Spring 2018

Kiez Kieken: Observations of Berlin, Vol. 2, Spring 2018

Maria Ebner  
*Fordham University*

Paula Begonja  
*Fordham University*

Evan Biancardi  
*Fordham University*

Elodie Huston  
*Fordham University*

McKenna Lahr  
*Fordham University*

*See next page for additional authors*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://fordham.bepress.com/modlang_studentpubs](https://fordham.bepress.com/modlang_studentpubs)  
Part of the [German Language and Literature Commons](https://fordham.bepress.com/modlang_studentpubs), [Modern Languages Commons](https://fordham.bepress.com/modlang_studentpubs), and the [Modern Literature Commons](https://fordham.bepress.com/modlang_studentpubs)

Recommended Citation


This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Modern Languages and Literatures Department at DigitalResearch@Fordham. It has been accepted for inclusion in Modern Languages and Literatures Student Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalResearch@Fordham. For more information, please contact considine@fordham.edu.
Stories of the Stasi Files,
SOPHIE LEE

Countercultural Art in Berlin,
Mackenzie Norton

Women Versus the Patriarchy: Fighting for Healthcare Rights in 20th Century Berlin,
ANN PEKATA

Destructively Divine Decadence: Cabaret’s Reflection of the Weimar Republic,
CATHERINE RABUS

Is Socioeconomic Status the Main Influencing Factor of Childhood Obesity in Kreuzberg?,
TIMOTHY UY

Turkey in Berlin. The Emergence of Oriental Rap and HipHop,
PAULA BEGONJA

German Cinema as an Instrument for Reunification in Berlin,
EVAN BIANCARDI

Fractured Identities, Fractured Classrooms: Questions of Integration and Education Policy,
ELODIE HUSTON

Berlin’s Fight for the Environment,
MCKENNA LAHR
With this journal *Kiez kieken: Observations of Berlin* the students’ articles of the course *Berlin Tales: Germany’s Kiez and Metropolis* taught by Prof. Maria Ebner are being published to open up classroom discourse to a broader academic community. Topics have been chosen individually by each student and involved first-hand fieldwork research in Berlin, Germany, between March 21st and March 28th of 2018 as well as continuous individual research throughout the course of the semester. Most students of this course have chosen to research topics that are located outside of their regular major’s program, and therefore represent a specific personal interest or emotional story. All articles are the result of thoughtful personal engagement with the city of Berlin, the culture of Germany, and the community of Fordham University.

**PAULA BEGONJA,** 1
“Turkey in Berlin. The Emergence of Oriental Rap and HipHop.”

**EVAN BIANCARDI,** 7
“German Cinema as an Instrument for Reunification in Berlin.”

**ELODIE HUSTON,** 11
“Fractured Identities, Fractured Classrooms: Questions of Integration and Education Policy.”

**McKENNA LAHR,** 16
“Berlin’s Fight for the Environment.”

**SOPHIE LEE,** 21
“Stories of the Stasi Files.”

**MACKENZIE NORTON,** 25
“Countercultural Art in Berlin.”

**ANN PEKATA,** 29

**CATHERINE RABUS,** 33
“Destructively Divine Decadence: *Cabaret’s* Reflection of the Weimar Republic.”

**TIMOTHY UY,** 38
“Is Socioeconomic Status the Main Influencing Factor of Childhood Obesity in Kreuzberg?”

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The students of the course *Berlin Tales: Germany’s Kiez and Metropolis* and Prof. Maria Ebner wish to thank the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Dr. Andrew Clark and Dr. Susanne Hafner, Dean Maura Mast, Dr. Joe Rienti and Sajana Blank and the International Study Abroad Office, John Roper and especially Jennifer Porto at CIEE, the Max Kade Foundation, Dr. James L. Clark and his family for their help and support.
The images used in this journal have been (a) created by the authors of the articles, or (b) assembled from a variety of internet web sites. A good faith effort has been made to comply with US Copyright Law. This does not mean that none of the material is copyright, but that the “fair use” clause of US Copyright Law has been adhered to. In particular, any copyright material used here is not used for commercial gain. If there are any objections that material placed here does not conform to the “fair use” provisions outlined, contact the German program at germanprogram@fordham.edu and material will be removed immediately pending resolution of the issue.
ABSTRACT

