

**T.C**

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**POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL  
SECURITY: COMPARISON OF WEST AND EAST GERMANY DURING THE  
COLD WAR**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved mother and brother, who passed away during my graduate education. They were so happy and encouraging about my decisiveness in starting this journey.

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## ABSTRACT

In this master's thesis, political communication strategies employed in West Germany and East Germany, particularly in the context of national security, are compared. The motives that created the concept of the Cold War and the role of political communication in the victory of the capitalistic world are questioned. This study claims that the more a sign received by the receiver as an intention to be accepted, the more it requires synchronisation with the effectuality in the receiver's perceived reality. Thus, a message's persuasive ability is based on its perceived reality. This claim has been supported by the visual exemplifications of West German and East German, parallel to the ongoing events of their publishing periods.

In the light of arguments about a new upcoming cold war today, this study also claims that the success of the Cold War by the Western countries against the Soviet Union is not a replicant of today's conditions when it comes to creating a common enemy, this time for Russia and/or China.

*Keywords:* national security, propaganda, political communication, cold war, visual communication, West Germany, East Germany, strategic culture

## I. INTRODUCTION

*Omnia Mutantur, Nihil Interit (Everything Changes, Nothing Perishes)*

—Ovidius —Metamorphoses

The Cold War is an essential and worthy historical period of the twentieth century. It is assumed to have been formed within the framework of the changing world balance of power after World War II and is accepted to cover the period between 1947 and 1989. However, the beginning and end dates are ambiguous. For the Soviet Union, it is assumed that it ended in 1991 with its dissolution, but for Germany, it ended with the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. In this master's thesis, the Cold War period for Germany has been the primary research period.

The thesis plan is as follows: First, there will be a brief overview of the definition of the Cold War, its actors and how the process progressed. This section will also explain milestones and their implications such as the Berlin Blockade, the Bay of Pigs Crisis, the



building and the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the Vietnam War, and the proxy wars aftermath.

Although the Cold War is a multidimensional topic, the context for this master thesis will be the interaction between national security and political communication. A compilation of different views will be presented on how the definition of national interest evolved into national security after World War II and which variables and defence reflexes increased bipolarly worldwide during this evolution process. The role of political communication in spreading the concept of national security to the grassroots and examples of how nations try to create an impact on their people through propaganda tools will be presented.

Two examples, one from the capitalist world and the other from the communist world, represent two central poles of the period. They were selected as the playgrounds of the two most significant actors of the Cold War, the USA, and the Soviet Union. These two countries were closest to each other and the biggest victims of the Cold War as a divided state, West Germany, and East Germany.

The devastation caused by World War II, the different prices paid by both countries and how their governments presented the concepts of "us" and "the other" to their people and the outside world in the two different worlds they were thrown into will be shown through visual documents such as posters, brochures, etc. and videos they have published.

These documents will be systematically analysed in the context of the most influential leaders' periods on both sides. Further, the effects of important international events that occurred during these periods will also be assessed. The selected documents

will be analysed through a visual method, drawing on a semiological approach in communication theory, as well as by comparison between West and East Germany.

The thesis will be based on realist theory as the determining theory of the period of great power rivalry during the Cold War and constructivist theory as the primary approach to political communication. In this context, by associating the concept of national security with the idea of strategic culture, it will analyse how West Germany sees East Germany as a communist threat, and vice versa, how East Germany sees West Germany as a fascist threat, shaping each other's strategic cultures based on insecurity and mistrust to each other using propaganda devices.

The thesis will also aim to understand the reasons underlying Europe's postwar condition and why Russia (then the Soviet Union) and its ideology and allies have become enemies of the continent so rapidly in the context of political communication.

## **2.THE ROOT CAUSES AND DETERMINANTS OF THE COLD WAR**

### **2.1.Power Distribution Before The Cold War**

The Cold War refers to an essential historical period of the twentieth century. It is assumed to have been formed within the framework of the changing global balance of power after World War II and is accepted to cover the period between 1947 and 1989. However, the beginning and end dates are ambiguous. The two world wars, 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, dramatically changed the world's balance of power. Before 1914, there used to be a hegemony of British and French colonial imperialism on one side, and on the other hand, the emerging power of Germany, decreasing powers of Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese colonialism, and finally, the collapsed Russian and Ottoman Empires.

As a result of the disappointment and humiliation of being one of the major losers of the First World War, in addition to the economic and political crises aftermath, Germany has come back to the expansionist and aggressive policies within the leadership of the Nazi regime, which results to an incomparable catastrophe for both Germany and its allies and the rest of the world with the consequences of the Second World War. Although Britain and France were victorious in both wars, they have also been the decreasing powers of the new era. As the power vacuum theory suggests, a new power should fill every energy void, as it did for the USA and the Soviet Union after the Second World War.

### **2.2.Summary Of Events Preceding The Cold War**

The first rhetorical manifestation of the polarisation that fuelled the beginning of the Cold War was the Truman Doctrine. Harry S. Truman announced his doctrine to Congress on March 12, 1947, and detailed it on July 4, 1948. Briefly, he has shaped the official US policy based on supporting free peoples worldwide through financial and economic aid and guaranteeing political stability for the potential threats imposed on these free people. Even though it was not explicitly stated, the Truman Doctrine aimed to create a Western block to counter the emerging communist threat.

It was not a coincidence that in the meantime, Stalin, who was leading the Soviet Union, used political and economic aid, supporting the socialist and communist parties of multiple European countries. Besides, Stalin was doubtful of the empowerment of Germany and the possibility of power usage against them. This forced him to start blocking railways, canals, and highways of all Berlin sectors under Western control; the period known as the Berlin Blockade lasted for 323 days and ended on May 12, 1949. The USA managed to break the blockade by air supplies, the Western countries applied an embargo to the Eastern bloc, and tension rose at times, causing seventeen aircraft to be destroyed during the supply operations.

Still, on the other hand, the Soviet Union also had demands and impacts on Greece and Turkey, which caused discomfort and tension in the safety of these countries. Thus, as a natural result of this series of events, the USA and 11 European countries formed NATO in 1949.

After the Second World War, as a defeated country with a traumatic Nazi regime past, Germany experienced a sharp drift in two different directions by the end of 1949, which resulted in a political division. One of them was that of the USA dominated West

Germany under Konrad Adenauer's governorship with liberal economic policies, and this resulted in an economic boom, a phenomenon known as *Wirtschaftswunder* (Economic Wonder). Political choices, financial aid, and programs targeted to reconstruct Europe by the USA contributed to this “miraculous” development. Meanwhile, East Germany, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), became politically associated with the Soviet Union and ruled by the Sozialistische Einheitspartei (SED-Socialist Unity Party) as its main political power. East Germany did not rebuild and develop as fast as West Germany but mainly concentrated on collectivism and equal opportunity as its political and economic philosophy. While West Germany was an anti-Nazi yet capitalist state, East Germany has positioned itself both as an anti-Nazi *and* anti-capitalist state.

On the other hand, while the most definitive phenomenon that brought the Second World War to an end was the surrender of Germany, the ultimate event equally important was the atomic bombs dropped by the USA on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. While it has resulted in the end of an ongoing war, it has also caused the start of the Cold War. Immediately after the Potsdam Conference in 1945, Stalin ordered his high officials to work on atomic bomb projects. Stalin saw the consequences of acquiring and -when needed- using nuclear bombs, and his decision started the chain of mistrust revolving around militarisation and atomic power acquisition between the USA and the Soviet Union. The “bomb,” particularly an atomic nuclear bomb, is a tricky instrument to mention. It is what Baudrillard discusses in *Fatal Strategies* (1990): ‘*Anything that was once constituted as an object by a subject*’, he writes, ‘*represents for the latter a virtual death threat*’ (1990: 95).

Churchill had foreseen and warned his U.S. counterparts of the Soviet Union's expansionist and hostile policy via nuclear bomb production even in 1946 and emphasised it with the "iron curtain" metaphor in his famous speech "Sinews of Peace." This expression refers to an area of influence separating two rival parts of Europe. It has been commonly used as one of the defining elements of the Cold War, thus naming the Warsaw Pact member countries as "Iron Curtain countries." Though it signifies an area of economic and political rivalry, this Iron Curtain signification also gained a physical meaning with the building of the Berlin Wall.

Iron signifies strength, grit, and stubbornness, while curtain signifies secrecy, hiddenness, and uncertainty. The combination of both words, which indicates something hidden, secret, unknown, and powerful, is intended to connote a potential threat. Therefore, the Iron Curtain has been the most successful propagative definition for communist bloc countries during the Cold War.

