The concluding section approaches the central problem of this study on the "limits of foreign policy" in three chapters and revisits the major hypotheses of the analysis. The first concluding chapter summarizes the empirical, concrete limits, both internal and external, of East German foreign policy in general to clarify in what ways the GDR had been subject to internal and external limitations in International Relations in general. The second chapter is occupied with the empirical, that is, the concrete limits of East German foreign policy resources and abilities in the particular case of South Yemen. These two concluding chapters serve as the framework to answer whether the major hypothesis of the study can be upheld: Can the case of South Yemen be considered as both an exceptional case and a model suggesting a Weberian ideal-type of East German foreign policy? Finally, the last "Findings" chapter reconsiders the normative limits of East German foreign policy with regard to the autonomy of the host country South Yemen, while reflecting on the ability of societies to change based on the "degree of responsiveness" of collective identities.

CHAPTER 15. On the External and Internal Empirical "Limits" of East German Foreign Policy

1. External Determinants of East German Foreign Policy

The GDR's existence can be considered a by-product of the Cold War. Naturally, the continuation of its existence highly depended on the changes in conflicts, alliances, and dependencies, that is, the changes throughout the period of the Cold War. First of all, this meant a significant impact of the relationship between the USSR and the USA on any party involved in the conflict, especially in places home to competing systems, such as divided Germany. As a consequence, the GDR was highly susceptible to the policies and actions of the Soviet Union and Western Germany, the two major determinants of its international scope of action. It was the bilateral relations to these two actors that determined the GDR's relations to all other state actors and alliances. And while Moscow exerted an active role and has thus to be considered a *directive determinant,* Bonn, on the other hand, remained without direct diplomatic contacts to East Berlin: West Germany, though highly influential on the SED's foreign policy decision-making, upheld its of passive character as a *reactive determinant*. Due to the limiting nature of these two determinants, the GDR regularly has been denied the quality of an autonomous actor in the international realm and thus a self-directed foreign policy by contemporaries and academia alike – especially when consulting sources from the Western hemisphere. This study now claims that East Berlin was able to find alternative ways within this narrow scope of action to promote its interests, which is the major precondition for the emergence of a state's foreign policy.[1] Just like Bonn, East Berlin did not merely move *within* but actively worked *with* the "limits of its foreign policy."

1 | E.g. during the first phase of the CSCE Process in Geneva and Helsinki in the early 1970s, in: Müller, in: DA 4/2010, 610.

Throughout the GDR's history, any other policy goal was subordinated to the overarching interest of securing its existence as a state while upholding the SED's political autocracy. The SED's strategy to achieve this goal was to create a positive image of the anti-imperialist and "democratic" peace-state of the GDR, as opposed to the imperialist West Germany within the Cold War rivalry. This context threatened the existence of the GDR, the necessity of an "alternative Germany" in the sense of the "discourses of danger." As the SED successfully tied the GDR's state survival to its reign, opposition to the SED was equated to opposition to the GDR and treason. Thus, the East German foreign policy actors had internalized loyalty to the regime itself, as a conditio sine qua non for the state's survival and thus their own.

1.1 External Limits I: On the Kremlin's "Short Leash"[2]

Apart from defining East Berlin's boundaries of foreign policy maneuvering room – the concreate "limits of foreign policy" – Moscow also provided the GDR with a promise: To guarantee its existence as a state coupled with the survival of the SED and the continuation of its leadership.

Phase I of East German Foreign Policy: Benefits for East Berlin Despite Full Soviet Control

During Phase I of the GDR's foreign policy, Moscow laid bare that it would not shy away from direct military control to uphold the SED regime with force – directly when it ended the "June Uprising" in 1953 in the GDR, and indirectly when the SED supported Moscow's intervention in the ČSSR to stifle the reform movement of the "Prague Spring" in 1968. This "guarantee of existence" was combined with an extremely high level of economic and political assistance to uphold a persistent level of control over this new "Socialist Germany." Nonetheless, this control changed over time in intensity and form, from high-intensity direct control to low-intensity indirect control. Also, until its international recognition in the early 1970s, the GDR needed the Soviet Union's active support as a *foreign policy proxy* for the GDR, as the East German state, not yet internationally recognized, was not able to act for itself.[3]

While East Berlin's foreign policy in the 1950s and 1960s mostly "copied" Soviet foreign policy,[4] the GDR began to advance as an "active junior partner"[5] of the Soviet Union in the late 1960s. In the developing world, the GDR navigated time and space within the Soviet foreign policy framework, but without doubt pursued a policy quite different from Moscow: Moscow neither had the interest

2 | Malycha/Winters, 2009, 184.

