

The Influence of Geopolitical Change on the Well-Being of a Population: The Berlin Wall

ABSTRACT

Objectives. Social cohesion is recognized as a fundamental condition for healthy populations, but social cohesion itself arises from political unity. The history of the Berlin Wall provides a unique opportunity to examine the effects of partition on social cohesion and, by inference, on health.

Methods. This ethnographic study consisted of examination of the territory formerly occupied by the Wall, formal and informal interviews with Berlin residents, and collection of cultural documents related to the Wall. Transcripts, field notes, and documents were examined by means of a keyword-in-context analysis.

Results. The separation of Berlin into 2 parts was a traumatic experience for the city's residents. After partition, East and West Germany had divergent social, cultural, and political experiences and gradually grew apart.

Conclusions. The demolition of the Wall—the symbol and the instrument of partition—makes possible but does not ensure the reintegration of 2 populations that were separated for 40 years. The evolution of a new common culture might be accelerated by active attempts at cultural and social exchange. (*Am J Public Health*. 2001;91:369–374)

Véronique Héon-Klin, Dr med, MPH, Erika Sieber, Dr med, Julia Huebner, AB, and Mindy Thompson Fullilove, MD

Social cohesion is widely recognized as a fundamental precondition for healthy populations.¹ It is also well established that cohesion is a result of social, cultural, and political integration within a society. Events or processes that rupture ties within and among social groups can undermine social cohesion, thereby weakening the social foundation for health.^{2,3} Such upheaval also causes short- and long-term psychological distress for the affected individuals, an effect that contributes directly and indirectly to poorer health outcomes.⁴ Finally, divided social groups can come to hate each other. Such intergroup alienation can affect health directly, through violent psychological or physical acts, or indirectly, through withholding of resources.⁵

Geographic partition is one process that ruptures social groups.⁶ Many societies have been spatially segmented—albeit in a variety of geographic patterns—including Korea (North and South), Cyprus (between Turks and Greeks), the former Yugoslavia (into many new nations), South Africa (by apartheid), and the United States (through the institution of Jim Crow policies in the 1890s). In some instances, political movements have ended partition, but they have not necessarily achieved full reintegration of the formerly divided populations. The continued division of the society represents an ongoing threat to social cohesion. The reasons for continued division are not entirely clear, nor are the solutions evident. The city of Berlin, which was partitioned for 40 years, provides a case study of the interrelationship between partition and social cohesion.

The partition of Berlin was a result of the treaties ending the fighting in the European theater in World War II. The Allied invasion of Germany took place on 2 fronts. British, French, and American troops moved in from the West, while Soviet troops moved in from the East. The armies met in the center of Germany. The treaties ending the war acknowledged the shared occupation by dividing Germany and Berlin into 4 sectors: the French, British, and

American sectors, which in 1949 became the Federal Republic of Germany, with a new capital in Bonn; and the Soviet sector, which after 1949 was known as the German Democratic Republic, with a new capital in East Berlin. After the war, the alliances among the Allies quickly disintegrated, and the shooting war between the Allies and the Axis was replaced by the Cold War between Eastern and Western powers.⁷

The partition of Germany, though initially informal and permeable, became increasingly rigid as the Cold War intensified. After 1949, the 2 political systems existed side by side in the city of Berlin. The quality of life, potential for higher wages, and freedom to travel drew many Easterners to West Berlin. This particularly applied to highly trained people, such as medical doctors and engineers, who could easily find well-paid jobs in the West. The constant emigration threatened to undermine the Eastern economy. The Berlin Wall, erected in 1961, was designed to limit migration from East to West and to create a boundary. The Wall severed the city and became the most important symbol of separation.⁸ By 1962, it had curtailed nearly all movement between the 2 parts of the city.⁹ In addition to the Wall itself, the intracity blockade was effected by severance of the train and subway lines and the disconnection of the telephone system. An elaborate system of physical barriers inhibited travel and communication.

Véronique Héon-Klin is with the Medical University of Lübeck, Lübeck, Germany. Erika Sieber is with the Charité-Virchow-Klinikum, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany. Mindy Fullilove and Julia Huebner are with the Community Research Group of the New York State Psychiatric Institute and the Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University, New York, NY.