David Holloway (1981) claims that the Soviet decision to build the atomic bomb was one of the most important weapons decisions of this century, leading ultimately to the formation of Soviet strategic forces, which are such a major factor in international policies today. Besides, even though the Soviet Union had its foundations on communism and ideology in its narrative, it deliberately chose its policy as patriotic during the Second World War. Stalin even declared a 'patriotic war' against the invader Nazi regime in his speech in 1941, implying Russia's previous 'patriotic war' against Napoleon in 1812.<sup>1</sup>

Postwar status of the state as patriotism has firstly been replaced by loyalty to the state and its institutions on the Soviet side, but in time, connected to only one-person

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<sup>1</sup> Anon, (n.d.). Available at: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1941/11/07.htm>.

decision without control and predictability, in this case, by Stalin himself, until he died in 1953. Over time, the one-person control policy has evolved into a party-control policy in the Eastern Bloc. However, this did not change the totalitarian nature of the governance; it only changed from a more patriotic approach to a more ideological and internationalist one, particularly after the death of Stalin. This narrative change can be seen in Khrushchev's speech in 1961 as :<sup>2</sup>

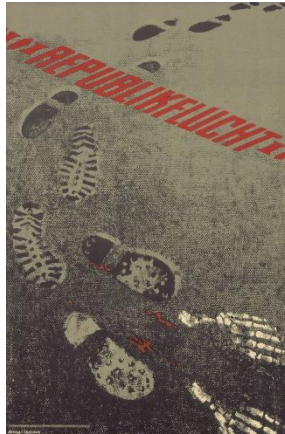
*“...We will support the objective process of increasingly closer rapprochement of nations and nationalities proceeding under the conditions of Communist construction on a voluntary and democratic basis” and “It is essential that we stress the education of masses in the spirit of proletarian internationalism and Soviet patriotism. Even the slightest vestiges of nationalism should be eradicated with uncompromising Bolshevik determination.”*

Germany has always been a unique case in terms of communist-capitalist conflict. It is hard to compare with the experiences of a local Soviet or a Soviet-neighbouring country inhabitant. East Germans have a shared past and unity of identity with their Western counterparts and are only divided by colliding ideologies. Thus, persuading the acceptance of such a division has been much more problematic. As a result, there was mass emigration from East Germany to West Germany from 1949 until 1961, when the Berlin Wall was built, and the borders were closed. This flow is known as Republikflucht

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<sup>2</sup> N. S. Khrushchev, Report on the Program of the C.P.S.U., October 17, 1961, Pravda, October 19, 1961 (pp. 1-10), p. 1; for the English version, see Current Digest of the Soviet Press (quoted in the following as CDSP), December, 1961.

(Desertion from the Republic), which was legal between these two dates and continued illegally from 1961 until 1989, reaching at least four million emigrants.<sup>3</sup>



*Figure 1*

These emigrations and escapes have also transformed both sides' internal and external policies as a bargaining power, security concern, and political communication instrument. They have mainly been demonstrated as the survivors of the Red Scare and freed from an oppressive regime to the (western) liberal, democratic part of the world. On the other hand, East Germany stigmatised these legal or undocumented immigrants as traitors to the country. It attempted to diminish them through military force and propaganda devices by SED, as shown in Figure 1, claiming it was a threat to the unity of the regime.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.stiftung-berliner-mauer.de/en/topics/flight-division#:~:text=In%20the%20decades%20of%20Germany's,risk%20and%20under%20enormous%20pressure.>



### **3.CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1. From National Interest To National Security: Evolution Of Safety, Security, And Insecurity**

“National Security” is a relatively new term that emerged to define the political conditions of the states, beginning from the Second World War. The perspective of this term is realism in the context of the international relations theoretical framework because it analytically puts the state at the centre and chooses the main topic of interest as the state's survival. However, national security has evolved from other preceding terms, such as national interest, social security, and collective security. Besides, the national security definition has also been in progress of interaction with other theoretical approaches for a better understanding, like in this study to be evaluated in the form of realist constructivism.

Each of these mentioned terms has common and distinct parts within national security. Nevertheless, none succeeded in being a centrepiece of foreign policy discussions like national security did after the Second World War, particularly during the Cold War era. Therefore, it will be beneficial to discuss them to understand the evolution of the contemporary concept of national security. As Rosenberg comments, (1993) while national interest and collective security terms disappeared from public speeches, national

security became the mainstream term to replace them, due to their lack of explanation capacities and negative connotations.

The most general term was “national interest” to explain the international relations between the French Revolution and the Second World War. However, this term has had a negative sense as a power-oriented, struggle and challenge-reminding sense, which was incompatible with the mood in a postwar world trying to create a supranational and institutional collaborative environment. Hans Morgenthau (1951) argued that the concept of national interest was the most appropriate framework for the Cold War, as he had already advocated for the realist policies of the era. Still, advocates of realist policy successors have made it possible to change the discourse from national interest to national security.

Security and safety are primarily confused and misinterpreted when used for political arguments. It can be clarified as security, which is the feeling of having nothing to fear, and safety, which is the state of having nothing to fear.

*“... by saying “security,” a state representative declares an emergency condition, thus claiming a right to use whatever means are necessary to block a threatening development”* (Buzan et al, 1998:21-23).

Besides scholars analyse security and safety differentiation under the same safety roof, like Hedley Bull, (1995) claiming that security in international politics means safety. This might be objective safety, which exists, or subjective safety, which is felt or experienced.

Thus, when the term national security is used, it implies the national preparedness of a nation-state against all potential threats. In conclusion, security is a matter that

requires power and wealth, and the possession of power and wealth are essential gains that ensure the security of nations. Ironically, national security has become the biggest impediment to the safety of nation-states, as it will be discussed later.

From the term's historical development, one can conclude that national security is a constructed concept. Thus, it is first necessary to understand what the concept of security means in international relations. Walter Lippmann (1943) defined a nation's security in terms of values. According to him, a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values if it wishes to avoid war and is able if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war.

As can be seen from the implications of Lippmann's definition, security is a situation that increases or decreases according to a nation's ability to prevent or defeat an attack. This reflects the nature of both realism as the security of the state as the focus point and constructivism as the perceived relativity of security as a matter of degree.

The discursive importance of the idea of national security comes from its antonym: national insecurity. Insecurity has been regarded as a weakness, and this state of weakness could not have been sustainable because there was an ongoing balance of power situation during the Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union. This situation should be considered not only in terms of the strength of one part but also the weakness of the counterpart. The strength of the nation-state is the defence part of the matter while taking advantage of the counterpart's weakness is the offence part.

As mentioned above, in the context of constructivism, "The West" has identified itself as the good, prosperous, free part of the world with its allies. As might be expected, there is also an evil part of the world, the Soviet Union, and its labelled governing

ideology of communism. This creates a dualism of demonisation: Every hero needs a demon; if there is not, it should be created.

In this context, an important concept within the realist school of international relations, the so-called “security dilemma” should be introduced. In political science, a security dilemma is a situation in which actions a state takes to increase its security cause reactions from other states, leading to a decrease rather than an increase in the original state’s security. The terms used by realist approaches to characterise states as “aggressive,” “expansionistic,” “opportunity-driven,” or “risk-acceptant” assume that states seek a secure status quo, whether through aggression or acceptance of the current situation. It can be acceptable up to a point, but it is also arguable to label states' policies as imperialistic or expansionist in various cases. In that sense, there is not a security concern but an intentional escalation of tension to discuss. Another major term in policymaking during the Cold War period is “brinkmanship,” which both sides have occasionally used for assorted reasons. The consequences of brinkmanship policy have been the arms race, space race, nuke-speak and finally, proxy wars in different regions of the world. (Dobson, 2010)

The climax of security concerns during the Cold War has been the Bay of Pigs crisis, which is also a good example of brinkmanship. However, as Thomas C. Schelling explains the term brinkmanship “*One does not, in brinkmanship, frighten the adversary who is roped to him by getting so close to the edge that if one decides to jump one can do so before anyone can stop him.*” (2005,p.199)

Until then, both parts have been precautionary and tended to be defensive. The formation of NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and other auxiliary organisations and alliances

have consolidated the mutual opposition of the two blocs. Even the building of the Berlin Wall has functioned to prevent emigration and escapes from one side to the other and has been regarded as a defensive action. But in 1962, the Soviet Union began to install missiles in Cuba, which is only ninety-nine miles away from the USA mainland. This provocative action has forced the USA to decide to retaliate by planting missiles at Türkiye eventually. Thus, “deterrence” is another keyword that describes the nature of the Cold War in terms of each party’s security concerns. While mentioning the term, there are nuances between “general deterrence” and “immediate deterrence.” General deterrence is the available preparedness of power against a threat in the long term. In contrast, immediate deterrence is the rapid reaction capability for the same threat in the short term. It can be concluded that general deterrence is one of the components that created the environment of the Cold War. Consequently, immediate deterrence keeps the triggered environment solid during the whole period. Both parties have come to the edge of nuclear war (1961 Cuban Missile Crisis), made Germany, especially Berlin, a battlefield of espionage, and both have even made war by proxy in Vietnam for 20 years. Actions taken by both sides did not result in a war yet forced the counterpart to take another defensive or offensive action as a reply can be regarded as deterrent actions during the Cold War.

Another popular Cold War term for the security dilemma is Mutual Assured Destruction, aka MAD. Inspired by the famous physicist, Hugh Everett’s interpretation of quantum mechanics, this doctrine is based on the deterrence policies of military powers in the nuclear proliferation period of the Cold War. Peter Bryne (2010), explains “*Assured destruction was Prisoner’s Dilemma played with a nuclear button that, if*

*pushed by one player, was tantamount to the commission of national suicide—if the other player's retaliation option worked.*” On the other hand, he also adds that fear of the second strike might cause a refrain from pushing the first strike button, creating a cycle that both sides refrain from doing the destructive action, which causes mutuality to add to the description. However, its roots go back to the pre-nuclear area, and the Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombings of the USA have been a good example to explain the doctrine. It states that an attacker should be prepared for retaliation by the defender after the attack. Thus, the second attack of the defender results in the destruction of both the attacker and the defender. Japan had been so unprepared and weak for a retaliation to the ultimate and powerful attack in Hiroshima and Nagasaki that it had to surrender immediately. On the other hand, the Soviet Union began to act in order not to face such a consequence as Japan had experienced and produced its first nuclear bombs. This manoeuvre has resulted in an increase in the production of nuclear bombs in the USA part, too. So, this has concluded in a nuclear peace status-quo, a peace without security, and a status-quo without war.

It is possible to state that the Cold War was a spiral of insecurity. The Soviet Union's ideologically and politically expansionist attitude and its increasing military destructive power in parallel with the USA created an organisational process that started with the establishment of NATO by the USA and the European Coal and Steel Union and evolved into the European Community for the capitalist European countries to act together. In the face of these steps, the Soviet Union and the neighbouring countries under its leadership established COMECON and the Warsaw Pact in parallel with these institutions and organisations.

