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Looking to the East:

Youth Identity in Berlin Through Subculture
Centered on Consumerism, and Music Following
the Fall of the Berlin Wall

Christopher Sinunu

Introduction

When World War II ended in Europe, the Allied forces split Germany into military districts. The four nations, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet, also split the German capital city of Berlin. As tensions were building up between the capitalist countries and the communist Soviets, two German nations sprung up in 1949: die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (BRD), also known as the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), in the West; and die Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (DDR), also known as the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the East. In 1961, the West Germans of Berlin found themselves in an isolated island as a wall was constructed, closing them in. The two Germanys developed distinct cultures from one another, the West being noted as wild and unruly and the East being seen as stingy and prudish. In October 1989, on East Germany's fortieth anniversary, the people marched in the country's largest protest, calling for reform. One month later, November 9, die Mauerfall, the Wall fell. The youth of Berlin were now pushed together after growing up with two different lifestyles and cultures. Their identities were thrown into question; what were the youth of Berlin, more Eastern, Western, or still divided and what then changed over time? In the five years following Mauerfall, the youth of Berlin identified culturally more Eastern, despite the rest of Germany being viewed as Western, through subcultures; specifically through a consumerism centered around the black market and a desire for what wasn't available, music, and Eastern nostalgia known as Ostalgie until an Easternly cultured Berlin faded away in the late 1990s with the rest of the GDR culture through the Ostalgie fad fading in popularity and the complete dissolution of the GDR and the takeover of the FRG.

Theory

Culture is a term with many meanings after being in use for centuries. Its definition, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*,

Culture: cultivation, tending, in Christian authors, worship; the action or practice of cultivating the soil; tillage, husbandry; the cultivation or rearing of certain animals (e.g. fish); the artificial development of microscopic organisms, organisms so produced; the cultivating or development (of the mind, faculties, manners), improvement or refinement by education and training; the condition of being trained or refined; the intellectual side of civilization; the prosecution or special attention or study of any subject or pursuit. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)¹

Dick Hebdige notes the number of definitions and how contradictory they can be in *Subculture: the meaning of style*. Cultural studies showed that in the definition of culture that a culture is determined by similarity in language, experience and reality.² Hebdige states that against culture is a hegemony that subculture falls into. From part one of *Subculture, the meaning of style*, “The term hegemony refers to a situation in which a provisional alliance of certain social groups can exert ‘total social authority’ over other subordinate groups,”³ Subcultures, according to Hebdige, go against nature and normalization that youth experience growing up. Hebdige looked at subcultures in England following the Second World War. Even though England and Germany developed different, and by definition had a different culture, the observations of subcultures that Hebdige notes follows into more than just the English culture. Subcultures, such as the punks, can transfer over into other cultures, as what happened in both East and West Germany. *Subculture: the meaning of style*, is used in this paper as a stepping stone for analyzing the differences and similarities that the Berlin youth faced following the fall of the Berlin Wall.

¹ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style*, (London: Routledge, 1979) 5.

² Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style*, (London: Routledge, 1979) 8.

³ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style*, (London: Routledge, 1979) 15-16.

Historiography

The Fall of the Berlin Wall is regarded as a key moment of history in the twentieth century. The Wall's Fall was the first time a communist East European became opened to the rest of the world. The Wall coming down ushered in the end of the Cold War and the dissolving of communist nations, such as the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and of course the German Democratic Republic. Historians have therefore been very interested in Germany, coming back after an immense defeat in the Second World War and being split in two for forty years with two distinct cultures and lifestyles. Many books and films have been made over the last twenty-five years cataloging the culture of Berlin before, during, and after the Berlin Wall.

Historians looked into the cultures and histories of the Germanys, from the German Empire, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, and the two divided Germanys to understand the cultural convergence that occurred when the Berlin Wall came down. Janet Ward commented that the West had become Americanized and transformed West Berlin into a pseudo-Las Vegas.⁴ The East began to absorb the Americanized German culture and take in the Las Vegas as part of their city. A collection of articles in *German Pop Culture* also look at the Americanization of Germany. While there is agreement in some, other articles, such as Winifred Fluck's article, question whether Germany is all that Americanized, especially when it comes to the East.⁵ The East was weaned off of America and Americanisms by the Soviet Union for around forty years. The non-American culture of the East stayed prevalent at reunification.