Requests for reprints should be sent to Mindy Thompson Fullilove, MD, New York State Psychiatric Institute, 1051 Riverside Dr, Unit 29, New York, NY 10032 (e-mail: mf29@columbia.edu).

This article was accepted June 1, 2000.

Although partition was effective for decades, it disintegrated in the 1980s. Peaceful demonstrations put pressure on the East German government to allow a variety of freedoms, including the freedom to travel. On November 9, 1989, travel to the West was opened and the Wall itself fell.

While the political meaning of the Wall has received extensive attention, its massive effect on the geography of Berlin and its impact on the well-being of the population have been less well studied.¹⁰ We undertook an ethnographic study to examine these effects of the Wall. Qualitative methods were chosen for this project, because they offer insight into broad social processes, such as partition and reintegration; incorporate data from a wide range of sources, such as observations and interviews; and permit description and the elaboration of hypotheses.^{11,12}

Methods

Design

The study had 2 objectives: to describe the structural alterations of the Berlin landscape and to examine how social relationships were influenced by these changes. The primary concept behind the data collection was an in-depth, on-location triangulation of data sources, researchers, and methods, with a spiraling process to test hypotheses.¹³ This study built on previous efforts by members of our group to examine the triumvirate of person-environment-health.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ In particular, our method focuses on the specification of a given location as subject and object in people's lives.

To prepare for triangulation and to protect against bias toward East or West, we embedded variety in the design. A team of 3 ethnographers with diverse backgrounds collected data in Berlin: one ethnographer was raised in East Germany, one was raised in West Germany, and the third had German roots but was raised in the United States. A fourth ethnographer, located in New York and familiar with problems of social disruption, participated as a non-German check on the formulation of theory. Similarly, every effort was made to collect a wide variety of data, using an array of methods. Study procedures were presented to the committee for the protection of human subjects at Charité, which deemed the study exempt from review because it posed little danger to human subjects.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork was conducted between October 1996 and March 1998 and was documented in extensive field notes. The ethnographers

were immersed in the life of the city and able to participate in many unstructured interviews and discussions with residents working and living in East and West Berlin. Observations of the environment were conducted along sites formerly occupied by the Wall, as well as in other areas in East and West Berlin. To develop a deeper understanding of the construction and the geographic course of the Wall, an interview was conducted with a former cartographer of the Wall. Other unstructured interviews followed with people engaged in the helping profession, including nurses, psychologists, and psychiatrists. Additionally, photographers and architects were interviewed.

Cultural expositions and artifacts were an important source of data. The Checkpoint Charlie Museum, a photographic exhibition of pictures from the Berlin Wall at the Info-Box Museum, videotapes from the erection and fall of the Wall taken for television and by individuals, photographs, postcards, maps, newspapers, magazines, cartoons, literature, news broadcasts, and television shows were reviewed. Where possible, copies of literature, videos, and other artifacts were obtained for detailed examination. In all cases, extensive field notes were compiled.

Formal, in-depth, semistructured interviews were conducted with 12 adults who had resided in Berlin during both the erection and the destruction of the Wall. Subjects were recruited through snowball sampling. In all, 6 men and 6 women, half from East Berlin and half from West Berlin, were interviewed. These interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. All participants in the formal interviews were informed of the risks and the benefits of the study and asked to sign informed consent.

Analysis

Observations, interview transcripts, pictures, and maps were the major sources of information for this study. They were examined for 3 purposes: to describe the specific geography of the Wall, focusing on its strip nature as a sign of demarcation and separation; to demonstrate the influence of these changes in geography and spatial arrangements on the flow between East and West Berlin; and to identify place-related emotional reactions.

We used a keyword-in-context analysis to locate and analyze all paragraphs in the field notes and transcribed interviews referring to the Berlin Wall.^{17,18} Sections that included the word *Mauer* ("wall") were highlighted. Each section was matched to 1 of 4 categories: erection of the Wall (1961), time of the Wall (1961–1989), demolition of the Wall (1989), and the post-Wall period (1989–2000). Codes were developed for important themes noted in each period. The German members of the team col-

laborated on the coding of data and the development of tables and charts displaying the data.¹⁹ These intermediate products were translated into English for review with the New York team member. As consensus developed about the meaning of various observations, reports of the study were prepared in German and translated into English.