3 | Judt, 2008, 501.

4 | Möller, 2004, 330f.

5 | Wentker, 2007, 537.

nor the capacity to engage with the same intensity everywhere within its own sphere of influence. East Berlin first reacted with a "Fill-in Policy" where the Soviet Union neglected certain policy fields or even states and secondly with a "Policy of Enhancement" where it was initiated or tolerated by Moscow. One concrete example for the latter is East Germany's engagement during the Ethiopian-Somali conflict in 1977, when East Berlin acted on behalf of the Soviet Union to support Addis Abeba. Furthermore, the GDR's engagement in the PDRY as a whole may be grouped under this kind of policy.

Phase II of East German Foreign Policy: From Satellite to Junior Partner?

The state's survival was always the top priority of the GDR's foreign policy. Thus, it remained a means to an end for internal and external consolidation while increasing East Germany's international prestige and influence. Despite the de facto recognition by West Germany and the establishment of diplomatic relations with a majority of influential states in the early 1970s, the GDR's existence still fully depended on the goodwill of Moscow. As a consequence, the SED aimed to emerge as an indispensable ally and maybe even partner for Moscow. In the words of Egon Bahr: "Being just a satellite probably isn't the most pleasurable condition."[6] With the "Prague Spring," the GDR finally was able to prove its loyalty and began to establish itself as Moscow's "junior partner."[7] Also, within less than two decades, the GDR had been able to ascend as the second industrial power after Moscow, and developed a new self-confidence.[8]

> "For sure, in the end [usually] we gave in. Nonetheless one has to say Honecker pushed through the interest of the GDR as early as 1974/75 – even against interventions by Moscow [...]. Sometimes we did not inform Moscow at all – or at least only in rather general terms. Several times [the Soviets] complained. [...]. Sometimes we merely informed them after it was done."[9]

In the mid-1970s the mechanisms of consultations between the SED and CPSU had achieved a sufficient level of routine. After Moscow had replaced its former champion Ulbricht with the more loyal Honecker, the Kremlin appeared to have settled for observation of the GDR's activities and considerate "advice" if necessary rather than active intervention. This attitude however, should not be mistaken for Soviet weakness. Rather, it was in the Kremlin's best interest to "steer" East Germany with the least effort possible.

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6 | Interview with Egon Bahr February 3 2009, in: Müller, 2009.

7 | Gasteyger, 1976, 38.

8 | Scholtyseck, 2003, 23.

9 | Seidel, 1999, 1.

New Ways in the Global South End with the International "Wind of Change"[10]

While the GDR's narrow scope of action within the framework of the Kremlin's foreign policy did not expand considerably, East Berlin's willingness and ability to become active within this framework increased significantly after the mid-1960s. Over time, a congruency of interests of Soviet and East German foreign policy, especially in the Global South, had emerged. Thus, given limits might not have appeared as restrictive for East-Berlin:

> "[Our position] corresponded [with the Kremlin's] in most situations like developmental policies. Not due to the feeling we had to defer Moscow, but due to an identical ideological perspective on the 'Third World' as 'anti-imperialist' allies."[11]

Also, the clear "limits of foreign policy" had a rather beneficial side effect for East Berlin: Their inclusion as an important factor of Soviet foreign and security policy offered East Berlin other options to expand its international position.[12] With the blessing of the Soviet Union,[13] the GDR became considerably active in certain states in the Global South and within the framework of international organizations and conferences, such as the sub-organizations of the United Nations Organization or the CSCE Process, by acting as the "honest broker."