The Turkish population and presence in Berlin is one that cannot be overlooked; a simple stroll past the bustling shops of Kreuzberg, or past the numerous Turkish restaurants found in Neukölln, demonstrates that people of Turkish descent make up a significant population of the residents of Berlin, and clearly have a prominent impact on the city. Ever since the arrival of Turkish Gastarbeiter in Berlin during the 1960s, people of Turkish descent have often faced many difficulties with integration into German society, stemming from cultural, religious, and political differences. This isolation led to the development of a vibrant Turkish rap and hip-hop culture in the 1980s, where certain groups such as Cartel and Islamic Force are credited with the creation of “Oriental Hip Hop,” which unites Turkish sounds, German lyrics, and the themes of peace and unity, against xenophobia and discrimination. By analyzing the work of the two most important Turkish rap groups Cartel and Islamic Force, one can see how Turkish rap and hip-hop in Berlin is an extremely profound and revolutionary music genre that still has a significant impact on the music scene in Germany today.

PART I: THE HISTORY OF THE TURKISH ROOTS IN BERLIN

The introduction of a Turkish presence in Berlin took place about five decades ago, where Turkish guest workers first began to populate the city in the 1960s, fulfilling Germany’s need for people to labor in various heavy industries at the time. These guest workers were expected to return to their homeland after working in Berlin for a few years, explaining why the government never took the measures necessary to promote proper integration policies (Spirova 2013). In the decades following, more and more people from Turkey started settling in Berlin, creating new generations of people of Turkish descent born in Germany who consider Berlin to be their only home. Currently, Berlin contains the largest population of people of Turkish background outside of Turkey; out of the 470,000 people of non-German descent living in Berlin, 200,000 of them are of Turkish background (Spirova 2013). Throughout the decades, these people of Turkish descent have been able to bury their roots in Berlin, where in districts such as Kreuzberg and Neukölln, they make up a majority of the population. By imbedding their own unique...
culture in the surrounding communities, people of Turkish descent have been able to nurture the establishment and proliferation of a strong Turkish presence in Berlin.

PART II: The Foundations of Turkish Rap and Hip Hop

As a result of the arrival of Turkish guest workers in the 1960s, the conditions for the emergence of a Turkish rap and hip-hop culture were made ripe in the 1980s. Because they were considered outsiders in many of the German discotheques, Turkish youth gravitated towards those operated by American soldiers stationed near Tempelhof Airport in Berlin. These young teens had the opportunity to interact with African American servicemen, who introduced them to the rap and hip-hop genre (Solomon 307). Through this music, many Turkish youth found an “idiom in which they could express their perceptions of themselves as having a similar place in German society to that of black people in the United States” (Solomon 308). Popular American hip-hop movies, such as Wild Style (1982) and Beat Street (1984), both captivated the minds of Turkish youth, and perpetuated the growth of this new rap and hip-hop culture throughout Berlin. The late 1980s in Berlin also saw an increase in the rise of violence and attacks against “foreigners” (Diessel, 167). In order to combat these difficulties, the German government decided to establish youth centers for Turkish teens in Berlin, in order to protect them and to provide them with a safe place to congregate. Found in Kreuzberg, NaunynRitze is a famous Turkish youth center that is considered to be the headquarters of Turkish rap and hip-hop (Kaya 46). At this youth center, Turkish teens gathered and began to write their own hip-hop songs first in Turkish, and then in English and in German. In addition to the youth centers, state-subsidized competitions were also held, such as “Istanbul,” which was a two day culture festival where Turkish performers were able to gather and perform their traditional music and dances for one another. Other activities included outdoor music festivals such as Heimatklänge, along with Fest der Kulturen, where both worked to promote the “multikulti” theme of Berlin. Such institutions were quite important for the Turkish population in Berlin because it enabled them to build a community through which they were able to express their cultural customs and traditions, allowing the unique rap and hip-hop culture to thrive in the city (Diessel 166).

PART III: Cartel and the Introduction of “Cultural Nationalist Rap”

As a result of the festivals and the large emphasis on multiculturalism, Berlin started to become a dynamic metropolis and a global city. By 1995, Turkish rappers and musicians such as MC Gio, DJ Derzon, and Boe B started to seek...
commercial success beyond the confines of their communities and youth centers (Soysal 69).