Results

Structural Alteration of the Environment

In 1949 the Eastern sector of Berlin became part of a new country, East Germany. The founding of the East German Republic introduced different laws, rules, and currencies to the affected portion of the German population. From 1949 to 1961, the new country was attempting to stabilize itself. During this period, although there was increasing regulation of travel, residents of Berlin were able to move throughout the city, and the 2 parts of the city remained linked by family relationships, goods, cultural events, and jobs.

The politically divided but structurally linked city posed many challenges to the stabilization of East Germany. The permeable boundaries provided an exit point for many East Germans eager to migrate to the West, permitted residents of both sectors to use subsidized goods and services intended only for Easterners, and facilitated an easy exchange of propaganda. For example, East German price subsidization made it cost-effective for Westerners to buy meat and bread in East Berlin and resell it in West Berlin. Similarly, the costs of living (rent, insurance, food) were so much cheaper in East Berlin that people worked in West Berlin, earning Westmarks, but lived in East Berlin.

This permeability proved to be too stressful for East Germany to manage. The Berlin Wall was erected to increase the internal separation of the 2 parts of Berlin. The initial version of the Wall was created by the use of barbed wire and bricks. Despite its crude construction, this barrier produced a sudden and profound alteration in the environment: roads were transformed, thoroughfares became dead ends, and people were trapped on one side or the other.

These efforts to curtail movement and contact were not entirely successful. The East German authorities worked tirelessly to perfect the Wall. Over the 28 years of its existence, 4 versions of the Wall were built and a fifth was in the planning stages. Houses, churches, and other buildings were cleared to broaden the Wall into a system of barriers. The third version of the Wall, for example, had an exterior wall on either side approximately 3.6 m