Between 1945 and 1961, in addition to the exponentially rising tension between the two sides, East Germany lost almost one-sixth of its population due to migrations and escapes for the reasons mentioned above and because of the economic and political damage this situation caused to the regime's power and reputation; East Germany started the construction of the Berlin Wall on 13.08.1961. From today's perspective, it is easier to conclude that Germany, particularly a sector-divided Berlin, has been chosen as a playground for NATO and Europe, not only to restrict the expansionist Soviet Union but also to control Germany itself. As Westad emphasizes (2019), Germany was still a subject of mistrust among the other European countries and stemming from the roots of a divided Germany, Eastern Europe was recreated by communism and Western Europe was recreated by capitalism.

What happened during the Cold War in Germany is not the only case to discuss for this period. The Cold War period has had multiple milestones, each of which has been worth a significant source of arguments, events such as the nuclear tests of the Soviet Union, hydrogen bomb tests of the USA, the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam War, or as a phenomenon such as space race. However, the division of Germany and the subsequent division of Berlin has been of unique and symbolic importance to understanding the Cold War's fundamental nature, therefore being this thesis's primary topic.

The Cold War confrontations match with the realist constructivism school because it was a period in which power struggle, rivalry, national interest, and national security issues brought by the realist theory and “We” vs “the other” construction of the elements by the constructivist theory are intertwined.

### 3.2. Semiology And Semiotics: Myths And Mythical Speech

Explaining the nuances between semiology and semiotics will be beneficial before outlining and consolidating the study's theoretical approach. Semiotics, initially used by Charles Sanders Peirce is more inclusive than the sémiologie of Ferdinand de Saussure. While semiotics contains all sensory stimulations in nature that could create an idea in the receiver's mind, semiology is only interested in intentional communication interactions between human beings in interpretable or decodable forms of communication. This brings us to the conclusion that semiology is about how the mind interprets the signs inside, yet semiotics is about how logic analyses the external signs. This means semiotics is more coercive and suggestive of the right-thinking mindset rather than just a due diligence process. As contradictory as it sounds, semiology includes a broader range of sensibilities with a narrower point of view and area of usage than semiotics. Barthes (1972), a leading theorist of semiotics, even claims that nothing is insignificant when it comes to a literary text because whatever tiny bit of any text is a sign that composes the global meaning of that text.

Apart from these subtle yet essential differentiations, both approaches adopt the same framework based on three pillars: the signifier, the signified, and the sign. However, this structure must be revised to address the myths. Myth is an anonymous and traditional symbolic narrative, related to actual events, and usually connected to religious beliefs. As Barthes states (1972), myth is a second-order semiological system that derives from another semiological system, which myth uses to replicate and evolve into a new type of speech. In this regard, Laclau also differentiates myth from utopia. Laclau states (1996,p.91) "*While a utopia is an intellectual construction, the blueprint of a fully*



*achieved (and in principle achievable) society, myth is an ensemble of the equivalential images capable of galvanising the imaginary of the masses, thus launching them into collective action.* Therefore, utopia requires a priori acceptance of an organised system created before, while myth is intended to create or recreate an action without needing it.

Mythical speech materials such as language, photography, painting, posters, rituals, and objects, are not what they were initially. They were once a sign once created; However, their creation aims to make their existence a new signifier, this time aiming to create a myth with the help of a new signified and a new sign. Maasik and Solomon (2012) state that “from a semiotic perspective, everything in everyday life is potentially meaningful, a sign to be decoded, and the fact that something is entertaining is only the beginning of the matter.” Besides, our values, too, belong to systems from which they take their meaning. Semioticians call these systems of belief cultural mythologies.

1-The meaning of a sign can be found not in itself but in its relationships (both differences and associations) with other signs within a system. To interpret an individual sign, you must determine the general system to which it belongs.

2- Things have both denotative meanings (what they are as things) and connotative meanings (what they suggest as signs); semiotics seek to go beyond the denotative surface to the connotative significance. While two fingers making a “V” is nothing but a letter and the action of two fingers is denotative, its suggestion as a victory in many cultures is connotative.

3- Arriving at the connotative significance of a sign involves both abduction (a search for the most likely explanation or interpretation) and overdetermination (the multiple causes behind a cultural phenomenon). While a swastika used to be a symbol of

good luck with the combination of four L's, this would be the original interpretation of the symbol itself. On the other hand, its explanation turned out to be the symbol of Nazism as a cultural phenomenon and its overdetermination makes the symbol to be a taboo sign as a far-right ideology indicator today.

4-What we call social "reality" is a human construct, the product of cultural mythologies or value systems that intervene between our minds and the world we experience. Such cultural myths reflect their builders' values and ideological interests, not the laws of nature or logic. These human-constructed realities can change with the deconstruction of values and ideological interests and may be produced as a completely new form of reality. For instance, fez used to be presented as a modernised way of dressing in the first years of its usage in the Ottoman Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century. Not after a long time, it was abolished in the first years of the Republic of Turkey as a symbol of obsolete past values. Considering that there is less than a century between these two dates of the same symbol's presentation and abolishment, observing the radical change of perception is meaningful.

Ideologies inherently coexist with semiotics. Because ideologies contain sign systems, these can only be interpreted through semiotics. The ideology creation process depends on both the sender's knowledge and the cultural universe of the receiver. Regardless of their definitions as cold or hot (even hot and cold definitions of war have semiotic value), war is an essential instrument for legitimising ideologies. War directs the audience's attention (receivers) to emphasise the importance of the ideology and creates the expectation of being worthy of the possible gains because the risk potential of the loss

is incomparably high. War is the ultimate polarisation of the ideology, a gamble played on people's lives.

The Cold War has been a period to consider as the clash of ideologies without an actual war, but always to be prepared for a potential war. Both parts have come to the edge of destruction, like in the Bay of Pigs crisis, have used Berlin as a capital city of espionage, and even have made proxy wars in Vietnam and Korea; however, they have never come to the ultimate result of a global war. Nevertheless, the preparedness for a war with an elevated level of circumspection has existed.

The balance of power after World War II allowed the new superpowers to use previously unused military, operational, and political instruments. It is possible to count containment, deterrence, détente, and military force management as the basic policies implemented during the Cold War period. These policies have had goals to provide legitimacy to the society in which they were created, to gain support from the public they opposed, to demoralise various groups designated as enemies, to question their confidence in their ideology, to confirm their power, and to weaken the opposing side. One can observe that the ground for conflict was mainly at the ideological level in the 1950s. The formation phase of the polarisation process of the Cold War period was primarily based on public acceptance of the potential danger of a power considered to be equivalent and the power gained from this public opinion to provide support for armament, espionage, and, in some cases, the use of force in regions beyond the border.

While it is difficult to talk about the existence of a communist threat within the borders of the USA when we consider objective realities, with the intensity of the

propaganda work carried out in this process, even discussing definitions such as communism, socialism, social state, and workers' rights had become taboos.

### [How to Spot a Communist](#)



The above-linked short film<sup>4</sup>, published by Armed Forces Information Film, provides military-level information on how to identify a communist. Accordingly, the following are listed as possibilities for a person to be a communist: openly declaring that they are a communist, following or endorsing the views presented in publications identified as communist, being a member of or supporting associations and organisations identified as communist, and finally supporting the actions and policies of communist countries but criticising the foreign policy and actions of the United States. In addition, the scale of the fear has been emphasised by reminding that some communists may not be so clearly identifiable and that they may operate quietly but deeply.

During the Cold War, an ideological interaction can be seen most clearly, especially in the divided Germany. It is possible to observe this interaction in the first years of the Cold War as an effort by capitalism. Therefore, the Western world would transform itself to prevent the Red Scare from expanding and increasing its influence. While the West strengthened the image of a prosperous, developed, liveable world, it was also inspired by the employee rights and egalitarian, anti-discrimination practices that the

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<sup>4</sup> CONELRAD6401240 (2010). *How to Spot a Communist*. YouTube. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkYI\\_AH-qyk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkYI_AH-qyk).

alternative socialist world offered as a promise and managed to integrate within its system. In the second half of the Cold War, especially from the end of the seventies, as a result of the economic, political, and social problems experienced in the socialist bloc and the beginning to lose ground in areas that could previously be considered as superior in the eyes of the West, a rapprochement with the Western world resulted in a process that can be summarised as the relaxation of rules and prohibitions within certain borders, then resulting to the dissolution of the socialist bloc.

The Cold War should be understood as a chaotic period in which many paradigms have intertwined and struggled. It would be too easy to simplify it as a power struggle between the USA and the Soviet Union. Their point of struggle has not only been a military one but also an economic, psychological, sociological, and political one. The perception of “threat” has defined and transformed the attitude of both sides toward each other.

In addition, both sides of Germany have experienced a denazification process through a very recent historical experience. On the other hand, the manners and approaches to this process have differentiated dramatically. West Germany has adopted a Western world country approach, naturally and heavily influenced by the USA. At the same time, East Germany has chosen a total denial of its counterpart's values and adopted an alternative socialistic understanding. East Germany has regarded West Germany as the extension of the former Nazi regime in a fascist manner and the capitalistic system gives supply to the continuation of it. Thus, their new alternative would be the optimal solution for the same tragic events to never occur, with a collective and equalist approach, even though it contradictorily seems competitive with the West in terms of institutionalisation

and inefficient over-productivity. In contrast, West Germany has established its ground on its new institutions and governing models, which ensure democracy, civil rights, freedoms, and prosperity through international and supranational cooperation.