⁴ Janet Ward, *Post-Wall Berlin: Borders, Space and Identity*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

⁵ Agnes E. Mueller, *German Pop Culture: How American is it?* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004) 19.

When historians first began to analyze the Mauerfall, many stated that Berlin, like the rest of the newly collapsed GDR, was western. The culture and capitalism swept from the West to the East almost as quickly as the Wall falling down. One place that historians argue as proof of Berlin being immediately westernized is with schooling. Stefan Berger compared the historiography and way history was taught in the two Germanys. Berger stated that the GDR avoided teaching the about the Third Reich while the FRG did⁶. Berger said that the curriculum went straight to the West and therefore the entire former GDR was a Western culture with their youth by the start of the next school year. Author Jana Hensel noted a similar structure in her own personal life. Her book, *Zonenkinder* and its translated version *After the Wall: Confessions from an East German Childhood and the Life that Came Next*, touched on the new Western syllabus that entered the schools directly following the Mauerfall⁷. According to Hensel, however, it did take longer before the Easterners identified themselves as Western.

The popular film, *Goodbye Lenin!* illustrated a look of East Berlin that tried to retain its Eastern culture. Following the Wall, the protagonist must make sure that his mother doesn't find out that East Germany disappeared while she was in a coma. The film shows a small GDR culture living and thriving in the newly opened Berlin, despite constantly being surrounded by a new, invading Western culture. Though the film itself isn't a scholarly source, Roger Hillman analyzed the popular film and how it changes the view of post-Wall German culture. "Goodbye Lenin (2003): History in the Subjunctive" from *Rethinking History* analyzes the film to show how the Ostalgie craze affected culture, both during the timeframe of the film and in the world that the film was shown to. The major focus is the wave of Ostalgie, which as described by

⁶ Stefan Berger, "Was Bleibt von der Geschichtswissenschaft der DDR? Blick auf eine Alternative Historische Kultur im Osten Deutschlands," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 2002, 1016-1034.

⁷ Jana Hensel, *Zonenkinder*, (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2002).

Hillman, “for instance in the historical phenomenon of Ostalgie, an impossible desire to retain the past in the present.”⁸ Hillman asks the reader to look at history in a different light, in an alternate reality sense, to think about what if situations, quoting examples like the GDR culture living on and German soldiers flirting with English girls in a Nazi occupied Britain.⁹ Coca-Cola reappeared in East Berlin’s streets and the main character fabricated that it became a socialist drink.¹⁰ A love for cola already existed in the East through a black market consumer culture, as noted by Milena Veenis¹¹. Veenis describes this preexistent consumerism as a gateway for a swift move to Western culture following Mauerfall. Hillman also comments on the Eastern fascination and desire for Coca-Cola, tracing it back to the 1950s and World War II.¹²

Popular sources reflect opinions of the culture and the society they are serving. Historians and popular media work together to state their opinions on the way that life is in a certain area, during a specific time period. This paper will be combining the popular and academic views and arguments to show that the commonly agreed solution is false, and that Berlin was very much an Eastern haven in a Western world.

Sources

This paper employed the use of many types of sources ranging from academic profiles, readings, and articles to photographs, memoirs, and popular media such as films. The primary and secondary sources work together to paint a picture of the youth cultures of East, West, and

⁸ Roger Hillman, “*Goodbye Lenin! (2003)*” *Rethinking History*, 2006, 221-237.

⁹ Roger Hillman, “*Goodbye Lenin! (2003)*” *Rethinking History*, 2006, 221-237.

¹⁰ *Goodbye Lenin!*, directed by Wolfgang Becker, 2003.

¹¹ Milena Veenis, “Cola in the German Democratic Republic East German Fantasies on Western Consumption,” *The Author*, 2011, 489-524.

