

Politics through economics: The G7 approach to East-West economic relations, 1975-1989

“Layers and Connections of the Political”

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Abstract

The Cold War and the dynamics that led to the 1989 epilogue have been the subject of an impressively significant amount of literature. Economics have been identified as a crucial element. In particular, a lot has been written on the weaknesses of the socialist economic system. This paper is going to discuss the way the West used economics to enhance the decline of the Soviet block. It is worth asking how the US and its allies perceived the economic situation of Eastern countries and, consequently, how they decided to proceed. Were the adopted policies reaching consensus within the West, making it an effective diplomatic tool?

The G7 is a useful standing point as it is a yearly rendez-vous that reunites the top political authorities of the major industrialized countries. Their rather informal discussions on East-West economic relations shall tell a story that still need to be clearly told about Western Cold War strategies. I take into consideration a relatively long time period ranging between 1975 (first G7 summit) and 1989, which shall also allow to highlight changing long run dynamics. The paper shall be based on governmental documents on the summits' preparations and proceedings from British, French and US archives.

Author information

Mattia Ravano is a third year PhD candidate in International History at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (Geneva, Switzerland). Mattia obtained his BA in International Relations at the University of Geneva in 2011 and his MA, with the same subject, at LUISS Guido Carli in 2014. He is currently working on his thesis, under the supervision of Prof. Jussi Hanhimaki; the provisional title being: "Institutionalizing interdependence. The G7 and the experience of the West, 1975-1991."

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Wednesday, 16th June - Session 5 - 10.30-12.00 CET (Webex) - Panel - *Beyond Traditional Cold War Understanding: Economic and Cultural Elements in East-West Interactions*

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