Cartel, founded in 1994, was the first Turkish rap and hip-hop group to achieve notable success in Germany. The group was composed of members Karakan, Erci-E, and Da Krime Posse. They all wore black clothing, and their signature look consisted of uniform black t-shirts covered with Turkish motifs (Kaya 47). In 1995, the group was featured on the cover of Spex, the leading music magazine in Germany, and their first album Cartel was the most successful and popular album in the country. Cartel went on tour all over Turkey and Germany, performing numerous sold out shows and topping the Turkish pop charts. Their first hit single, “Cartel,” combined references to specific themes such as solidarity and blood brotherhood. By linking together Turkish percussion sounds and folk music, along with German, English, and Turkish lyrics, the song became one of the “main pillars of Turkish nationalism,” demonstrating that violence against minorities in Germany should be combated with calls to civic responsibility (Soysal 72).

What is interesting to examine in Cartel’s music is that the group utilized the authentic form of Turkish lyric structure in their songs, enabling the rappers and their listeners to “contextualize themselves in their own culture,” and feel a connection to their ethnic identities (Kaya 49). One of the lyrics in the song “Cartel” reads: “Bloodbrother is everything. If we get together, no one can beat us. Come on guys! Karakan is coming. Come on guys! Nothing can scare us” (Kaya 49). Another lyric reads “All together we will break up the chains, in a way that suits the blood brothers, if you’re ready, it’s your turn now” (Kaya, 49). By analyzing such lyrics, one can see how the rappers of Cartel aimed to mobilize the Turkish masses against issues plaguing solidarity such as arson attacks, xenophobia, exclusion, the drug trade, and capitalism (Güney 143). The song also praises family institutions that are key to Turkish culture, presents Germany as a homeland, and criticizes the perception of people of Turkish background as being outsiders in Germany (Diessel 170). By creating music that Turkish people could relate to, Cartel’s music was truly revolutionary because it was the first music genre that exemplified the hardships of assimilating into German society that people of Turkish background often come across (Kaya 50).

PART IV: Islamic Force and True Oriental Hip Hop

While Cartel was the initial group that was able to commercialize Turkish rap and hip-hop in Berlin, Islamic Force was first group that truly solidified the foundations of “Oriental hip-hop” in Berlin, and established its position as a politically charged and transcultural genre of music. Islamic Force was founded in 1986 by members Boe B, Killa Hakan, Nelie, and DJ Derezon. The name of
the group was later changed to Kan-Ak, which in Turkish means “running blood” (Kaya 51). This was done in retaliation to bring attention to the term “Kanake,” which many right-wing Germans used to identify black people; thus, the term “Kan-Ak” was the Turkish vernacular of this word (Kaya 51). Islamic Force had the greatest impact on Turkish rap and hip-hop because it solidified the “Oriental hip-hop” movement in Berlin. By mixing together traditional Turkish sounds with American hip-hop beats, Oriental hip-hop was a compelling creation at the time because it “brought together issues of music, identity, and power to the surface in a city already struggling to assemble its identity after a turbulent decade of reunification and reconstruction” (Diessel 171). In their music, the group combined traditional Turkish instruments such as the zurna, baglama, and ud with the Afro-American drum-computer rhythm, therefore transculturating rap. Thus, through Oriental rap and hip-hop, the “global rhythm and beat of rap infused with local Turkish folk and pop music,” which was the specific process that Islamic Force highlighted in their songs (Diessel 172).

In a similar fashion to the music of Cartel, one of the main themes in the music of Islamic Force is blood brotherhood, which can be observed in the song “Selaminaleyküm.” One lyric in the song reads: “Those peasants turned out to be clever, they worked hard. Opened a bakery or a döner kebab on each corner, but they paid a lot for this success. We are losing life, losing blood” (Kaya 53). Mc Boe-B in the song continues to tell the story of a Turkish man who is arrested and charged with auto-theft in Berlin, simply due to the “lack of a document.” These lyrics express the hardships that people of Turkish background are confronted with, and the feelings of hostility that they often experience as being outsiders in a community. By expressing these conflicts that people of Turkish descent face with their own diasporic identities, this song can also be seen as a “quest for the homeland,” and a cry for unity against such inequalities. Mc Boe-B is seen as being almost like a “messenger” chosen by his Turkish community in Berlin to express their difficulties of existing in Germany (Kaya, 53). By displaying these hardships in a way that empowers ethnic minorities, Turkish-Germans are enabled to stand up for their rights, and feel a strong sense of pride in their background. Thus, because the music of Islamic Force was extremely politically charged and expressive, it paved a road for German artists to be able to create music that was unrestricted and representative of their struggles, fears, and beliefs. In doing so, the group was able to permanently alter the face of the German music scene, and set a precedent for music serving as medium through which people could freely express their feelings, and achieve positive and tangible change in society (Güney 143).
CONCLUSION:

