consultations on Africa took place regularly between the GDR and USSR foreign ministries in Moscow and Berlin on Africa, including on selected priority issues. In addition, on the ground, the GDR and Soviet embassies generally worked in close cooperation (Schleicher, 1991, p. 32). Thus, the American allegations that the Soviet Union was assisting the GDR in Africa in exchange for using its territory as a springboard for the realization of its interests in Europe, as expressed in one of the reports (Grundy, 1981, p. 595), are also unfounded.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the GDR's policy in Africa underwent a period of consolidation and intensification. In 1979, E. Honecker, Chairman of the GDR State Council, undertook a large African tour to Angola and Mozambique.<sup>6</sup> At this time, it was particularly important to establish mutually beneficial trade and economic co-operation, as the GDR had been experiencing an economic crisis since 1977. Honecker's visit to these countries marked the beginning of the parties' rejection of foreign currency in the process of mutual trade, large-scale agricultural projects were launched (the establishment of large agricultural farms in Mozambique with an area of up to 120,000 hectares of agricultural land).<sup>7</sup> The implementation of joint projects led to a significant improvement in the repayment of loans taken earlier, as well as a notable increase

in economic development, despite the delayed process of decolonization.

In 1989, E. Honecker hosted H.M. Mengistu, one of the leaders of the Ethiopian revolution, for the fourth time. Western countries viewed this as yet another manipulation by the Soviet Union. The close personal relationship between Honecker and Mengistu was perceived as the realization of Soviet ambitions in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia was of strategic importance given its proximity to the Suez Canal and the American presence at the port of Berbera in neighboring Somalia. The East German government encouraged diplomatic contacts with Ethiopia, and this helped to consolidate the Soviet bloc's significant presence in the Horn of Africa (Winrow, 1988, p. 206).

However, it is noteworthy that, firstly, E. Honecker was the only East European leader to be invited to take part in the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the Ethiopian revolution in Addis Ababa, and secondly, by 1986 the GDR had managed to establish diplomatic relations with practically all the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, with the exception only of the Kingdom of Swaziland,<sup>8</sup> Malawi and South Africa; and thirdly, these were not only political, but also trade, economic, educational and cultural contacts: everything that binds the peoples of sovereign states. It is inaccurate to assert that the GDR's policy in Africa during this period was exclusively driven by the pursuit of the Soviet interests and lacked its own distinct goals and objectives.

### **A New Phase of East German Policy in Africa: Security Challenges**

It is important to acknowledge that the diplomatic achievements of the GDR in Africa were not easy for the state. This was due to the need of not only acquiring a political identity, but also a military and technical one. As part of the confrontation with Western policy, the GDR,

<sup>6</sup> Erich Honecker am 20.2.1979 in Lusaka/Sambia // Bundestiftung Aufarbeitung. URL: <https://www.bundestiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/vermitteln/wissenschaft/promotionsfoerderung-stipendienprogramm/stipendiaten/daniel-lange/ddr-afrika-sport/erich-honnecker-1979-lusaka> (accessed: 29.11.2024).

<sup>7</sup> „Afrika war für die DDR-Außenpolitik wichtig“. Hans-Joachim Döring im Interview // Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk. 09.01.2018. URL: <https://www.mdr.de/geschichte/ddr/politik-gesellschaft/aussenhandel-afrika-fdj-freundschaftsbrigaden-100.html> (accessed: 09.04.2024).

<sup>8</sup> Kingdom of Eswatini since 2018.

with the support of the USSR, tried to open diplomatic missions in Guinea, Congo (Brazzaville), and Ghana (after the overthrow of K. Nkrumah). However, the only real success, under the constraints of the GDR's actions under the Hallstein Doctrine, was the opening of the Consulate General in Tanzania in 1964 after the unification of Zanzibar and Tanganyika (Winrow, 1990). This provided the impetus first to strengthen the position in Tanzania and then to build trust with neighboring African countries. Largely because of East Germany's increased propaganda activities, which offered an alternative to Western neocolonial proposals, the number of political forces in Africa willing to recognize the GDR as an independent foreign policy actor increased. In this regard, the FRG's policy in the context of the Hallstein Doctrine was virtually meaningless by the end of the 1960s. The doctrine was no longer applied following the signing of the Founding Treaty between the FRG and the GDR in 1972,<sup>9</sup> within the framework of the Eastern policy of West German Chancellor W. Brandt. Although the FRG did not recognize the GDR, it began to turn a blind eye to recognition by other countries.