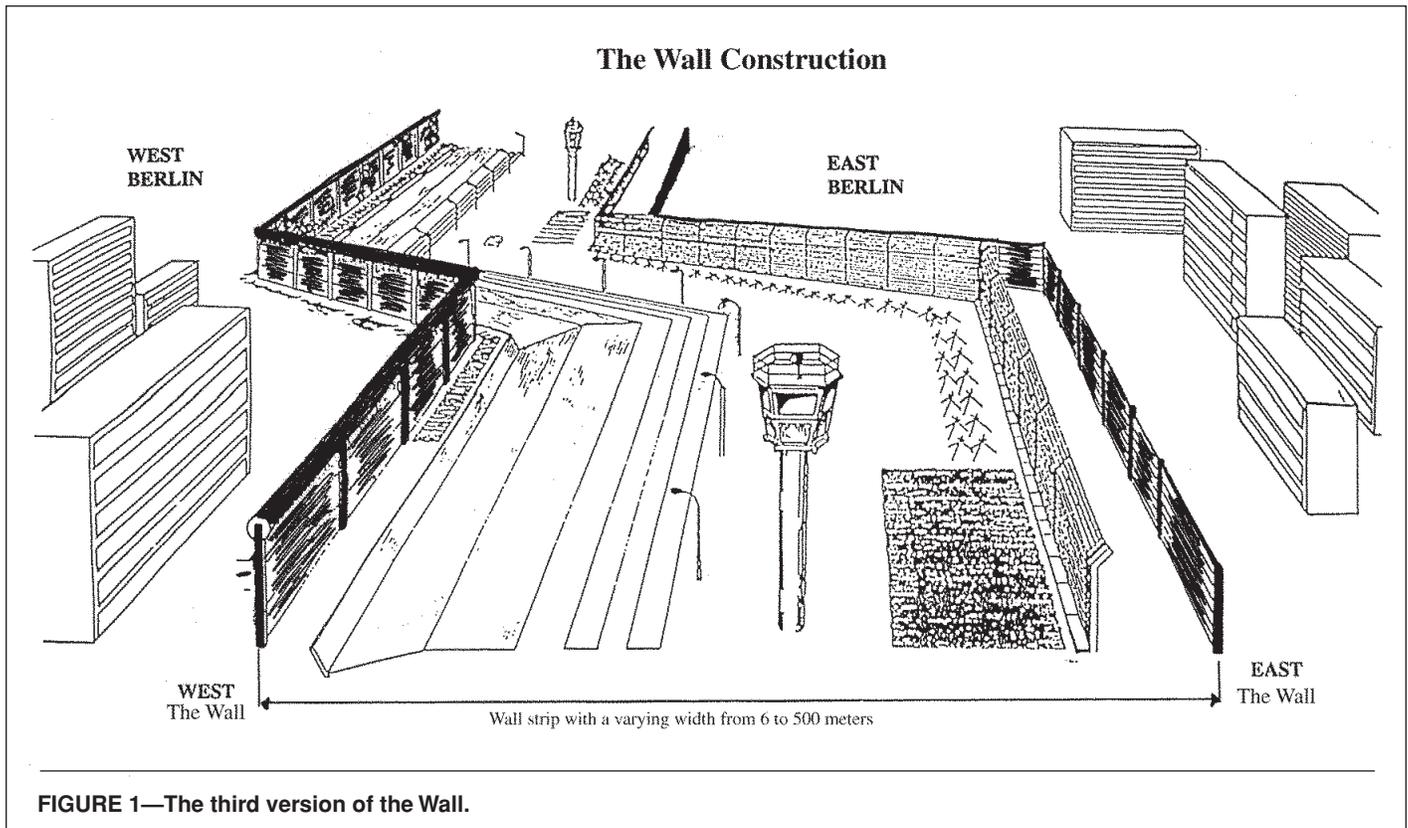


FIGURE 1—The third version of the Wall.

high and 0.15 m wide, made out of steel-reinforced concrete (Figure 1). Between the outer walls was an entire defense system, with guard towers, bright lights, steel nails, barbed wire, and other obstacles. The strip varied from 6 to 500 m wide. At a few points there were checkpoints for monitored passage to the other side.

All versions of the Wall became part of the ideological campaign waged on both sides. The exterior of the Western Wall, for example, was entirely covered by graffiti. In addition, the city officials of West Berlin had built little platforms to allow their people to look over the Wall into the interior strip. The city officials of East Berlin made sure that every part of the Eastern Wall visible from the West was painted in white.

The demolition of the Wall in 1989 left a vast strip of valuable real estate unoccupied. The land in the center of the city became a site for new construction by big companies as well as by the German government, which relocated from Bonn to Berlin. When our fieldwork ended (1998), shiny modern buildings were rising slowly into the sky, many in modernist styles that presented a sharp contrast to the traditional architecture of Berlin. The landscape of the Wall was being reinvented in the form of tall buildings rather than being repaired by an architectural design intended to knit the 2 parts of the city back together.

In sum, the building of the Wall altered Berlin, transforming it from a single European capital into 2 cities, one a distant province of its

mother state and the other the capital of an emerging nation. This division produced a first set of displacement experiences, organized around the theme of separation. The destruction of the Wall, by permitting the opening of closed roads and train connections, reconnected parts of the city that had been disconnected for nearly 30 years. The potential for free movement and sociopolitical reunification was established. The emotional and behavioral reactions to these structural alterations, highlighting the theme of reunification, are explored in the next section.

The First Displacement

Even before the Wall was erected, the divergent political systems had transformed lifestyles in the 2 parts of the city. A man from East Berlin described it as follows:

For me West Berlin always was a bit scary [*unheimlich* (unhomelike)] in the evenings when we went to the movies at Ku-Damm or Zoo. There were these lights, these ads, the prostitutes on the streets, the beggars, the homeless that were there even then; all that was unknown, a slightly scary world. I can remember vividly after the movies you sat in the train and the stations were Tiergarten, Bellevue, Lehrter Bahnhof, and at Friedrichstraße it was pitch dark. You knew you were home so fast from the blinding brightness—you were in pitch-dark East Berlin in a few minutes.

Despite the discomfort, people had some freedom to move. The shock of the Wall lay in

the sudden elimination of the element of choice. Residents were stunned. People in both East and West felt powerless and helpless. On both sides, residents felt a deep sense of loss of the other part of the city. One woman of East Berlin explained,

I drove aimlessly through Berlin, looking at checkpoints one knew. For the first time I had the feeling of being locked in forever. I suddenly had this feeling: I can never get out of here.