¹² Roger Hillman, “*Goodbye Lenin! (2003)*” *Rethinking History*, 2006, 221-237.

united Germany that helps showcase my argument of Berlin's youth identifying for as Easterners following the Fall of the Berlin Wall.

The primary sources dig directly into that moment of time, the Fall of the Wall and the years directly following it. Some primary sources used are diaries and memoirs from people living in Germany at the time of Mauerfall and Wende. Jana Hensel is known for being one of the first to publish her experience as an Eastern youth with her memoir, *Zozenkinder*. Other primary sources included photos, such as the photo of punk and rock singer Nina Hagen and a photo of youth in the punk subculture group. The two photos work to show where a subculture came from and who followed it at the time being examined. Interviews in a documentary can be considered partly primary sources, though the documentary, *This Ain't California*, is a secondary source, hearing from the East German skateboarder and learning about the skater culture is primary information.¹³ Newspaper articles from the time period are also employed in this paper. Some of the newspapers are from other countries; the views they provide expand opinions of Berlin's culture and identity outside of Berlin and Germany. An American paper could say whether Berlin was like a German-speaking America, and British papers could compare the Berlin subcultures to the British ones, especially since punk was carried over to Germany. The primary sources used in this paper act as gateways into the minds of the Berlin youth as they were being thrown together into one country and one city.

The secondary sources used range from academic writings to popular movies. The film, *Goodbye Lenin!*, shows the world the craze and desire for East Nostalgia in Germany and Berlin. The academic books and articles analyze different aspects of the two Germanys. Music and

¹³ *This Ain't California*. Directed by Marten Persiel. 2012.

subcultures are analyzed in depth and used in comparison to the other Germany. Historians take the lifestyles of the two Germanys and look at how they were different and similar, but they also look at how the two cultures worked together and interacted following the Berlin Wall.

Historical Background

This section is to educate about what occurred before the Berlin Wall. The following will cover the aftermath of World War II and the two Germanys developing distinct cultures for forty years before their reunification. By knowing what led up to the Wall falling down, one may gain a fuller understanding of the argument I am propositioning.

Following the Second World War, the victorious Allied Powers split the Third Reich into four military occupation zones: one for the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union. Berlin too was split into the four military zones despite being surrounded by the Soviet zone. In 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic were founded. The FRG was formed from the American, British, and French zones while the GDR was all made up from the Soviet sector.

Tensions began to rise between the two German nations when the USSR and GDR blocked off Western ground trade routes to Berlin. The goal was to starve out West Berlin so it would concede to the East. What resulted was the Berlin Airlift, comprised of the Western nations flying in supplies and not buckling to the communist powers. Many Easterners were fleeing from East Berlin and the surrounding state of Brandenburg to West Berlin and then finding passage into the rest of the FRG. In 1961, construction began on a wall that completely encircled West Berlin, closing it off to the GDR and making it more difficult for Easterners to flee.

The Cold War continued on, keeping relations between the East and West vastly different. Two different cultures developed; capitalism ruled the West while communism kept the East in order. The West was all about consumerism and accumulating personal wealth. Large department stores towered in the West Berlin skyline. The East had equality amongst its population. The West had more options, being able to get goods from most of the world, while in contrast an Easterner could really only get goods from Russia or the GDR itself. A good example being West Germans being able to get cars cheap, easy, and in mass quantities while the East only had the Trabant which cost a lot of money and took three months to receive. October 1989 saw the largest organized protest in East Germany, with thousands of Berliners marching to the Palace of the Republic clamoring for reform. One month later, the Berlin Wall came tumbling down on November ninth.

The two Germanys officially reunited on October third, 1990 with the name of West Germany being the official title. But even though the German Democratic Republic was nonexistent in on paper and in name, the culture continued to thrive with the youth of Berlin.