### **3.3. Strategic Culture**

Even though the paradigms are entirely different, postwar Germany has transformed its political culture into different strategic cultures. Traditionally, Germany has sought to exert dominance or leadership in Europe and has had an expansionist and, when conditions apply, offensive character as a nation. A latecomer to national unification but a significant military and economic power, Germany's potential influence has been undeniable. However, in postwar conditions, Germany became deeply sceptical about the willingness to use military force on both sides. This war has broken out because of the Nazi regime, and Germany has suffered and caused significant material and moral devastation. Considering these traumatic experiences, both West and East Germany have had to evolve their strategic cultures to be ready for defence from any potential attack, yet on the other hand, never to be the first attacker in any case. This defensive approach was shaped according to the ideological codes of both regimes. East Germany sought a socialist internationalist manner, while West Germany was more NATO-influenced and less initiative. Thus, under this deadlocked position, Germany as a divided country and Berlin as a divided city have become the symbol of the Cold War.

On the other hand, regarding strategic culture, it is also essential to look at the Soviet aspect. In this sense, Snyder (1977) claimed that diverse cultural contexts of U.S. and Soviet decision-makers bring different questions about the use of nuclear weapons and develop unique answers. Therefore, he predicted that due to the rooted Russian history of insecurity and authoritarian control, the Soviet military would prefer the pre-emptive, offensive use of force. Finally, Snyder argued that embedded patterns of Soviet strategic thought "*have achieved a state of semipermanence that puts them on the level of "culture " rather than mere "policy."*" (1977,p.39). He also claimed that recent problems and developments could be assessed with the perception provided by strategic culture rather than on objective grounds.

However, the U.S strategic culture aspect differs as a more abstract, game-theoretical approach, prone to create debates on "*stability versus counterforce, damage limitation by intrawar deterrence versus damage limitation by unilateral means, the inevitability of escalation versus the possibility of limited strategic war, and so on.*" (1977,p.6). Thus, while the U.S. strategic culture relies on intellectuals, analysts and their theoretical arguments, the Soviet strategic culture is more oriented to military effectiveness. In Germany's case, it is possible to find traces of these two different strategic cultures, peaking on the building of the Berlin Wall as the primary precaution of the Soviet side. In contrast, the U.S. did not have a military response but regarded the event as part of a bigger game to play.

### 3.4. Propaganda Perception Before And During The Cold War

Though it has been a popular instrument for a long time, propaganda was an issue of an organised intergovernmental scale in the First World War, mainly by the British against the Germans. It was highly influential in causing morale collapse and revolts in the German army at those times. In the meantime, the definition of propaganda has evolved and diversified during the twentieth century. It has a neutral sense academically, but on the other hand, it has also been perceived ethically negative because, especially in the US, the term ‘propaganda’ was commonly identified as the narrative of dictators and totalitarian regimes. Still, even this reflection can be regarded as a tool of democratic government when considered objectively, enabling “the other” to claim as the wrongdoer, taking pre-emptive actions and creating counterarguments. Nevertheless, it is acceptable to argue on the components of propaganda, especially when considering truth-method-objective triangulation. Generally, if governments achieve a desirable aim by utilising propaganda, the methods used and whether these methods shadow, mask, or distort the truth can quickly be ignored. This creates an ethical dilemma, causes a contradiction, and forces a choice between the principles of democracy and Machiavellian success.

Predictably, the choice has usually been pragmatic and power-based in history. Thus, this dominant position of power in the political environment ensures that propaganda seems incompatible with a genuinely democratic culture. Noam Chomsky even stated that ‘*propaganda is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state*’ (1991, p. 23).



Ironically, both the USA and West Germany have been inspired much by the anti-communist propaganda techniques of the Nazi regime, then under the leadership of propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. Excluding other aspects of his propaganda fields, such as antisemitism and ultranationalism, one of the core enemies of the Nazi regime was the eastern enemy myth, the Soviet Union. Apart from their vicious and hostile presentation to the public, Goebbels was also against the socialist manner of the Soviet Union, even though the ideology of the Nazi regime consisted of not only nationalism but also socialism. Goebbels described himself as a socialist and agreed with Russian socialism regarding anti-liberalism and revolutionism. However, he disagreed with communism's internationalist nature and defended that socialism could only be achieved nationally.

This anti-Soviet attitude showed itself during the Second World War in every mass media and control mechanism in Nazi Germany. As an example, "Lieber Tot Als Rot" (Better Dead Than Red) used to be a famous anti-communist slogan in Nazi Germany, and even as its primary enemy, in the USA. "Red" has been a familiar symbol used to signify communist countries by Western countries and affiliated with danger, blood, and hostile counterpart to be cautious, even before the Cold War era, inherited from the Nazi regime itself.

## “Sowjet Paradies<sup>5</sup>”



Figure 2

Another interesting, inspiring example before Cold War was again in the Nazi regime, “Das Soviet Paradies” (the Soviet Paradise), a propaganda exhibition created by NSDAP and visited by 1.3 million people in Berlin. (Figure 1) The title font is chosen red to emphasise the communist threat and “paradise” as a touch of sarcasm to demonstrate poor and devastated people and buildings.

The four divisions of Germany were, at first, the British, French, American, and Russian sectors, which were the victorious countries of the Second World War, which were agreed upon after the Potsdam Conference in 1945. But there were two points worth mentioning: this victory for the British and the French was a Pyrrhic victory; on the other hand, the Soviet Union has never been a friendly country for none of the other three countries; they have only been forcible allies for an extraordinary period against a common enemy, the Nazi regime. Once the war was over and a share of power and land

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<sup>5</sup> Wikimedia.org. (2024). Available at: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f6/Soviet\\_Paradise\\_exhibition\\_1942\\_in\\_Berlin.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f6/Soviet_Paradise_exhibition_1942_in_Berlin.jpg)

came to the agenda, the conflicts emerged again with a conclusion of the Germany and Berlin division.

The Soviet Union, even its predecessor and successor Russia, has never been a country willing to be articulated as part of a military or political alliance such as NATO or the European Union. However, since it is also not a country capable of being a guiding power on its own, it has maintained its position as a strong actor country in Europe in terms of confirming its existing strengths and providing arrangements to reinforce its power through mutual dependencies. This is because the Cold War concept strongly matches the existential problem of Russia: the interdependency of a vast country within the mythical superiority of national identity. The Russian dilemma of the West could have only been solved with involuntary peace, and the Cold War was named after it to describe this silent war.

Political communication has also been a significant field of the Cold War between two counterparts, and the manners and methods of both sides have been dramatically different. Nevertheless, it can be classified according to the two prominent leaders of West Germany (Konrad Adenauer and Willy Brandt) and East Germany (Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker), who were naturally heavily influenced by their big brothers, the USA, and the Soviet Union.

#### 4.COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In this chapter, West Germany and East Germany's approaches to political communication will be analysed comparatively. The main instrument will be the visuals of the periods of the prominent leaders. These visuals will be interpreted according to the signifier-signified-sign triangulation, and the symbolisation will be explained in a constructive approach. In terms of image definition, there are three significant ways of representation in visual communication: a mirror of reality, a map of reality, and a simulacrum, which only seems to reproduce reality but consciously or unconsciously hides it. This framework is particularly relevant when examining visual communication's role in the Cold War context, a pivotal period in world history.

Image and reality relation is so interconnected in visual communication that it is obvious to observe the usage of images for different persuasive strategies in media discourse. They are intended to become more than a sender-receiver exchange, and these persuasive strategies correspond to the metaphors for image representation: presented as a mirror of reality in documentaries or newscasts, presented as a map of reality in advertisements, propaganda, or fiction, presented as a simulacrum of reality, simply a mimesis.

In this sense, the ultimate purpose of banners, posters, and other visual resources by West Germany and East Germany has been to create a persuasion process that prevents the possible consequences of a situation that prioritises the constructed reality imagination of both opposite sides (potential invasion of evil capitalism vs evil communism), to create an attitude that questions the existence and legitimacy of the opposite imagined reality (capitalism causes inequality vs communism causes poverty), and to direct the judgments of imagined reality to a reorganised counter goal (united against communism vs united against capitalism).

Visual communication is not just a tool but a powerful force that binds the viewer in a communicative relationship where the agenda is hidden, and meaning is ambivalent. This power in visual communication is not evenly distributed but belongs to whoever can persuade their audience better than their competitors regarding mimesis and tellability. On the other hand, as Kukkonen claims, (Stocchetti, M, and Kukkonen, K.,2011) postmodern thinkers like Barthes and Baudrillard have discredited such rhetorical attempts to convince the audience as insincere and ideological because images seem to be downgraded to reflections of ideological instruments, hegemonic power structures and prison houses of simulacra.

Therefore, regardless of the definition and information in any semiotic form, the mind tends to confirm or deny a match in proportion to its harmony with the reality it witnesses. For this reason, East Germany's simultaneous increase in espionage activities and the construction of the Berlin Wall, while publishing a poster about maintaining peace and security, makes the desired match unsustainable, resulting in remarkable emigrations and escapes from East Germany simultaneously.

Like its predecessors, such as 1789, 1848, and 1917, the building and the collapse of the Berlin Wall are of immense symbolic or iconic value. They are all connected through their intensity to the concept of ‘political crisis’ and contentious value-mobilization (right-wrong, good-bad, friend-enemy). Thus, crisis experiences are mediated through appeals to specific values that deal with dogmatic and normative concepts of ‘right or wrong, good or bad.’