The divisions created by the 2 political systems became more profound as people looked at and experienced life from one side of the Wall. Propaganda against the other side was a large part of the experience. East Germans were told, “Young people in the West take drugs and fall apart as a result,” “There are more and more unemployed people lying on the street homeless in the West,” and “Companies in the West wear out their workers and send them out to the street when they are sick.” West Germans were given the messages “If you express your opinion in the East you will be immediately sent to jail,” “You have to be in the socialist party to be successful in your career in the East,” and “People in the East drink to alleviate their misery.”

People on both sides of the Wall felt vulnerable. Easterners had a feeling of insecurity about what might happen to those living near the Wall. West Berlin had become an island within East Germany, linked to West Germany

by controlled air-, rail-, and roadways. Westerners feared that they might be abandoned by their government. A woman from West Berlin remembered,

[A] certain anxiety concerning the GDR [East Germany, DDR] was there in the first years of the Wall. What will come of this? One just did not trust the politicians totally and we thought they might sell us to them, us, this little piece of Berlin. The government in Bonn will not be very concerned about us. They might give up on us some day. This anxiety was always there.

With time, residents on both sides became habituated to the Wall. As individuals, they felt powerless and unable to change the situation. People learned to ignore the Wall. Interviewees commented that they drove by it every day but no longer saw it. Consciously or unconsciously, they avoided taking streets that confronted them with it. For most people, it was erased from daily consciousness, emerging to cause pain and inconvenience on certain occasions, for example, when a Westerner crossed the border or a guest pass had to be obtained to visit an Easterner living near the Wall.

An important exception to this general pattern was reported by people who had family on the other side. They never escaped from the pain of separation and never became habituated to the Wall. In certain cases this experience of separation led to depression, extreme anxiety, and unstable mental states. A woman of East Berlin said,

One of my friends had all his siblings in West Berlin. Only he and his mother were in East Berlin, so the Wall was a terrible thing. His mother had a nervous breakdown and she was not doing well; she suffered for years.

Another man said,

The Wall was for me the concrete symbol of the separation from my parents. They were on the other side of the Wall, the symbol of hatred, and therefore I was very lonely in Berlin in the years following the building of the Wall. The support and caring of my parents was suddenly gone. I developed sleep disturbances and heartache as a result, as the doctor could not find any organic cause for these symptoms.

The Second Displacement

The fall of the Wall was one of a series of acts that permitted German reunification. For most of the residents of Berlin, the demolition of the Wall was totally unexpected. After living with it for 28 years, people were used to the Wall and had difficulty comprehending its disappearance. After it fell, people were curious about the other side. Strong feelings of euphoria were reported all over the world. People filled the streets of Berlin and spontaneously celebrated this event together. A man from West Berlin said,

The fall of the Wall and the human events related to it are some of the most moving events of my life, or the most moving event of my life; it surpasses all others.

Less visible was the feeling of anxiety, even panic, that emerged. A woman from East Berlin said,

I did not go over there right away, I just was not able to go there. I was afraid of it all. I was afraid of it all, of the ravaging, of the opening, of all those people, of the bustle. For me it was a totally strange world, as if you suddenly were supposed to climb to the moon. I had anxiety attacks; I did not go.

Easterners felt that West Berlin was a totally different world and Westerners felt that East Berlin was totally different. Coming from a socialist society where consumer goods were scarce and resources were pooled, the Easterners met a consumer society characterized by an overabundance of goods. A woman from East Berlin described it as follows:

What mostly impressed me in West Berlin was that in my whole life I never had seen so many beautiful flowers in the winter. I thought I was dreaming, since something like that does not exist here. Here we might have three roses and you had to fight to get them, or we had some green plants but no flowers, and then I was also shocked by the fruit vendors with grapes and all that. Over here we only have something like that around Christmas, some oranges. Otherwise all year you get apples and seasonal vegetables and cabbage. Well, we did not have more. So when I saw the fruit vendors I could not handle it.

After the first rush of joy, the realities of the new city set in. Both Easterners and Westerners found their daily lives affected by a constantly changing city. Both complained about the dirt, the noise, and the cancellations of commuter trains. People shared the feeling that they could not influence the process and must simply adapt to the situation created by political decisions. Resignation and disappointment gradually replaced euphoria.