Body of the Paper

Subculture

A subculture is defined as a subdivision of a national culture or an enclave within it with a distinct integrated network of behavior, beliefs, and attitudes. According to Dick Hebdige, “The word ‘subculture’ is loaded down with mystery. It suggests secrecy, masonic oaths, an Underworld. It also invokes the large and no less difficult concept ‘culture’”.¹⁴ Subcultures can

¹⁴ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style*, (London: Routledge, 1979) 4.

be used to examine the overall culture of a country or city by looking at the smaller individual groups that make up the larger identity with their similarities and interactions. The East and West traded off objects, trends, and ideas that transformed groups of the youth populations into subcultures. The majority of subcultures in Berlin kept an Eastern vibe going in the first few years of reunification.

West Berlin was a typical Western city during the Cold War. It was a part of the Federal Republic of Germany, and therefore capitalist. Though the West was clearly separated by the Wall, it was also separated generationally. According to Josef Ernst, the youth of West Berlin felt more in common with the youth of East Berlin than with the older generation of West Berliners. The older generation remembered Hitler and the Nazi times while the youth only remember the Wall looming over them.¹⁵ The youth in West Berlin broke away from the old generation and their culture, as Ernst put it, the youth in West Berlin became, “*Aussteiger*—literally, those who have ‘stepped out’ of mainstream bourgeois society.”¹⁶ The youth in West Berlin were trying to be more radical and against control from the older generation, a lot of times through activities like squatting in abandoned buildings as Alex Clarkson noticed.¹⁷ The Western youth already saw themselves more like the East. Therefore when the Wall came down the Western youth could easily connect and unite with the former Eastern youth subcultures. While the Western youth saw themselves more like the Easterners, the Easterners were cut from the Westerners and had their own subcultures, unaware to the similarities of the Western youth.

¹⁵ Josef Ernst, “The Berlin Scene”, *The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 1988, 123-127.

¹⁶ Josef Ernst, “The Berlin Scene”, *The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 1988, 123-127.

¹⁷ Alex Clarkson, “Urban Tribes: Subcultures and Political Conflict in West Berlin, 1945-1991”, *Social Justice*.

Though Eastern subculture had many stems from the West, they developed the subcultures into their own distinct style. Punk and Goth movements sprung up and acted as dissidents against the East German police state.

Some aspects of subculture crossed over the Wall during the Cold War. One activity that crossed the Wall into the East was skateboarding. A large group of teenager began to rise up. The early 1980s had over five-hundred youths documented as semi-organized skate groups¹⁸. The skaters rose out of three major cities in the GDR: Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden¹⁹. The groups were initially seen as hoodlums and troublemakers by the government and the older generations, as noted by Kai Reinhart. The skating culture brought youths together and made use of public space, causing some fear to a government constantly concerned about calls for reform from the public²⁰. Skating started out as a Western idea that Eastern youth discovered in the black markets and pirate television stations intercepted from the West²¹. The government of the GDR wanted to find a way to make Western ideas seem like well-respected and encouraged institutions of East German society. Skateboarding was soon turned into a state-sponsored sport, with government run clubs, schools, and even a national team rising up²². When the Wall fell, Berlin opened up more space for skating. The Eastern skaters flocked to the new spaces of the West, parks, parking lots, the former no-man's land of the Wall²³. The skaters mingled and began to adopt each other's lifestyle, but the Eastern skating culture outnumbered West Berlin's. The majority

¹⁸ *This Ain't California*, directed by Marten Persiel, 2012.

¹⁹ Kai Reinhart, "I Ollied the Berlin Wall: Skateboarding in Socialist East Germany," *Stadion*, 2010, 157-176.

²⁰ Kai Reinhart, "I Ollied the Berlin Wall: Skateboarding in Socialist East Germany," *Stadion*, 2010, 157-176.

²¹ *This Ain't California*, directed by Marten Persiel, 2012.

²² *This Ain't California*, directed by Marten Persiel, 2012.

²³ Kai Reinhart, "I Ollied the Berlin Wall: Skateboarding in Socialist East Germany," *Stadion*, 2010, 157-176.

culture swallowed up Western skating, the more uniform and less freestyled Eastern skating ruled supreme²⁴.

Mark Fenemore wrote extensively on the subcultures of the East and West Germans, looking very closely into gender roles, interaction with the older generation, and interactions with the other subgroups²⁵. Many subcultures, as Fenemore explains, stem from musical influences²⁶. A lot of music escaped the West and got to East Berlin through black markets and pirate radio networks. The most notable East German music subculture was adopted from the British punk movement.