Moscow's comparably modest reaction to the reformist movement in Poland in 1980 signaled the rise of a new international climate. And even though the GDR kept strictly in line with all questions of Soviet security and armament policies during the 1980s, the inflexible regime in East-Berlin was not able to follow the political changes taking place in the Soviet Union at high speed. Instead, the SED leadership obstinately held on to the ideological truths of Marxism-Leninism and the Cold War. The expansion and increased flexibility of East Germany's "limits of foreign policy" staked out by Moscow overexerted not only its foreign policy in the end, but also its sclerotic state and regime.

1.2 External Limits II: Competition is Good for Business or how Bonn justified the Existence of a "Socialist Germany"

Apart from its dependency on Moscow's goodwill, East Germany grew into the role of West Germany's immediate competitor: For political and economic success, international reputation, and especially the German population's support. However, West Germany's economic head start, in combination with better

10 | The Scorpions, Album "Crazy World," Lyrics "Wind of Change" in English and Russian.

11 | Winter Heinz-Dieter, in: DDR-Außenpolitik aus heutiger Sicht, 1994.

12 | Muth, 2001, 24.

13 | Scholtyseck, 2003, 35.

conditions for reparation payments[14] and a more flexible economic system, made certain that the venture to beat the competitor through economic success would fail. In addition to that, Bonn hoped to position West Germany as the "shop window of the West"[15] to draw the GDR's population, especially the young and qualified, across the border and in doing so, destabilize the GDR's political system. After the national uprising on the June 17 1953, the success of this "Magnet-Theory"[16] became more and more a harsh reality for the SED regime. Ulbricht tried to react with his theory of a uniquely socialist way of economic development. The GDR was supposed to follow a supposedly more social, humane and, in the long run, more economically successful path of development. But Ulbricht's famous formula to "outdistance [the FRG] without catching up"[17] of 1958 never became reality.[18] The West's economic growth and liberties coincided with mounting pressure on the political opposition and the urge of the disaffected in the GDR to leave.

However, direct competition did not end with direct comparison of the two systems. While the GDR at first aimed for a unified Socialist Germany, Bonn considered itself the only legitimate German government, offering citizenship to all Germans, East and West. With this, Bonn denied East Berlin the recognition as an equal member of the international community of states. As a consequence, it had been the SED's foremost interest to achieve the international recognition of their state to at least internationally legitimize their claim to power. Accordingly, this was the major goal of the GDR's foreign policy endeavors until the early 1970s. In the international sphere, Bonn's claim to exclusive representation was translated into the so-called "Hallstein Doctrine" of 1955: Bonn threatened to cut diplomatic ties with any state which established relations of this kind with the GDR. For more than 15 years, the "Doctrine" barred regular diplomacy for the GDR.

Establishing Itself as a State in Its Own Right

Even though East Berlin did not have anything at its disposal that could compete with Bonn's financial, economic, or technical resources, the GDR nonetheless was able to emerge as a rising industrial nation in the mid-1960s. Especially in the fields of consulting for the governments of the "partner countries," education, and vocational training, East Germany was able to offer support on a considerably high level. Furthermore, East Berlin successfully marketed their own educational system and created an image of "East German culture."[19] As a consequence, the

14 | Wehler, 2008, 467.

15 | German: Schaufenster des Westens, in: Haftendorn, 2001, 50 and Alisch, in: Timmermann (ed.), 2012, 249.

16 | German: Magnettheorie, West German interpretation in: Abelshauser, 2005, 402; Scholtyseck, 2003, 13; East German interpretation in: Stöver, 2007, 311.

17 | "überholen ohne [sie] einzuholen," in: Schroeder, 2006, 95.

18 | The est. productivity before 1961 was about half of the FRG's, Scholtyseck, 2003, 23.

19 | Das Gupta, in: Wengst/Wentker, 2008, 119.