In addition to the rapidly changing landscape, other problems beset people from both sides of the city. Unemployment and competition in the open market increased for everyone. This created feelings of insecurity and inferiority for the unemployed and for the employed, who feared losing their jobs. Some people fell into depression and long-term instability. One man from East Berlin said,

I have a top student in my class whose father suffers from terrible inferiority feelings. He is a PhD in math who was working at the Academy of Sciences; he is in his late 40s and cannot find work. He is home all day and in search of something to do. He has become very depressed.

A woman from East Berlin explained,

I was fired in 1993 and was unemployed for the first time in my life. In the process of trying to save our company, many of the employees and I worked 14 to 15 hours per day. I was physically and psychologically destroyed—so many injustices. I took 2 years of therapy to recover. I suffered from a real psychological breakdown.

Another problem was that of eliminating duplication in city services. The division of the city had required the development of separate systems for police, fire, and other services, and with the reunification these separate systems became redundant. A man from West Berlin explained the complexities and burdens of this process:

Well, over there they also had the German Postal Service in East Berlin and so they had to be integrated, these people. They of course did not have required skills, technical skills, and so it was a long process, it took years. They first had to be investigated to see if they had a clean past or if they were secret police and then they had to be graded; see, they had had totally different training. There are the simple service level, the technical service level, the administrative level. It took years to get some order into this whole thing, and of course the consequence was that we here [West Berlin] had a freeze on promotions, cuts in positions, elimination of positions, because the people from East Berlin had to be integrated and so we had no more hiring or promotions.

But the differences of the past meant that the changes had different meanings for East Berliners and West Berliners. The streets in East Berlin were renamed to erase commemoration of the socialist system and its heroes. Lenin Square is now the Square of the Nations and Ho-Chi-Minh Street became Gandhi Street. Easterners felt disoriented, as they were not able to give directions in their own borough of the city. The imposition of new—capitalist—street names was a marker of the fact that the socialist states had “lost” the Cold War.

In another example, guaranteed employment in East Germany had created a sense of job security and provided social networks that made the postreunification scramble for jobs more confusing and troublesome for Easterners than for Westerners. Workers in East Germany were also supported by extensive services such as childcare, housing, and health care services. Some people from East Germany regretted the loss of the sense of belonging and stability that existed before the fall of the East German government. A woman from East Berlin said,

I am really missing this sense of belonging that existed before. For example, in my building I was the one who would go to government offices, since I had an easy time doing that. So I went, for example, to get the coupons for coal and then distributed them among tenants. You know, now a lot of the people have moved away, the older ones, and new ones moved in, that is how it goes. Well, in the olden days it was nice, this solidarity among people—but I think it is a problem of different generations—there was a connectedness, so when I got to the apartments the

people asked me in, they did not just finish up at the door. See, I am living for 30 years in this building. Nowadays if you have some question you do not get asked in by the younger tenants, they get things done at the door. But this belonging that existed in the old days has gone.

Feelings of resentment and loss were not confined to Easterners. For their part, Westerners resented the solidarity levy all Germans had to pay after reunification, as they thought it benefited only the East. Westerners often expressed the idea that Easterners were not good workers. A man from East Berlin related being told so by a relative:

When I went to the first family reunion in the West I got to know my cousin's husband, a notary. He immediately declared that we in the East first had to learn to work. We continued to discuss it and now we only greet each other from afar when we meet.

Prejudices and devaluation, often rooted in the Cold War period, perpetuated a situation in which people expected or assumed a certain behavior of *Ossis* (Easterners) and *Wessis* (Westerners). Some of the prejudices expressed were "The misery of some of them [Easterners] has not been caused by us but by the misregime of the East German Government"; "You [Easterners] do not have any say, you never paid taxes or pension funds"; "The

West German Government destroyed all our industries, including the ones which were well functioning, such as agriculture."

These prejudices reinforced the continuing sense of difference between the 2 parts of the city, so that people felt ill at ease when "on the other side." The continuing feeling of division was captured in a cartoon exhibited in the summer of 1997 (Figure 2). The artist captured the ongoing separateness that is not consciously acknowledged by the population. As a result of the legacy of devaluation and prejudice, people have retreated from each other: the initial curiosity about the other side has been replaced by indifference and disappointment.