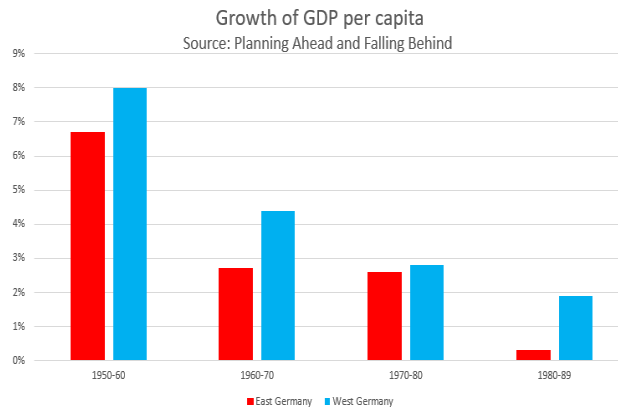
As Kukkonen states, (Stocchetti, M, and Kukkonen, K.,2011) visual communication is communication by proxy. The sender and the receiver have an indirect relationship via images. These images are intended to form a contact between sender and receiver. Once the sense of image appears in visual communication, the receiver instinctively perceives the sender’s intention.

Nevertheless, no matter how understandable the rationalisation and the intention are, variables such as the exposure density of the signifier, the importance of the signified in the eyes of individuals and the society, and the productive capacity of ongoing events and actions to strengthen or weaken them have remarkable significance in the persuasion process. This is particularly evident in the case of East Germany, where propaganda for a united, prosperous, and supranational communist world utopia was interrupted by economic instability due to overly centralised Soviet policies. On the other hand, West German anti-communist propaganda was successful due to U.S. postwar economic and military support, leading to an incomparable economic development and prosperity between 1946 and 1975, later known as “Les Trentes Glorieuses “ in literature.

More specifically, the competition for economic growth between West Germany and East Germany, which seemed to be balanced in the first years of the Cold War,

gradually resulted in West Germany's overwhelming superiority. West Germany succeeded in becoming a desirable place to live in the eyes of East German citizens rather than their own country and economic system.

### Comparison of GDP per capita in West Germany and East Germany<sup>6</sup>



This implies that the more a message contradicts the reality of individuals' lives, the effect of the message decreases, and this decrease forces political communication to be softer and less rigid as a narrative. It will also be seen in the changing decades of East Germany's posters compared to the sharpness of the first decades and the softening of wording, target themes, and even colour palettes. On the contrary, West Germany's shift from the ideological targeting and demonisation of communism to a "helping hand to the poorer brother" has also been consistent with West Germany's economic growth and

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<sup>6</sup> Midofe1996 (2020). English: *Growth GDP per capita East Germany, Economic Growth of East Germany, GDR economy, GDP growth*. [online] Wikimedia Commons. Available at: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=93665423> [Accessed 10 Jun. 2024].

unification intention as a message. During the détente period, each side used a softer narrative, though the reasons behind it were different.

#### **4.1. West Germany Propaganda: Konrad Adenauer Period**

It will be beneficial to differentiate political communication strategies according to the period of remarkable leaders of both sides. The first remarkable West German leader is Konrad Adenauer. He was in power between 1949 and 1963. His leadership intersected with that of Harry S. Truman (1945-1953), Dwight Eisenhower (1953-1961), and John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1961-1963) as the US presidents. It is essential to mention the USA equivalence of the same period because West German policies, like East Germany's of the Soviet Union, were naturally under the heavy influence of US policymaking after the Second World War. Thus, when discussing Cold War policy periods on both sides, one can presume that these policies were shaped by their dominant superpowers.

The keyword for this period is “containment.” This term has been made public as a term by the famous diplomat and historian George F. Kennan. John Lewis Gaddis (Gaddis,2005, p.26) quotes from George Kennan’s draft paper of 1948.<sup>7</sup> Kennan explains the fundamental policies and objectives of US foreign policy as:

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<sup>7</sup> . Draft paper, Comments on the General Trend of U.S. Foreign Policy," August 20, 1948, George F. Kennan Papers, Princeton University



*“1. to protect the security of the nation, which means the continued ability of this country to pursue the development of its internal life without serious interference, or threat of interference, from foreign powers,*

*2. to advance the welfare of its people by promoting a world order in which this nation can contribute to the peaceful and orderly development of other countries and derive maximum benefit from their experiences and abilities.”*

He also differentiated the parts of the world in terms of their vitality for American security. He stated that the regions and countries listed below should not fall into hostile hands, and the political regimes in those areas should be in accordance with the continued power and independence of the USA.

Kennan’s list of regions and countries is as follows: (Gaddis,2005, p.29)

*“A. The nations and territories of the Atlantic community, which include Canada, Greenland and Iceland, Scandinavia, the British Isles, Western Europe, the Iberian Peninsula, Morocco, and the west coast of Africa down to the bulge, and the countries of South America from the bulge north.*

*B. The countries of the Mediterranean and the Middle East as far east as, and including, Iran and*

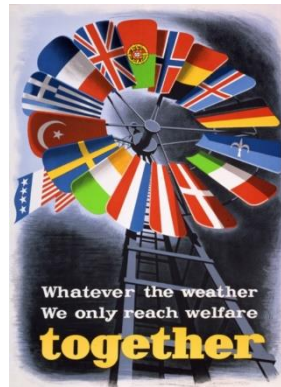
*C. Japan and the Philippines.”*

As the list implies, the USA's security concern is to provide a broadened periphery to limit the Soviet Union and China, especially the Soviet Union.

As defensive yet also open to international interference, this doctrine? quickly became a central US policy in the first and last years of the Cold War.

Truman Doctrine has used this strategy to help, subsidise and promote countries that have a direct security concern with the Communist bloc. This resulted in the Marshall Plan, which provided direct economic aid, grants, and loans to sixteen countries needing recovery after the Second World War, including West Germany.

**“Whatever The Weather, We Only Reach Welfare Together”<sup>8</sup>**



*Figure 3*

The main narrative of this period emphasises togetherness and cooperation to reach a common aim. Each member country's flag constitutes the wings of a mill, and every tiny bit is essential for its completion. The colourful windmill picture in figure 3 above signifies diversity, power potential, and perseverance in a challenging environment, with the intention of transformation. On the other hand, the power behind the mill, the founder of the mill, the USA, and the Allies cooperate for welfare; they are ready to send and expect help from each other and do not harm. They are together regardless of the weather change (possible economic crises emerge or are caused by enemies), and countries aim to achieve welfare.

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<sup>8</sup> Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. (n.d.). *Whatever the weather we only reach welfare together*. [online] Available at: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017651526/>.

Besides, the USA has naturally exerted an influence policy on these countries to ensure a potential expansion of the communist threat. These policies have generally promoted capitalism and demonised communism. They have been customised for each country with different instruments and via different institutions.

Even in the aftermath of the Second World War, SPD Chairperson Kurt Schumacher, leader of the social democratic party of Germany, has presented his “Magnettheorie” (magnet theory). Magnet is a symbol here to signify an irresistible force and attraction. He claimed that Europe should establish a strong and centralised entity, creating a powerful magnet that would attract the separatist Soviet zone. He declared this theory even before the last division of Germany and Berlin, foreseeing the potential conflict with the Soviet Union. It is possible to claim that his theory has been inspirational for establishing the European Union, though there were significant differences with the original theory.

When there are strong ideological cleavages in society, negative advertising can be more visible, like in the first years following World War II when the threat of communism was illustrated with clear and expressive symbolism.

Regarding the propaganda strategies of post-war West Germany, the People’s Association for Peace and Freedom (VFF for *Volksbund für Frieden und Freiheit*) stands as a testament to their unity and collective effort. This news and propaganda organisation, founded in 1950 and funded by both the USA and West Germany's federal funds, exemplifies their shared commitment to peace and freedom.

## Die Wahrheit<sup>9</sup>



Figure 4

This poster from 1953, published by VFF, signifies communism as a red spider with a face resembling Stalin and legs stylised with a hammer and sickle, a common symbol of Soviet domination, also used to be available on the Soviet Union flag. Hammer and sickle represented the cooperation between industrial (hammer) and agricultural (sickle) proletarian workers in Soviet times. However, its connotation with red flags has been negative within the Western world, describing it as a sharp sickle and hitting a hammer, which is a lethal combination. With its hammer-and-sickle legs, this red spider crushes Korea, Albania, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, and Soviet-zone East Germany. The title “*Wahrheit*” means “Truth” in English. It also stresses the message to be informative, not persuasive, by implying that it *is* the truth, not something made up.

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<sup>9</sup> Fbcdn.net. (2024). Available at: [https://scontent.fyei6-2.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t1.6435-9/143719847\\_745079449446022\\_1811216038481425421\\_n.jpg?\\_nc\\_cat=103&ccb=1-7&\\_nc\\_sid=5f2048&\\_nc\\_ohc=1UvJfRR1NOsQ7kNvgE5jDm&\\_nc\\_ht=scontent.fyei6-2.fna&oh=00\\_AYCXgE8B-V9-VPT72TOroLABXIDg-uczFOVBEXBe7COgQ&oe=669114C2](https://scontent.fyei6-2.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t1.6435-9/143719847_745079449446022_1811216038481425421_n.jpg?_nc_cat=103&ccb=1-7&_nc_sid=5f2048&_nc_ohc=1UvJfRR1NOsQ7kNvgE5jDm&_nc_ht=scontent.fyei6-2.fna&oh=00_AYCXgE8B-V9-VPT72TOroLABXIDg-uczFOVBEXBe7COgQ&oe=669114C2) [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

„Alle Wege des Marxismus führen nach Moskau!“<sup>10</sup>

„Schützt uns!“<sup>11</sup>

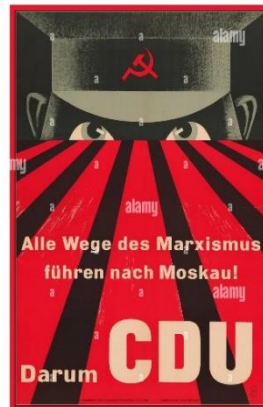


Figure 5



Figure 6

CDU, Christian Democratic Union of Germany (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands), is a centre-mass party in West Germany that remained solely in power until 1965 under Konrad Adenauer's chancellorship. In accordance with the US

<sup>10</sup> ghdi.ghi-dc.org. (n.d.). *GHDI - Image*. [online] Available at: [https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_image.cfm?image\\_id=2545](https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=2545) [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

<sup>11</sup> [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3f/CDU\\_Wahlkampfplakat\\_-\\_kasp1011.JPG](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3f/CDU_Wahlkampfplakat_-_kasp1011.JPG)

containment policy, it is one of the essential actors in effectively conducting anti-communist propaganda in this process.