Music

Music is an integral part of subculture. The types of music that youth listen create connections to their peers. The music of the peers then creates styles and help form subcultures. Music is a huge contributor to the subcultures of East Berlin. Music can cause emotions and give ideas to the impressionable youth. The government of the German Democratic Republic tried to control the music listened to. The GDR was notorious for outlawing certain objects and styles, especially if they were American, but later adopting them and claiming the object or style to be full of socialist values for the people. Jazz for example was used as means for protest initially in the GDR.²⁷ However, the GDR would eventually allow jazz music and preferring it over the rebellious and anarchist ideals of rock 'n' roll. East Germans would get music through pirated

²⁴ *This Ain't California*, directed by Marten Persiel, 2012.

²⁵ Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock 'N' Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

²⁶ Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock 'N' Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

²⁷ Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

radio transmissions. The youth would listen to the music and act on it. Rock music was said to make women more promiscuous, therefore the East banned the music of Elvis at rock 'n' roll's beginning.²⁸ Protests due to rock music would occur. In June of 1987, East Germans demanded the crumbling of the Wall and the GDR regime while the British rock band Genesis performed right on the other side of the Wall in West Berlin.²⁹ This was the most serious protest since a similar incident in 1977. Four people reportedly died during the protests. The youth saw this as a good opportunity to call for reform as the government was celebrating Berlin's seven-hundred and fiftieth anniversary.³⁰ Eventually, a Western artist came to East Berlin. Bruce Springsteen played a concert but far away from the Wall, so that there wouldn't be any protests. The East German youth used music as a means to express their disdain for the government.

When the Wall fell, and the Berlins merged together and the youth cultures moved together, the musical stylings and interests followed. Though a lot of the music listened to, and for that fact available, was Western, the appreciations of it was Eastern. The music was used as inspiration and a way to protest the older generation that they did not understand and who did not understand them.³¹ The subcultures that the youth aligned themselves with are partly shaped through music; it is one of the most defining factors of subculture, according to Hebdige.³² Artists such as Nina Hagen were a big inspiration, especially to the punks. Her story is that of being born to East Germany's most prestigious family of musicians and running to the West with

²⁸ Uta G. Poiger, "Rock 'n' Roll, Female Sexuality, and the Cold War Battle over German Identities," *The Journal of Modern History*, 1996.

²⁹ "An East German Rock 'n' Roll Riot at the Wall Turns Political." German History in Documents and Images. June 10, 1987. <http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/> (accessed October 14, 2015).

³⁰ "An East German Rock 'n' Roll Riot at the Wall Turns Political." German History in Documents and Images. June 10, 1987. <http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/> (accessed October 14, 2015).

³¹ Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

³² Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style*, (London: Routledge, 1979).

her father.³³ She was completely against the government rule of the GDR and constantly protested them and their morals and ideals from across the Wall. She, and her band, went against the norms and gender roles, such as Nina being the more bass part in her songs. The youth would feed off of her protest and moving against any form of government control. The music helped the combined Berliners find a voice and find commonality amongst each other.

Consumerism

Western consumerism is a known aspect in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. With communism dissipating around the time of Mauerfall only the consumerism from capitalist nations remained and spread to the rest of the world. Berlin was clearly split still when it came to consumerism. In the West, the large department stores were king while the East continued to be more selective. Eastern consumerism focused on glamour and the illusion of wealth, buying items from the West that would give the appearance of worldliness and success within the communist party³⁴.

Previously stated in the historiography, Coca-Cola proved to be a huge staple in the consumer lifestyle of both East and West Germany. The Easterners saw the Coca-Cola bottle as a sign of wealth, placing them on one's mantle was a means of impressing peers³⁵. It showed that a person earned money through favor with the party. The East Germans took major usage out of black markets to get contraband items, especially Coke. The East was unable to manufacture many common objects the West had in the same quantity, notably metals and glass, therefore

³³ "Photo of Nina Hagen." *German History in Documents and Images*. n.d. <http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/>.