GDR was ready and able to emerge as a "normal" international player after the "wave of recognition." Thus on the first glace the de facto recognition by Bonn finally had freed the way for East German foreign policy. But recognition also brought new challenges with it. The second phase of the GDR's foreign policy was predominantly characterized by East Berlin's permanent effort to balance its "rapprochement" to Bonn while keeping the necessary distance from "imperialist Germany"[20] so that the GDR's existence as the "better Germany" could still be justified.

Changing Relations, Changing Challenges

Apart from its "de facto recognition" by Bonn, the most important outcome of the "Grundlagenvertrag" for East Berlin had been the installation of the "direct line"[21] between the two Germanys. Until then, any contact between them had been mediated by Moscow and "in accordance with [the Kremlin's own] interests."[22] From then on, the GDR at least tried to realize its own policy without the Soviet's permission for every move. Economic relations with the West in general and the FRG in particular steadily intensified: Between 1970 and 1975, foreign trade with the "capitalist states" doubled and the "West Mark" advanced as the second if not the most important currency.[23] Not surprisingly, this special treatment of East Germany significantly affected relations with Moscow and the Eastern Bloc.

In this early days of political exchange between the two Germanys, the GDR's dilemma had become obvious: At first international détente, and thus Moscow, had demanded rapprochement with the unloved sibling state; later on it was the SED's economic need that demanded it. Regardless, any relaxation of relations between the blocs, and thus between the GDR and FRG, somewhat questioned the GDR's justification for its existence.

State without People?

> "What kind of state is this which has a territory, people living in it, which has borders but not a state population of its own? "[24]
>
> (Siegfried Bock, former chief-diplomat of the GDR)

When it had become clear that the GDR wouldn't be able to realize its goal of a unified socialist Germany, East Berlin changed its approach to the German nation and began to propagate the "socialist nation" of the GDR. Two important parts of this policy of "establishment of two German nations" were the abolishment of the "unified German citizenship" advocated by Bonn and the recognition of GDR

20 | Scholtyseck, 2003, 33.

21 | Wentker, 2007, 371ff and 413ff.

22 | Bahr, in: Die zweite gesamtdeutsche Demokratie, 2001, 192.

23 | Haftendorn, 2001, 162.

24 | Interview with Siegfried Bock Sep 18 2008, in: Müller, 2010.

citizenship. But citizenship was not the only nor the most acute issue questioning facing the GDR's national sovereignty: To finally claim full sovereignty over its territory, East Germany needed to include West Berlin, the West German enclave surrounded by the German Democratic Republic. Securing its existence and liberty on the outside, that is, external sovereignty, remained the major priorities of the GDR's foreign policy. The de facto recognition by the Federal Republic of Germany did not do much to change this: The GDR never had been able to fully acquire all three fundamental prerequisites of a sovereign state introduced by Jellinek.[25]

Even though the SED had erected and secured an undisputable *Staatsmacht*, its *Staatsvolk* remained undefined as GDR citizenship was contested by Bonn and its *Staatsgebiet* appeared to be fragmented with the island of West Berlin in the middle. Thus, while the SED regime was able to establish and uphold state power, it constantly was being questioned – by the government in Bonn, but also by dissidents and opposition from within the GDR. Even though disagreement on power distribution exists in any state of the world, the SED considered it necessary to eliminate any dissident voices and install one of the most intensive systems of state control in Western history over its citizens. One may interpret this policy as the attempt to compensate for the imperfection of the other two characteristics of Jellinek's definition of the state: A state's territory and a state's people.

2. Internal Limits of Foreign Policy: Between Economic Exhaustion, "Double Standards" and Political Friction

Compared to Western democracies, the internal structures of the GDR did not only form a very different background for foreign policy activities, but also played quite a different role for foreign policy generation itself.