Discussion

The most remarkable finding of this study was the degree of social, political, and cultural divergence that had emerged among people who were nominally residents of the same city. Studies of speciation have made it clear that physical separation leads to genetic divergence. In a similar way, partition, by separating the population, initiated divergent experiences, which in turn contributed to the formation of distinct socio-cultural groups.

This process of differentiation began with the forging of 2 opposing political systems at the end of World War II, long before the Wall was built. With the construction of the Wall, the divergence of culture, lifestyle, language, and identity continued, though the Wall acted as a screen obscuring the differences. At the same time, as residents became habituated to the Wall, they no longer concerned themselves with "the other side." Thus the emerging differences between the 2 nations grew more profound than many realized.

The fall of the Wall in 1989 was a startling and joyous event. It represented a longed-for reunification of the city and the country, as well as a greater measure of freedom. Expectations for brotherhood were high. In pursuit of reunification, people committed themselves to spending money, altering institutions, and relocating the nation's capital to its historic home. Along the way to reunification, joy collided with sociocultural differentiation. *Ossis* and *Wessis* had had 40 years of different lifestyles, informed by different values and goals. This has created a degree of cultural schism between the 2 groups.

That the schism is encoded in the expression of prejudice signals strain in the social process. Prejudice denigrates the "Other"; the appearance of prejudice within a culture de-



Source. Reprinted with permission from Barbara Henniger.

FIGURE 2—Cartoon shown at the 6th Annual Berlin Cartoon Show, 1997. The guide is saying, "Once a terrible wall separated the people here!"

serves explanation. One possible source of tension in Berlin is the relative inequality between Easterners and Westerners. Although people from both sectors of the city have had to make changes in the wake of reunification, the level of dislocation has been much more pronounced for people in the East. The dissolution of East German institutions—including guaranteed employment, childcare, and housing—disrupted the social networks and lifestyles of East Germans and precipitated a scramble to enter the Western economy and culture. Easterners now find themselves at a distinct disadvantage. Although Westerners have suffered as well, the continuity of ideas, institutions, and economic structure in West Germany has provided a significant cushion.

The gradient of disadvantage creates the cultural condition for the emergence of prejudice. Partition created divergent sociocultural experiences, but reunification, rather than erasing differences, has followed the social fault lines created by 40 years of separation.

The continuing condition of difference between *Ossis* and *Wessis* holds within it the seeds of intergroup alienation. Alienation is defined as an undermining of the place identity of an individual or group as a result of spatial dis-possession or denigration,⁴ and it is a serious problem for social groups.²⁰ Alienation is linked to anger and resentment between groups. Alienated groups may try to hurt each other passively, by withholding goods and services, or actively, through confrontational interactions. These actions, in turn, aggravate group feelings of resentment, which can escalate into violence. Such actions also lead to poorer health outcomes, which will appear disproportionately, but not exclusively, in the group with less power.

To eliminate the seeds of alienation and to promote social cohesion, an active process of reconciliation is needed.^{4,6} This process should increase knowledge and consciousness of commonalities and differences between the 2 parts of Germany. One problem to be confronted is the defeat of East Germany by West Germany. Logistically, after 10 years, the East German system has been replaced by the West German system. At this point, most areas are dominated by West German ideology. The cultural and political tenets of the former East are suppressed and devalued. There is no space for Easterners to remember the strengths of the old system, to mourn its loss, or to find a new identity that has meaning and pride. Easterners are expected to take on a new identity, while Westerners are not confronted with the need to realign their sense of self. As long as the adaptation remains unidirectional, healthy integration will not occur.

Integration also depends on strengthening interpersonal bonds.^{21,22} For example, after World War II, the leaders of France and

Germany developed a program, *Échange pour la jeunesse franco-allemande*, designed to rebuild relationships between the citizens of their countries to prevent a future war. This program introduced many kinds of citizen exchange that promoted interpersonal contact, respect, and affection. Although a similar program was attempted to bring together young people from the cities of Hamburg and Dresden to promote German-German reunification, it was not continued or developed.²³

Finally, the residents of Berlin need to reappropriate the city beyond the limits established by the Wall.²⁴ Having the freedom to go “over there” does not necessarily alter behavior and habits. Rather, it is important to find ways to attract Westerners to the East and Easterners to the West. City and regional planning are an essential part of reunification programs.⁶