The first poster (Figure 4) is from the 1953 West Germany elections. CDU has chosen its slogan as “All Roads of Marxism lead to Moscow!” Red is the primary colour signifier for Marxism and the Soviet Union, with black stripes resembling roads that reach a Soviet Union official’s hat, understood by the hammer and sickle on it. The official is visible only from his eye level; his eyes look sneakily at the road. CDU implies that it is the only party that will prevent communism from invading West Germany.

The second poster (Figure 5) is also from the same campaign. This time, the slogan is “Protect Us! Be Defence Ready, Choose CDU.” The exact red figure is shown as an anonymous red hand trying to grab a mother-son. As can be observed, multiple archetypal fears and elements are presented in these posters. Fear of unknown, unclear, shady figures, only sneaky eyes, or a hand without a clear presentation of the enemy, following or trying to reach from an upper level, potentially harmful to an innocent figure of a mother-son, which also has a symbolical meaning of the relation between the country and its citizens.

On the other hand, a communist party, KPD, existed in West Germany until it was banned in 1956, even with 5.7 per cent support in the first West German federal elections. The Soviet Union funded and politically supported the KPD.

## „Willst Du so alt werden wie Adenauer?“<sup>12</sup>



Figure 7

In the context of the 1956 political landscape, this KPD poster (Figure 6) depicts Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, and a hand pointing to him. The title asks, “Do you want to grow as old as Adenauer? “ (Konrad Adenauer was 80 years old in 1956). The second part continues: “Do like him - never become a soldier - get rid of his conscription law!”. The poster is against compulsory military service law in West Germany, emphasising the old age of Konrad Adenauer as an irony to live as long as him by not attending compulsory military service. He is also illustrated as an elite, upper-class suit with an umbrella, implying a person away from the ordinary public person’s imagery. Antimilitarism has been a popular propaganda device of the Soviet Union among the Western countries that legally allow or illegally include socialist or communist parties within.

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<sup>12</sup> Fu-berlin.de. (2024). Available at: [https://userpage.fu-berlin.de/roehrigw/lva/ws9596/texte/kk/dhm/pics/b144\\_1.jpg](https://userpage.fu-berlin.de/roehrigw/lva/ws9596/texte/kk/dhm/pics/b144_1.jpg) [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

## Vereinte Abwehr<sup>13</sup>



*Figure 8*

This propaganda poster of West Germany (Figure 7) chooses “United Defence” as a slogan. It shows a dam consisting of Western countries, starting from the USA, the UK, France, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, and Denmark, and continuing to invisible other flags. A gap in the dam and a red, boiling water (also can be interpreted as blood) with anaphors is leaking. On the other side are blooming trees and white clouds with green grass. A stone with a German flag is ready to be placed to fit the gap in the dam. The placement of countries can also be interpreted as the power line of countries, and Germany was selected as the fourth power to stop the leakage. It is also a “divine” mission as it has been sent by a hand from the sky. In the posters of the era, the “red” colour is always associated with the Communist bloc.

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<sup>13</sup> Leo-bw.de. (2014). Available at: [https://www.leo-bw.de/media/wlb\\_plakate/current/delivered/jpg/5\\_30009.jpg](https://www.leo-bw.de/media/wlb_plakate/current/delivered/jpg/5_30009.jpg) [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].



“Frieden-Freiheit-Sicherheit<sup>14</sup>” “Wir Bewahren den Frieden<sup>15</sup>” –  
 “Wir Sichern die Freiheit<sup>16</sup>”- “Wir Schützen die Heimat<sup>17</sup>”



Figure 9

Regarding security concerns in West Germany, the German Armed Forces (Bundeswehr) is also worth mentioning. Bundeswehr published a series of volunteering campaigns in the 1960s, especially before and after the Cuban Missile Crisis and the building of the Berlin Wall. The narrative used in these posters (Figure 8) emphasises protection (We Protect the Homeland), security (We Secure Freedom), and peace (We Keep Peace). “We” is the reference for the German Armed Forces; however, it also implies the unity of the German homeland and signifies the representation of the whole of Germany as its sole army. Another implication is that West Germany is the “free” part of Germany, and they are responsible for the security and protection of freedom. Contrary to red, generally used by the communist bloc to signify danger and aggression, these posters

<sup>14</sup> weser-kurier.de (n.d.). *Bundeswehrwerbung im Wandel der Zeit*. [online] weser-kurier-de. Available at: <https://www.weser-kurier.de/deutschland-welt/bundeswehrwerbung-im-wandel-der-zeit-doc7e60ly46j2rwrzek7b3> [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

<sup>15</sup> weser-kurier.de (n.d.). *Bundeswehrwerbung im Wandel der Zeit*. [online] weser-kurier-de. Available at: <https://www.weser-kurier.de/deutschland-welt/bundeswehrwerbung-im-wandel-der-zeit-doc7e60ly46j2rwrzek7b3> [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

<sup>16</sup> Pinterest. (n.d.). *Pin von SuperMasterSweg auf hello | Bundeswehr, Freiwillige, Wunderbare jahre*. [online] Available at: <https://www.pinterest.de/pin/627407791827876661/> [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

<sup>17</sup> SCHWARZER PETER. (2010). *Freiwillige vor!* [online] Available at: <https://blog.petertauber.de/?p=214> [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

choose blue and white as the main colour themes. Blue typically symbolises stability, calmness, and reliability, while white represents purity, perfection, and honesty.

**“Wir Bleiben Zusammen<sup>18</sup>”**

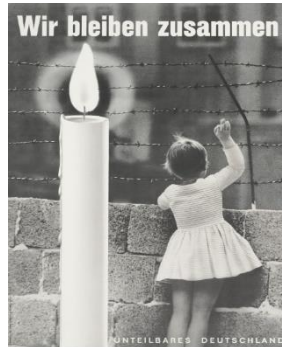


Figure 10

West Germany has less verbal yet powerful imagery of the explanation in his aspect on the building of the Berlin Wall. This poster shows a little girl, a candle, and the Berlin Wall with barbed wire, showing a blurred scene on the other side of the wall. The little girl with a white dress signifies the innocence and purity of the West, enlightened by the candlelight. She tries to reach the other side, extending her hand as long as possible. Also, it can be commented as a waving hand to her beloved ones still in the dark, enslaved part of Germany. The motto is “We stay together, indivisible Germany” on the poster.

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<sup>18</sup> Deutschland, S.D.H.M., Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik (n.d.). *Gerade auf LeMO gesehen: LeMO-Objekt: Plakat 'Wir bleiben zusammen!'* [online] [www.hdg.de](https://www.hdg.de). Available at: <https://www.hdg.de/lemo/bestand/objekt/plakat-geteiltes-deutschland.html> [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

## 4.2. West Germany Propaganda: Willy Brandt Period

Beginning in the late 1960s and lasting until the 1980s, the need for rapprochement and reconciliation emerged between two parts. The length of the “détente” is arguable because the tension between the USA and the Soviet Union rose in 1979 after the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union; however, this has only a partial effect on Europe; thus, it has been an ongoing process until the official end of the Cold War, meaning to be the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

West Germany Chancellor Willy Brandt and Secretary of State Egon Bahr have created an innovative approach towards East Germany, known as *Ostpolitik* (East Policy). Before *Ostpolitik*, both West Germany and East Germany considered their government the sole representative of the whole of Germany. They have never recognised each other on any level of contact. Furthermore, West Germany even had a diplomacy policy that did not allow contact with third-party countries that recognised East Germany, known as the Hallstein Doctrine. *Ostpolitik* has intended to change this rigidity and status quo. West Germany and East Germany signed various agreements first to start commercial activities, became de facto ambassadors to each other, and claimed to be the only representatives of the whole of Germany. Willy Brandt was a unique figure who started this process. He was both a resistant and survivor of the Nazi regime and a member of the SPD, the social democratic party of West Germany.

## Warsaw Kneeling<sup>19</sup>



Figure 11

Willy Brandt made a state-level visit to Poland in December 1970 and spontaneously knelt before the statue dedicated to the victims of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Kneeling signifies respect, submission, and a desire for forgiveness in most cultures. Thus, this has been an iconic figure and gained a remarkable international press interest yet received mixed reactions. Known publicly as “Warsaw Kneeling,” he has both been praised due to a confrontation with the tragic memories of the past on behalf of West Germany and criticised in internal political debates as a demonstration of weakness against communist enemies. Nevertheless, he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971 “*for paving the way for a meaningful dialogue between East and West.*”<sup>20</sup>

Whether this was a spontaneous or a staged action is another debate topic. However, it has undoubtedly been one of the most influential actions during the Cold War, resulting in various consequences afterwards. Not only has it served to build the first steps of rapprochement between both sides, but it has even been offered as a model to signify the deserved respect and confrontation of the other guilts committed by other nations towards their victims.

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<sup>19</sup> ghdi.ghi-dc.org. (n.d.). *GHDI - Image*. [online] Available at: [https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_image.cfm?image\\_id=161](https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=161).

<sup>20</sup> NobelPrize.org. (n.d.). *The Nobel Peace Prize 1971*. [online] Available at: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1971/brandt/facts/>.