³⁴ Milena Veenis, "Cola in the German Democratic Republic East German Fantasies on Western Consumption," *The Author*, 2011, 489-524.

³⁵ Milena Veenis, "Cola in the German Democratic Republic East German Fantasies on Western Consumption," *The Author*, 2011, 489-524.

plastics were in huge abundance³⁶. West Berlin relied similarly in means of consumerism, they could not get what they needed as easily as the rest of the Western world, and everything needed to be airlifted in³⁷. Both Berlins had this similar consumerism that relied on outside sources to supply them. Because of this, the Easterners and Westerners had a shared culture and identity. The swarm of items flooding into an accessible Berlin overwhelmed the citizens. The Eastern black market consumerism lasted until the late 1990s, when a singular German identity was truly formed.

The skaters created their own consumerism as well. It was mostly focused in the black market system like Coca-Cola³⁸. A difference though was the concept of customization for skating. One could switch out axels and wheels and accessorize a skateboard. These items could also be procured at black markets but also could be found and made using repurposed objects³⁹. A trade and barter culture rose among the skaters, they could customize their boards with parts they trade with other skaters. This extended into the skater subculture of the new Berlin after Mauerfall.⁴⁰

The East Germans put different values on the material than the Western World did. The appreciation of easier to find materials, harder to find objects, and the ability to have some sense of wealth for hard work in an “equal” state. The Western youth, wanted to escape from a generation that they didn’t relate to at all, so they went to the opposite of what they were raised on, to find a group that understood them, isolated from the West and estranged from the

³⁶ Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

³⁷ Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

³⁸ *This Ain't California*, directed by Marten Persiel, 2012.

³⁹ *This Ain't California*, directed by Marten Persiel, 2012.

⁴⁰ *This Ain't California*, directed by Marten Persiel, 2012.

generation before them.⁴¹ The West Berliners adopted the material appreciations that the Easterners had. Instead of staying with the buying culture and big box stores that are commonly found in the West, the West Berliner youth chose to follow in the path of desiring harder to obtain objects and materials while using cheaper materials in everyday life, like the Easterners that they began to associate with and emulate. How groups see and value items is an important defining aspect to subculture.⁴² The Eastern view of consumerism did fade, with the rest of the GDR in the late 1990s, as the rest of Germany moved on from their separated past and towards a unified future.

Eastern Nostalgia

A strange trend appeared in Germany starting in 1993. The trend was referred as Ostalgie, coming from the German words Ost for East and Nostalgie for nostalgia. The word by literal definition was a sense of nostalgia and desire for the ways of East Germany again. The Germans still felt like a wall existed, though not physical a wall still towered in the minds of the Germans. The West Germans and the East Germans still felt drastically different from each other, the Easterners clung onto the more socialist ideals of the GDR. Clothing trends and Eastern rock, Ostrock, began to resurface in the former GDR⁴³. My argument is seen more feasible because of the Ostalgie wave. The initial assumption of Germany was that it had become all Western, but a clamor for Eastern culture and life shows that there were parts of Germany that still pined for the GDR. A lot of the Ostalgie craze came from the youth, those who were

⁴¹ Josef Ernst, "The Berlin Scene", *The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 1988, 123-127.

⁴² Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style*, (London: Routledge, 1979).

⁴³ Denis Staunton, "AFTER THE WALL: OSTALGIA; Four Years ago today, the Berlin Wall fell. The jubilation soon turned sour. Denis Staunton continues a series that looks at life in eastern Europe after the Cold War," *The Guardian (London)*, November 9, 1993, 16.

children, teens, or in their early twenties at the time of Mauerfall, an a majority came from large cities like Berlin⁴⁴. The Ossies, as they were called, had a strong lust for what was taken from them. Most were in the stage of their lives when they began to have a self-identity forged from the identities of their peers and groups. The Berliners who had Ostalgie had a clear identity; they were culturally Eastern and wanted recognition for that⁴⁵.