Sociocultural differences and prejudice are not surprising outcomes of years of political rivalry and separation, but they should not be taken lightly. Should alienation emerge from current conditions, it would pose a great threat to social cohesion, group well-being, and health.²⁰ Conversely, it seems possible that active efforts at reconciliation can alter the current state of affairs. The deconstruction of the Wall must be followed by an aggressive reconstruction of social bonds. □

Contributors

V. Héon-Klin and M. T. Fullilove designed the study. V. Héon-Klin, E. Sieber, and J. Huebner collaborated on data collection and analysis. V. Héon-Klin and J. Huebner collaborated on translating the findings and text into English. M. T. Fullilove contributed to the analysis and edited the text for style.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the medical faculty (Charité) of the Humboldt University in Berlin.

We would like to thank Robert E. Fullilove III and Rodrick Wallace for helpful comments on the manuscript and Jennifer Stevens for her assistance in preparation of the manuscript.

References

1. Leighton AH. *My name Is Legion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; 1945.
2. Palinkas LA, Pickwell SM. Acculturation as a risk factor for chronic disease among Cambodian refugees in the United States. *Soc Sci Med*. 1995;40:1643–1653.
3. Brockerhoff M. Child survival in big cities: the disadvantages of migrants. *Soc Sci Med*. 1995; 40:1371–1383.

4. Fullilove MT. Psychiatric implications of displacement: contributions from the psychology of place. *Am J Psychiatry*. 1996;153:1516–1523.
5. Grier WH, Cobbs PM. *Black Rage*. New York, NY: Basic Books; 1968.
6. Paasi A. *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness—The Changing Geographies of the Finnish–Russian Border*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons Inc; 1996.
7. Fulbrook M. *A Concise History of Germany*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press; 1995.
8. Fulbrook M. *The Two Germanies, 1945–1990: Problems of Interpretation*. London, England: Macmillan Press Ltd; 1992.
9. Scholze T, Blask F. *Halt! Grenzgebiet! Leben im Schatten der Mauer*. Berlin, Germany: BasisDruck Verlag GmbH; 1997.
10. Schmidtchen G. *Wie weit ist der Weg nach Deutschland? Sozialpsychologie der Jugend in der postsozialistischen Welt*. Leverkusen, Germany: Leske & Budrich; 1997.
11. Bernard HR. *Research Methods in Anthropology*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications; 1994.
12. Ball MS, Smith GWH. *Analyzing Visual Data*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications; 1992. Qualitative Research Methods Series 24.
13. Denzin NK. *The Research Act*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall; 1989.
14. Fullilove MT. Promoting social cohesion to improve health. *J Am Med Womens Assoc*. 1998; 53(2):72–76.
15. Fullilove MT, Green L, Fullilove RE. Building momentum: an ethnographic study of inner-city redevelopment. *Am J Public Health*. 1999;89: 840–844.
16. Fullilove MT, Heon V, Jimenez W, et al. Injury and anomie: effects of violence on an inner-city community. *Am J Public Health*. 1998;88: 924–927.
17. Strauss AL, Corbin J. *Basics of Qualitative Research*. London, England: Sage Publications; 1990.
18. Flick U. *Qualitative Forschung—Theorie, Methoden, Anwendung in Psychologie und Sozialwissenschaften*. Hamburg, Germany: Rohwolt Taschenbuch Verlag; 1998.
19. Miles M, Huberman AM. *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods*. Newbury Park, Calif: Sage Publications; 1984.
20. Younger JB. The alienation of the sufferer. *ANS Adv Nurs Sci*. 1995;17(4):53–72.
21. Simmons-Morton BG, Greene WH, Gottlieb NH. *Introduction to Health Education and Health Promotion*. Prospect Heights, Ill: Waveland Press Inc; 1995.
22. Glanz K, Lewis FM, Rimer BK. *Health Behavior and Health Education. Theory, Research and Practice*. San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass Inc; 1997.
23. Kazamel I. *Grenzenlos: Deutsch-deutsche Jugendbegegnung zwischen Mauerfall und Einheitsstaat*. Hamburg, Germany: Verlag Ergebnisse/PNV; 1992.
24. Benatar SR. Change and coping with change. *J R Coll Physicians*. 1995;29:436–441.