Although the beginning of the rapprochement process did not reduce the lack of trust of the parties towards each other, it reminded them that they needed each other. Over time, it became more apparent that the balance of needs favoured West Germany, especially regarding economic conditions. West Germany managed to be one of the critical countries of economic development during the postwar period and has been incomparably prosperous considering the socialist, centralised governance of East Germany mainly bound to the decisions of resource allocations of the Soviet Union. Thus, this imbalance of economic power has also been a source of propaganda for West Germany.

**„Hast du das deine schon getan?“<sup>21</sup>**

**„Ostergrüsse in die Sowjetzone!“**



Figure 12

This is a non-commercial advertorial poster aimed to demonstrate package-sending options by various non-governmental organisations, including the Evangelist

<sup>21</sup> Ärmel, H. (2014). *Habt Ihr das Eure schon getan?* [online] Herr Ärmel: immer horsche immer guggle. Available at: <https://fotografieundtext.wordpress.com/2014/11/29/habt-ih-r-das-eure-schon-getan/#jp-carousel-4836> [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

church. It asks on the main title: “Have you already done yours? ( your gift package).” There is an elegantly wrapped package with flowers and a message tag “Easter Greetings to the Soviet Zone.” The red is lighter than usual, not the red tone used to signify “communist threat” before. All other colours chosen are also in pastel tones and look more peaceful, not a sign of warning but a feeling of compassion. The sender side is West Germany; thus, this brings a soft but superior tone while asking about the Soviet zone’s readiness for unpacking traditional Easter gifts. This also gives a message to the public to see the need for help from East Germany. The implications and connotations of political communication strategies on public opinion are remarkable; they shape how people view each other.

### **4.3. East Germany Propaganda: Walter Ulbricht Period**

The first remarkable East German leader worth mentioning is Walter Ulbricht. He has been in power between 1950 and 1971. Although the first and only president of East Germany was Wilhelm Pieck between 1949 and 1960, the influential party secretary was Walter Ulbricht. His leadership intersects with the last three years of Josef Stalin (1924-1953), Nikita Khrushchev (1953-1964) and the first half of Leonid Brezhnev as the Soviet Union leaders.

Walter Ulbricht was a successor of Stalin-model governance. Despite Leonid Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization period, which removed Stalin’s cult and political system, he combined the new period’s perceptions with a Stalinist cult personality in East Germany.

He was the leading figure in persuading the Soviet Union to build the Berlin Wall in 1961 because the nation's educated elite would otherwise continually escape.

**„Die EVG Bedroht Den Frieden“<sup>22</sup>**



*Figure 13*

The SED propaganda poster of 1954, also used as a booklet cover, signifies the European Defence Community (EVG) as a threat to peace as a slogan. Besides, the personification of EVG is a skeleton face bringing death with a Nazi-era uniform on it and showing SS and USA flags on its collar. It emerges from the flames and gazes at the green land and working factories as if it is about to burn them, with an approaching shadow as EVG. This imagery is a powerful representation of East Germany's perception of a Nazi-inherited, US-dominated capitalistic aggression for a defence community.

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<sup>22</sup> www.dhm.de. (n.d.). *DEUTSCHLAND IM KALTEN KRIEG 1945 BIS 1963*. [online] Available at: [https://www.dhm.de/archiv/ausstellungen/kalter\\_krieg/bild/a\\_141.htm](https://www.dhm.de/archiv/ausstellungen/kalter_krieg/bild/a_141.htm) [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

## “Aufbau Der Republik”<sup>23</sup>



Figure 14

Further, there were ideological works that nourished the utopia of prosperous, happy, and dynamic people brought about by socialism. A remarkable example is Max Lingner's 1952 mural painting on tiles, “Aufbau der Republik” (Building of the Republic). The demonstration above (Figure 17) shows, from left to right, groups of politically and emotionally committed people, including members of the FDJ (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*, Free German Youth, an official youth movement of the East German government), musicians, young pioneers and people's police and officers in ties and briefcases. In the centre of the picture is a depiction of the working class and artisans working as builders. The right-hand side of the picture shows agriculture, heavy industry, and engineering work.

Without exception, people of all levels of society, whether children, young or old, male, or female, are characterised by happy faces, dedicated to the state, and living in a shared and supportive coexistence. This mural painting is an excellent example of

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<sup>23</sup> Wikimedia.org. (2024). Available at: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/Wandbild\\_Leipziger\\_Str\\_7\\_%28Mitte%29\\_Aufbau\\_der\\_Republik.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/Wandbild_Leipziger_Str_7_%28Mitte%29_Aufbau_der_Republik.jpg) [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].



Socialist Realism, the cultural indoctrination of socialist art, many of which can be seen in most artworks of the said era. Ironically, realism has been overly optimistic, state-minded, and ideologically contextualised in these works.

### „Wozu die Mauer in Berlin?“<sup>24</sup>



1962 Still ask. Why the Berlin Wall? The wall of protection therefore serves ... He is also there for you!  
Source: LEMO Lebendiges Museum Online

Figure 15

This poster has been compiled with detailed information to explain the necessity of building the Berlin Wall. In summary, East Germany claims that the Berlin Wall was built for the protection of its citizens from fascist attacks to ensure the inviolability of their factories and properties. It even claims that this wall was constructed for humanitarian reasons to defend their country from the medieval-style brutality of the West. The main title is “Why Still the Berlin Wall” with a subtitle of “The Wall of Protection Also Serves,” continuing with the reasons mentioned earlier, and finally, the final slogan is chosen as “(The Wall) is also there for you!”

<sup>24</sup> Deutschland, S.D.H.M., Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik (n.d.). *Gerade auf LeMO gesehen: LeMO-Objekt: Broschüre 'Du und die Mauer'*. [online] [www.hdg.de](http://www.hdg.de). Available at: <https://www.hdg.de/lemo/bestand/objekt/druckgut-du-und-die-mauer.html> [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

Visualisation with symbols and signs has been of immense importance. The concrete and detailed explanation of East Germany trying to legitimise the building of the Berlin Wall has been overshadowed by West Germany's "Wir Bleiben Zusammen," a poster with only a little girl, candlelight, and barbed wire signifiers. The impression of this poster is that it is a simple brochure, reasoning that it is an action that is necessary to defend because it has a consequence of restricting its people's travel and living rights. However, West Germany emphasises just that feeling of immobility and slavery, regardless of the justification of the building action.

#### **4.4. East Germany Propaganda: Erich Honecker Period**

The second significant figure in East German history is Erich Honecker, who held power from 1971 to 1989. His leadership, which coincided with the latter half of Leonid Brezhnev's (1971-1982), Yuri Andropov's (1982-1984), Konstantin Chernenko's (1984-1985), and finally Mikhail Gorbachev's (1985-1989) terms, played a pivotal role in shaping the course of East German propaganda. Unlike Walter Ulbricht, Erich Honecker's leadership was a more global perspective. He adopted an internationalist approach, emphasising solidarity with other socialist nations beyond Europe. This international focus significantly influenced the themes of East German propaganda, which often addressed conflicts based on racial discrimination, economic inequality, and solidarity with oppressed groups in other nations.

“Solidarität mit Vietnam, jetzt erst recht!”<sup>25</sup>

„Solidarität Klassenpflicht“<sup>26</sup>



Figure 16

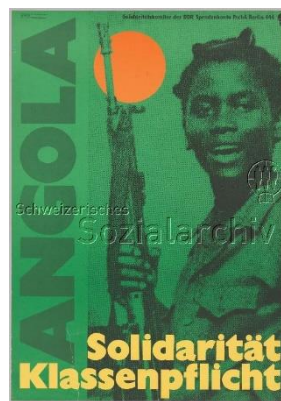


Figure 17

The first poster’s title (Figure 15) is “Solidarity with Vietnam,” and the slogan under the title is “Especially Now.” The dominant colour combination is black and white, with red scripts. It offers a donation account in East Germany. It depicts a Vietnamese

<sup>25</sup> Wordpress.com. (2021). Available at: <https://michel16555.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/poster-ddr-solidaritat-mit-vietnam-1.jpg> [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

<sup>26</sup> Bild-video-ton.ch. (2024). *Angola; Solidarität Kassenpflicht; Solidaritätskomitee der DDR Spendenkonto PschA Berlin 444; Illustration: gelbe Schrift auf grünem Grund, Bild einer jungen Frau mit einem Maschinengewehr*. [online] Available at: [https://www.bild-video-ton.ch/bestand/objekt/Sozarch\\_F\\_Pd-0253](https://www.bild-video-ton.ch/bestand/objekt/Sozarch_F_Pd-0253) [Accessed 12 Jun. 2024].

boy smiling and gives examples of living conditions in Vietnam on a chalkboard, with calculations emphasising the need for education and play for children.

The second poster's title (Figure 16) is "Solidarity Class Duty," implying working-class socialism. It shows an Angolan woman carrying a machine gun. The dominant tone is green, with an orange point resembling a sun. Green represents the peacemaker side of the war, and the sun is the rising hope just on top of the machine gun. This poster also offers donation accounts in East Germany.

The seventies marked a crucial period of *détente* for both sides when the language, colours, and symbols used in political communication took on a milder tone. The Cold War, while continuing through proxy wars in various global locations, saw a significant shift with the occupation of Afghanistan in 1979. However, for West Germany and East Germany, the *détente* period persisted, albeit at a slower pace, until the historic collapse of the Berlin Wall.