It was at this point that the GDR's security interests in Africa were already becoming apparent. By the 1970s, East Germany had about 2,000 military personnel deployed in Africa and at least another 2,000 military advisers and technicians (Sandvoss, 1985, p. 180). The GDR mainly specialized in such areas as training and organization of military forces for the protection of African territories, communications, the construction of airfields, the development of ports, collaboration with pioneer organizations, military engineering, and other related areas (Winrow, 1990, p. 139).

<sup>9</sup> Deutsch-deutscher Grundlagenvertrag 1972: Vertrag über die Grundlagen der Beziehungen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik // Deutscher Bundestag. 1972. URL: <https://webarchiv.bundestag.de/archive/2005/1115/parlament/geschichte/parlhist/dokumente/dok07.html> (accessed: 11.04.2024).

According to the West German newspaper *Die Welt*, the GDR forces helped provide security in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Uganda, Equatorial Guinea and Congo (Brazzaville).<sup>10</sup> As can be seen, predominantly the countries where the GDR attempted to realize its aspirations as an actor in charge of certain areas of security are concentrated in Southeast Africa. This is due to its success the country achieved in Tanzania and the possibility of expanding its sphere of influence.

As political contacts between the GDR and African countries expanded, so did the areas of mutual cooperation. This is evidenced by a comparative quantitative analysis of the reciprocal visits by delegations from the GDR to Africa and African representatives to the GDR in the 1970s. The data is presented in Table 2.

As can be seen from the above analysis, the intensification of relations, defined as the increase in reciprocal visits between the GDR and African countries, occurred at a time when the parties began to raise security issues and East Germany became one of the actors contributing to regional stability. Moreover, it was with those countries with which reciprocal visits were established that trade and economic relations were established and successfully implemented: "East German economists focused their attention on priority countries with a socialist orientation, such as Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe for the acquisition of raw materials, including through special barter trade agreements" (Lavigne, 1974, p. 350). By the early 1980s, the GDR was importing various raw materials from Africa: bauxite from Guinea, copper from Zambia and Zimbabwe, cocoa from Ghana and Nigeria, and coffee from Angola (Winrow, 1989, p. 305).

<sup>10</sup> *Die Welt*, 1985, Germany, German // *Die Welt* Internet Archive. April 1, 1985. URL: <https://archive.org/details/DieWelt1985GermanyGerman/Apr%2001%201985%2C%20Die%20Welt%2C%20%2377%2C%20Germany%20%28de%29/page/n7/mode/2up> (accessed: 09.04.2024).

Table 2

**A comparative quantitative analysis of reciprocal visits of delegations from the GDR to Africa  
and African representatives to the GDR in 1970–1980**

Year	GDR delegations to Africa	Delegations from Africa to the GDR	Discussion of security issues
1970	1 (Congo (Brazzaville))	2 (Sudan)	No
1971	2 ( <b>Algeria</b> )	0	No
1972	2 (Algeria, Republic of the Congo)	1 (Republic of the Congo)	No
1973	1 (Republic of the Congo)	1 (Algeria)	No
1974	1 (Algeria)	1 (Tanzania)	No
1975	0	1 (Angola)	Yes
1976	0	4 ( <b>Angola</b> , São Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia)	Yes
1977	0	0	
1978	6 (Algeria, Angola, Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Nigeria, Zambia)	3 (Cape Verde, Nigeria, Zambia)	No
1979	3 (Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique)	8 (Benin, Guinea, <b>Guinea-Bissau</b> , <b>Mozambique</b> , Tanzania)	No
1980	0	2 (Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique)	No

*Note.* Countries whose delegations hosted the event several times in one year are shown in bold.

*Source:* compiled by N.V. Ivkina on the basis of: Dokumente zur Außenpolitik der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik. Berlin : Staatsverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1986.

In addition, the GDR regularly provided these countries with financial and technical assistance amounting to approximately 148 billion Deutsche Mark (DM) through the GDR Solidarity Committee in 1970s — 1980s (Döring, 1999, p. 209). This was necessary to support national liberation movements in countries that were just embarking on the path of sovereignty. Thus, for example, according to data published by the Ministry of Defense: in 1980–1985 Mozambique was also assisted in the training of its military personnel — 70 ground troops, 62 air force personnel, 62 navy personnel, 60 political officers and 25 border guards were trained. A total of DM 277 million was allocated from the GDR treasury for Mozambique during this period, slightly less — DM 238 million was allocated for Angola (Platoshkin, 2015). It can therefore be argued that the GDR pursued an independent investment military-technical policy in Africa. Of course, these were mainly countries with closer ties to the Soviet Union, but this is not surprising since both countries were on the same side of the barricade during the Cold War.