As stated before, the youth from both sides of the Berlin Wall estranged and distanced from the generation before them, finding similarity and companionship amongst themselves.⁴⁶ With the older generations now rejecting the East and moving towards their future as purely West Germany, the dissident youths, lashing out against the older generations, would therefore embrace the East. The Ostalgie wave was in effect at the perfect opportunity for the united youth of Berlin. They were given an opportunity to be themselves, to have a culture just to themselves, one that was left abandoned like how they felt, abandoned and different from the Western world that surrounded them.

Summation of Identity and Aftermath

The East and West Berliners found similarities within themselves. As stated by Josef Ernst, the youth of West Berlin identified themselves more with the Eastern youth than with the older generation of Westerners.⁴⁷ The subcultures worked in the underground against the norm of

⁴⁴ Hans J Misselwitz, "Nicht länger mit dem Gesicht nach Westen. Das neue Selbstbewusstsein der Ostdeutschen[No Longer Facing toward the West. The New East German Sense of Self]," *Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger: Bonn*, 1996, 26-32.

⁴⁵ Hans J Misselwitz, "Nicht länger mit dem Gesicht nach Westen. Das neue Selbstbewusstsein der Ostdeutschen[No Longer Facing toward the West. The New East German Sense of Self]," *Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger: Bonn*, 1996, 26-32.

⁴⁶ Josef Ernst, "The Berlin Scene", *The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 1988, 123-127.

⁴⁷ Josef Ernst, "The Berlin Scene", *The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 1988, 123-127.

the government and over-culture, as per the definition of subculture.⁴⁸ The Eastern culture was a way for the West Berliners to break away from being different from the previous generations. The East Berliner subcultures were a means to feel connected to a group that had been separated by a wall for almost thirty years.

While the youth of Berlin aligned to the East German culture in the early years following the Fall of the Berlin Wall, it eventually faded like the rest of the German Democratic Republic. As with all things in history, memory fades as do people, culture, nations, and empires. The GDR had become a memory, and the youth that kept the East alive grew up and out of the Ostalgie dream, and woke up into the new Western society, the new German society.

Conclusion

In the five years following Mauerfall, the youth of Berlin identified culturally more Eastern, despite the rest of Germany being viewed as Western, through subcultures; specifically through a consumerism centered around the black market and a desire for what wasn't available, music, and Eastern nostalgia known as Ostalgie until an Easternly cultured Berlin faded away in the late 1990s with the rest of the GDR culture through the Ostalgie fad fading in popularity and the complete dissolution of the GDR and the takeover of the FRG. The consumerism in both East and West Berlin were nearly the same. They both relied on receiving goods through other means, usually nonconventional. Following the Fall of the Wall, Berlin kept this black market consumerism for a majority of the 1990s until the flood of consumer goods and services dominated. The subcultures seen in Berlin reflected Eastern, especially with skaters. However, despite a more Eastern majority in cultural identity, music broke through as a Western aspect.

⁴⁸ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style*, (London: Routledge, 1979) 4.

Eastern music, notably Ostrock, faded away until the Ostalgie fad kicked in years later. Music helped the culture of the Berliner youth express themselves and their disdain for the generations that raised them and who they disagreed with. The subcultures had their idols, be it Western artists out of Britain and America or from East Germany itself. The youth put different meaning to their idols, meanings that challenged gender norms of East and West and meanings that had them protest for how they were governed. While the youth of Berlin aligned to the East German culture in the early years following the Fall of the Berlin Wall, it eventually faded like the rest of the German Democratic Republic. This article has shown through three major aspects that the youth of Berlin leaned more in the Eastern direction when it came to how they identified themselves. The cultures, the subcultures, and the buying lifestyles mimicked and idolized the communist nation's method. The GDR now is a faded memory; Germany is an economic leader in the world with its western style. But for a time, the youth of Germany's capital were still very much Eastern. Even though it isn't too clear that an Eastern culture still exists in Germany, the youth from the time of Mauerfall are now the major workforce, the policy makers, and the current deciders of what Germany will be in the world. The Berlin Wall was seen as a dark point in the world's history, a barrier of progress and its fall freed many, but what it truly did was make hybrid cultures that today shape Germany's history and future.

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