The effectuality of political communication that Europe and particularly the United States previously conducted with the discourse of protecting peace and security has been parallel to related events during the Cold War. It peaked in 1965 and within *détente* gradually declined, as seen in a survey conducted by Gallup, Norc, and Harris among US voters, a long-lasting study from 1945 to 1982 (See Table 1). To understand the radical change of attitude in the late seventies and early eighties, various hypothetical situations have even been rejected by the participants for justification of a possible U.S. military intervention. (See Table 2)

(Table 1) Gallup, Norc, Harris: *Do you think it would be best for the future of this country if we take an active part in world affairs, or if we stay/stayed out of world affairs?* (“*The Polls: U.S. Military Intervention - JSTOR*”)

Date	Active Part %	Stay Out %
October 1945	79	21
August 1947	71	29
January 1950	74	26
March 1955	77	23
June 1965	83	17
Spring 1973	68	32
Spring 1975	63	37
Spring 1976	66	34
Spring 1978	67	33
November 1980	66	34
Spring 1982	64	36

(Table 2) Roper: *“There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world. (“The Polls: U.S. Military Intervention - JSTOR”) I would like to ask your opinion about several different situations...”*

	Favor	Oppose	Do not Know
If US Embassy employees were taken hostage again in some other country			
February 1981	64	24	12
If Soviet troops invaded Western Europe			
July 1978	43	43	14
February 1980	60	27	13
February 1981	51	35	14
If the Soviet Union invaded West Berlin			
July 1978	40	47	13
February 1980	54	31	15

February 1981	46	41	13
If Arabs cut off oil shipments to the U.S. and we could obtain oil only by taking over Arab oil fields			
July 1978	30	54	16
February 1980	39	45	16
If Arab forces invaded Israel			
July 1978	21	65	15
February 1980	35	47	18
February 1981	26	58	16
If North Korea invaded South Korea			
July 1978	19	69	13
February 1981	20	63	17
If Soviet troops invaded Poland			
1981	23	58	19

As seen from the visuals and the conducted surveys during the Cold War, the more a sign received by the receiver as an intention to be accepted, the more it requires synchronisation with the effectuality in the receiver's perceived reality. West Germany has sent its audience as a threatening, frightening, dangerous figure of its communist counterpart; it has also constructed an economic, social, and institutional system to be an excellent alternative to it. This has empowered the perception of West German citizens' sense of identification with their nations and created a desire for East German citizens to be a part of it. On the contrary, while East Germany has sent its audience the communist utopian messages "as if" they were confirmed when the intended message does not match with the perceived reality, especially in terms of economic data and freedom of expression, this has created a bounce effect on the audience and led to the results reaching to escape attempts from their country.

Thus, a message's persuasive ability is based on its perceived reality. When there is a gap between them, the sender should soften or modify its message to protect its national identity myth; otherwise, it will sharpen a reactive effect on the audience.

## **5.CONCLUSION**

In this master's thesis, political communication strategies employed in West Germany and East Germany, particularly in the context of national security, are compared. This comparison raises a significant question: What motives created the concept of the Cold War, and what role did political communication play in the victory of the capitalistic world?

Naturally, it is impossible to answer all these questions, at least those requiring prediction. However, it is possible to observe that the successful use of fear and threat elements in visual communication and the verification of these messages in the eyes of the targeted audience have a significant share in the essence of success. In the realist constructivist perspective, there are implications to be considered: There are states that

are in an anarchic situation, they intend to survive, and survival implies that there is a rival or an opponent. This opponent can be a mythical opponent or even once an ally, but it has different interests and motivations. These actions affect the material capabilities of the other and create a safety issue, whether objectively or subjectively. If it is an objective safety issue, it can be evaluated in a purely realistic approach, however, if it has a subjective side, states (not the people) have the initiative to demonstrate who the allies and opponents are in a way to persuade their people and the others. This persuasion process can be achieved by not only informative products but also by political communication presented in the forms of symbols and myths. These instruments serve the realist-minded nations to create “us” vs “the other” identifications via a constructivist approach. They have the mission to create values in the eyes of the public as the good, the evil, the threat, the utopias to be created, the dystopias to be avoided.

For instance, on the West German side, communism was depicted as a red spider (Die Wahrheit), a sneaky pair of eyes or an invisible red hand (CDU election posters) or even as a blood-like boiling water (Vereinte Abwehr). Similarly, on the East German side, EVG was depicted as a skeleton dressed in a Nazi uniform with US flags on the collar. The timeline of the use of fear and threat takes a turning point within the building of the Berlin Wall, and this created a climax for the West to take action. On the other hand, the brinkmanship example of the Bay of Pigs crisis was a reciprocal climax for the threat perception. This has resulted in a mutual assured destruction (MAD) point for both sides. Thus, the most important variable, military power superiority was equalised in terms of winning the Cold War.



The comparison between West Germany and East Germany was based on the leadership styles of both sides, which served as key differentiating factors. The visual materials used in the comparison were analysed through a signifier-signified triangulation method to elucidate the intended messages of the senders. This comparative analysis provided insights into the zeitgeist of both sides during the same period. It also underlined the importance of aligning the message with the receiver's perceived reality for effective communication.

The Cold War is a concept constructed since the end of the Second World War and continues to be important today. Its paradigm and mindset continue as a reminder of past experiences of the history. While it would be anachronic to draw analytical conclusions with past events for current events, it is also inevitable to make comparisons and deductions from the past.

This study claims that the more a sign received by the receiver as an intention to be accepted, the more it requires synchronisation with the effectuality in the receiver's perceived reality. Thus, a message's persuasive ability is based on its perceived reality. When there is a gap between them, the sender should soften or modify its message to protect the myth; otherwise, it will sharpen the reactive effect on the audience. As can be seen in the examples of the study, the East German side published a brochure detailing why they built the Berlin Wall. However, it was a statistically known fact that there were emigrants and escapes before the Berlin Wall who tried to leave East Germany, and this flow was incomparably one-sided. Because of this, when West Germany published "We Stay Together," it succeeded in changing the emphasis on the feeling of immobility and slavery, with barbed wire and candlelight symbols, rather than justification of the

building action, using “we” as the centre idea of a unified Germany. Once the perception of immobility and slavery can be settled, then the protection and securitisation narrative of the West German Armed Forces could be more successful, and they had the chance to use “we” on behalf of both German sides afterwards.

This concludes that no matter how understandable the rationalisation and the intention are, variables such as the exposure density of the signifier, the importance of the signified in the eyes of individuals and the society, and the productive capacity of ongoing events and actions to strengthen or weaken them have remarkable significance in the persuasion process. This is shown in the case of East Germany, where propaganda for a united, prosperous, and supranational communist world utopia as shown in this study as “Aufbau der Republik” was interrupted by economic instability due to overly centralised Soviet policies. On the other hand, West German anti-communist propaganda was successful due to U.S. postwar economic and military support, leading to an incomparable economic development and prosperity between 1946 and 1975.

The questions this study tried to answer force other questions to consider: What factors contributed to this success, and can we replicate this success in today's political landscape?

National security and political communication concepts are at least as popular and influential as before. Political communication used to be conducted bipolarly during the Cold War, and after a decade spent unipolar in the nineties, it continues to be conducted as multipolar. This creates an asymmetry in the manners and paradigms of political communication; nevertheless, it also forces it to become bipolar again. This era

can arguably be defined as the pre-Cold War of a new possible Cold War because the Cold War mindset needs a reduction of two counterparts to create “other.”

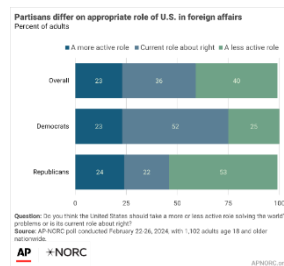
Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, which started in 2022 and roots back to the 2014 invasion of Crimea and the hot conflict environment that followed, brought about a familiar gridlocked environment that has not been seen in the equation of Europe, the USA, Russia, and China for a long time. As the most powerful economy in the European Union, Germany is not exempt from this ambiguous situation.

Germany is a country that can give ideas about the future of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, as it is one of the most important centres of the Cold War and one of the determinants of its outcome. As this thesis' visual illustrations often demonstrate, Russia and other countries that have embraced its values have always been seen as a threat and "other" in the relevant period, including East Germany.

Today's perception of fear and threat for Russian myth heavily relies on the previous Soviet and Tsar-Russian experience. This creates a priori acceptance of a former communist, now nationalist but always an expansionist Russia ready to annihilate European countries when possible. Because of this assumption, Russia is immediately sanctioned and excluded from every possible organisation, including entertainment and sports competitions. However, the Cold War was an experience not only based on Russia itself but also on a counter ideology and paradigm. It is not easy to conclude easily that Russia is today an enemy of countries other than Ukraine for the moment, even though the intended messages are accordingly so for the NATO member country governments.

As the variety and speed of information sources increased dramatically compared with the Cold War era, it is today harder to generate a concrete idea of the enemy and involvement in another country's affairs.

Another survey conducted in 2024<sup>27</sup> (See Table 3) demonstrates public opinion of the US voters' overall demand for less involvement in foreign affairs with politically diverse choices.



This study also claims that the success of the Cold War by the Western countries against the Soviet Union is not a replicant of today's conditions when it comes to creating a common enemy, this time for Russia and/or China. The mythification of Russia as a traditional enemy is not a sufficient message for today's interdependent economic atmosphere and broader possibilities of communication and (dis)information. The message requires a verification check of comparison between the perceived reality (Russia is the enemy of Europe) and the reality (Russia is an economic partner with security concerns of a NATO expansion) and another reality (Russia invades a sovereign country) Even in the European Union, there is not a unified tone of affirmation on the

<sup>27</sup> Anon, (2024). *Few want the U.S. to be more active in solving global problems - AP-NORC*. [online] Available at: <https://apnorc.org/projects/few-want-the-u-s-to-be-more-active-in-solving-global-problems/>.

states' attitude towards Russia in the Ukraine crisis, and this causes a cleavage image on the narrative of the West against Russia, unlike the unified image of the Cold War era.

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