The GDR's zeal and the USSR's unconditional support for its endeavors caused significant concern among Western politicians, and apparently not in vain. Particular discontent arose when the GDR's successful policies undermined the confidence of local African authorities in the FRG. East German efforts in Africa were discredited in order to reduce the level of confidence in the country in particular and in Soviet policy in general. For example, the commander of the Angolan police force travelled to the GDR in 1976 to meet his colleague, the Minister of the Interior, E. Eicharn. Following this visit and the subsequent agreements, the GDR was accused of supporting the country's intelligence structure, the Angolan Directorate of Information and Security, which, according to the West, carried out mass repression and even maintained "concentration camps" (Winrow, 1990, p. 140). Subsequently, the GDR was accused of supporting "dictatorial regimes" in Guinea and Uganda, links with the Communist Parties of Sudan and Ghana, which were banned in Western countries, and so on.



## Conclusion

The GDR's policy in sub-Saharan Africa can be characterized by a certain periodization linked to the search for a foreign policy identity.

The first period covers the 1960s and early 1970s, when the policy was mainly aimed at gaining recognition of the GDR as an independent player in the world through the establishment of diplomatic relations with sovereign African countries.

In the 1970s, following the FRG's rejection of the Hallstein Doctrine (1972), a second period begins when the GDR used an active policy in Africa to systematically confront the FRG and fight the neocolonial policies of the Western vision of the African vector.

The third period, covering the 1980s and until German reunification, is characterized by a more autonomous foreign policy, independent of external circumstances. This is due to the intensification of the GDR's security policy in Africa. However, even at this point, political actions were influenced by the Soviet "new thinking" policy, which resulted in the loss of even the limited independence that had been previously achieved.

Returning to the theoretical underpinnings of the study, a test of the realist, liberal and critical view of foreign policy identity revealed that the realists' argument about the selfish behavior of state actors towards others in the process of identity formation is untenable. The study found that the GDR was extremely cautious in pursuing its foreign policy course in Sub-Saharan Africa, in an effort to avoid any potential displeasure from Western countries towards newly borne states. Theoretically, this could be due to the realization that the former European metropolises, although largely in their own interests, were capable of providing significantly greater financial assistance to African countries than the GDR.

The thesis put forth by the liberals was ultimately proven to be more valid: the first and third stages of East German policy prove that the formation of a foreign policy identity was firmly

linked to the GDR's attempt to integrate itself into the emerging political and diplomatic conjuncture. Thus, in the first phase, it is clearly visible that the main objective was to establish diplomatic relations with the outside world to maintain the legitimacy of the foreign policy course and to overcome the ideological consequences of the Hallstein Doctrine. However, external pressure, largely due to the same liberal policies of the Western countries, prevented the GDR from fully unfolding its foreign policy course.

With regard to critical theory, an examination of the case of the GDR in Africa has shown that it is the one that offers the most balanced view of foreign policy identity. East Germany did try to shape its own discourse in the region in question in order to consolidate its status as a sovereign actor.

In summary, it can be stated that the practical verification of all three dimensions of foreign policy identity allows some conclusions to be drawn. In particular, the narrative dimension shows that the GDR's policy in Africa has developed progressively since African countries gained independence. From the establishment of diplomatic relations with individual countries, the GDR moved towards regional cooperation (geographically mainly Southeast and West Africa) and subsequently expanded the scope of its interactions to encompass security assistance.

The performative dimension presents a more challenging area for study. This is due to the close cooperation between the GDR and the USSR and the difficulty of separating, for example, aid to African countries separately from the East German government and jointly with Soviet aid. However, the USSR's assistance to the development of the GDR's foreign policy in Sub-Saharan Africa cannot be regarded as an infringement of identity. On the contrary, the evidence presented in the study indicates that the cooperation was mutually advantageous, both in economic terms and in shaping the images of both countries fighting the neocolonial

aspirations of the former metropolises. In addition, in the first two phases of the GDR's policy in Africa, the USSR involved it in its projects, thus providing it access to a new regional level.

The third dimension, the emotional one, seems to be the most obvious. The FRG and the GDR were originally created by two poles, the West and the East, and it is not surprising that they encountered opposition to each other in the implementation of their policies in Africa. Indeed, many of East Germany's

initiatives in African countries were dictated by its ongoing rivalry, primarily ideological, with West Germany. On the one hand, the data on the frequency analysis of visits showed that the fact of rivalry accelerated the deepening of the GDR's foreign policy course; on the other hand, it was East German activity that forced the FRG to seek help from the former metropolises in order to prevent it from expanding its contacts in the region.

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