2.1 Economic Exhaustion beyond Marxist-Leninist Principles: The "Double Standard" of East German Foreign Policy

> "Considering its limited resources, the GDR had to distribute its support for the developing countries very wisely."[26]
>
> (Hans Bauer, MfS resident in Aden in the early 1980s)

Economic welfare in the GDR rather was a secondary foreign policy goal rather than a foreign policy priority: Both the internal economy and foreign trade were policy fields subordinate to the major goal of the SED's internal and external

25 | The three prerequisites are territory, power, and citizens, in: Jellinek, 1900, 393 and 426.
26 | Interview with Hans Bauer June 20 2011.

policies: Securing the state's existence and thus the SED's survival. The 1970s had witnessed an economic but illusory boom and major mistakes in economic policies produced an economic crisis in the early 1980s.[27] Without doubt, the economic bottlenecks had a significant impact on East Germany's foreign policy, especially in the "developing countries." First, aid and technical assistance from the GDR turned out to be less and less reliable due to supply shortages and a simple lack of money. Thus, East Berlin oftentimes was not able to keep its foreign policy promises and technical projects in particular suffered from parts shortages in the GDR.[28] As a result, East Germany was not able to compete with other economic actors regardless of its political standing and prestige.

Second, economic need led to the open dismissal of ideological ideals. The need for foreign currency and oil became highly pressing during the 1980s and created a detectable "double standard" in East German international behavior. While the GDR's foreign policy officially was based on ideological principles, pragmatic reasoning regularly overruled Marxist-Leninist ideals if it was considered beneficial for the GDR: The SED opted for "Realpolitik" whenever it was deemed suitable. The KoKo and its dummy companies acquired the foreign currency desperately needed to keep the GDR and its economy afloat and alive. One of the most striking examples of this "double standard" was the arms trade with both sides of the Iraq-Iran War in the 1980s. According to East German Vice-Minister of Foreign Policy, Heinz-Dieter Winter:

> "[The arms deliveries to Iraq and Iran] fully contradicted our neutrality and our advocacy for the termination of the war. Nonetheless, I was informed that these deliveries existed."[29]

But as opposed to other contemporary commentators' versions of events, this was not a singular case. A similar decision was made with regard to the two Yemens in the late 1980s, as was shown in the respective analytical chapter. Furthermore, the "peace state" GDR delivered arms and weapons to terrorist groups like the "Abu-Nidal Group", well aware of who they sold their products to.[30] This "double standard" was an inherent part of East German foreign policy. Economic need dictated foreign policy action to secure the SED's survival as the leading vanguard of a one-party system. This undeniably demystifies the prevailing notions of East Germany as an advocator for the "small nations," a "peace state," its solidarity with the oppressed, and thus its foreign policy strategy of the "honest broker."

27 | Schroeder, 1999, 199.

28 | See e.g.: Scharfenberg, 2012, 45; Interview with Wolfgang Bator May 27 2011.

29 | Interview with Heinz-Dieter Winter July 3 2012; On the GDR's arms deals with Iraq and Iran also see: Deutscher Bundestag (ed.), 1994, 191ff.

30 | Deutscher Bundestag (ed.), 1994, 206f.

In the end, and mostly due to economic reasons, the SED regime had to open the GDR to the world – and with it, to ideas of social alternatives and hopes for political change. To assure the survival of an SED-led GDR, the party reacted with increased internal control to curb oppositional forces. Whether the SED leadership had been informed of the looming danger by the MfS but did not have the time to act,[31] or in reality did not believe in the "inherent dynamics" of the CSCE process[32] and "rapprochement" with West Germany is of not much importance here. The crucial point is that the SED regime was neither able to shield its society from these influences, nor to react in a flexible way by integrating them. The regime was not able to adjust to political change, not even to prevent its own downfall.

2.2 Assessment of Friction Losses between Foreign Policy, Ideology, and the Political System

To be able to reach a final conclusion with regard to East German foreign policy making, the actors of the field have to be taken into consideration. The division of competencies in the field of foreign policy between party and state, and also between political reality and the foreign policy ideals of Marxism-Leninism, caused considerable friction. Muth locates the process of the establishment and consolidation of the GDR's foreign policy apparatus, the evolution and settling down of the system, as well as the recruitment and education strategy for its personnel, in the period from 1949 to about 1972[33] - a time period that coincides with the two phases of foreign policy of the GDR due to the internal and external consolidation of the GDR. The division of responsibilities in the field of foreign policy changed considerably over time due to two factors: First, the development of the efficiency of the complex relation between party and state and second, the personality and power network of foreign policy functionaries. Based on these two factors, three phases of responsibilities in foreign policy making can be identified: The first "Phase of Collective Improvisation," from the founding of the GDR to 1961, the second "Phase of Consolidation and Professionalization," until international recognition in 1971-72, and the third and last "Phase of Establishment Administration," until 1989, when the state, its political system, and the ruling elite were able to act from an established position.

31 | Hanisch, 2012, 20.

32 | Müller, 2010, 612.

33 | Muth, 2001, 11.

From State to Party, from Bottom to Top: Centralization of Responsibilities and the "Second Version" of Foreign Policy

Over time, and just as in other fields, responsibilities in the field of foreign policy were either withdrawn from constitutional state organs or had not been left with them in the first place. The centralization process of responsibilities and authorities in the field of foreign policy did not stop at the party level, however, but expanded into the party apparatus itself. Over time, the Central Committee of the SED lost authority to the smaller, more elitist circle of the Politbüro. While some individuals were able to overcome the centralized structures of foreign policy making, the reasons for this can be found in a combination of personalities and connections to the "inner circle," and sometimes also within the responsibilities of the organ or institution itself. As a popular means of assuring the functioning of "democratic centralism," this often led people holding similar posts in both the party's CC and the government. Also, the superiority of the party toward the specialized ministries and its technocrats and experts led to the most absurd friction losses of expertise: "The political leadership [of the SED] evaluated the credibility of [foreign policy] analysis less based on their content, but rather on ideological criteria."[34] In the MfAA, this regularly led to the production of the "second version" of reports and analyses for the SED leadership that was apparently ignorant of political realities.

When Honecker replaced Ulbricht, he furthered this centralization process from state to party, from bottom to top, and actively drew foreign policy authority toward himself. Storckmann even goes so far to consider all party organs irrelevant during Honecker's reign.[35] However, Honecker was still part of and thus dependent on the party apparatus and the logic of "democratic centralism." Despite his undeniable plentitude of power, one has to recognize the existing limits of human capacity, as he could not be everywhere at the same time, and also had to balance the inherent competition between the various organs included in the process of foreign policy making. In addition, after Honecker had taken power and his confident Fischer was installed at the top of the MfAA, the distribution of responsibilities remained quite stable. Apart from minor changes, the power constellations within the foreign policy apparatus remained surprisingly constant over the years. This continuity in personnel and thus in policy style not only in the field of foreign policy but almost all other fields significantly added to the almost proverbial image of the SED leadership in the late 1980s as "overaged and overcome." To carve out the more complex layers of foreign policy making below the centralized "primacy of the party" and Honecker's "rule of the Sun King," further research on these structures is needed. For now, one may settle for the image of "party meritrocrats" who, under their "maestro" Honecker, divided the responsibilities for foreign policy making among their small and powerful circle.

34 | Muth, 2001, 22. Muth refers to several diplomats and foreign policy personnel of the GDR.

35 | Storckmann, 2012, 80.

The Fragmentation of East German Foreign Policy Making

Clearly, the intertwined foreign policy responsibilities did cause a certain fragmentation of the GDR's foreign policy making.[36] Even though decision-making itself can be considered quite efficient, as it did not include a democratic process, the ruling party still had to rely on the state apparatus and its functionaries to further elaborate the party's directives and execute them while still constantly demanding full control of the process. In addition to that, the field of foreign policy within the state was not an exclusive matter for the MfAA, so that competition and miscommunication lead to additional friction losses. This setup led to an extremely slow and long-winded process of policy-making. Based on his analysis, Möller concludes that in the field of foreign policy and international relations in particular, the SED's claim to absolute power could not be upheld due to actors' and institutions' self-interests on the one hand, and the incalculable impact of the international environment and its actors on the other.[37] Without doubt, these two dynamics had a volatile effect on East German policy-making that more often than not opened additional room for maneuver for certain foreign policy actors.

36 | Wippel, 1996, 16.

37 | Möller, 2004, 327.