The establishment of a Turkish/Oriental rap and hip-hop music genre in Berlin is substantial and imperative to examine because it was the first politically-charged music genre that took a stand against the inequalities that people who were not native Germans faced in the city. By allowing the movement to proliferate and expand throughout Berlin, the city was able to develop the unique, expressive, and progressive culture that it still has today, while also introducing the influence of Oriental rap and hip-hop to the rest of Germany. Not only did the movement become profound in Germany, but it also permanently altered the music scene after its arrival in Turkey. Because Turkish people were introduced to this new hip-hop culture that their counterparts in Berlin had created, many began to question the role and presence of Turkish traditions and customs in pop music within major cities such as Istanbul and Ankara (Kaya, 59). In doing so, one can conclude that this Oriental rap and hip-hop movement that sprouted in Berlin was both transcultural and extremely influential at the same time, permanently altering both German and Turkish culture, while also addressing many issues with acceptance and integration into Berlin society at the time.

While the Oriental rap and hip-hop movement took place in the 1990s, its implications in both Berlin, and in Germany are still very much alive today. Because Cartel and Islamic Force have cemented such a sturdy foundation for politically-charged and thought-provoking music in German culture, popular Turkish-German rappers today such as Bushido, Sido, and Kool Savas, are able to continue in their legacy and practice. Popular songs from these artists, such as “Ich und meine Maske” by Sido, and “Das Urteil” by Kool Savas, both include the same themes of blood brotherhood and discrimination against non-native Germans that their predecessors exemplified in their music. Thus, as a result of this movement, current musicians in Germany are able to create music where they can freely express their struggles, beliefs, and opinions regarding numerous political and societal issues. While integration policies and inclusion of non-native Germans have definitely improved in diverse cities such as Berlin, this music is still praised and listened to by Turkish and German people alike, and its influence and impact on German music along with Berlin culture must not be underappreciated.

References


7. [https://berlindividedcity.wordpress.com/2013/02/08/turkish-immigrants-in-berlin/](https://berlindividedcity.wordpress.com/2013/02/08/turkish-immigrants-in-berlin/)
ABSTRACT

The films of East and West Berlin contrasted in both style and ideology, and they failed to develop any unique cultural identity for the city itself. West German cinema often portrayed a city led astray, whereas films in the East focused heavily on recent history and anti-fascist communist ideals. After the German Democratic Republic (GDR) surrendered its stronghold on film production, its autonomy weakened, thus endangering its longevity and influence in the city of Berlin.

PART I: German Cinema Before the Berlin Wall

German film was first introduced to the international market at the turn of the 20th century, and it’s evident that its use of experimental and technological cinematic techniques proved to be influential in the films that would follow. While the Allied Powers successfully used cinema as a propaganda tactic during the first World War, German leaders also sought to institutionalize and nationalize the film industry by developing the Universum Film AG (UFA). Despite government interference, German film continued to thrive, reaching its climax during the early years of the Weimar Republic. In Berlin alone, there were over 230 film companies all vying for international acclaim. Soon afterwards, though, due to high inflation and the devaluation of German currency, the Berlin film scene began to deteriorate (Rogowski Xi). Production companies folded, the UFA weakened its grasp on the industry, prestigious filmmakers fled for countries like the United States, and many German films were actually banned from Western countries due to their ideological content.

The rise of Nazism and the Third Reich further hindered the German film industry, and in March of 1933, it was decreed that all Jews were to be barred from working in film production. Under the Reichsfilmkammer, the Nazi organization in charge of overseeing and regulating films, the state gained total control of film production, and, unsurprisingly, it was required that all film content had to directly reflect the views of the regime. However, not all German films produced during this time period were used as methods of propaganda.
After the war, though, the landscape of German cinema changed drastically. With the city of Berlin divided into four different sectors with two contrasting political ideologies, the threat to the industry as a whole was quite severe. Although the themes of films produced in both East and West Berlin differed in how they viewed the Wall and the current political state of the nation, they did help contribute to the eventual reunification of the city and its cultural identity.

**PART II: Cinema in West Berlin**

The German film industry suffered mightily after the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. The commercial successes of the previous decade were a distant memory, as an overall increase in wages and the emergence of television led to poor results at the box office and the decline of production companies throughout the city. In 1965, however, the development of the Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film, the Young German Film Committee, gave way to the advent of the “New German Cinema.” This movement and general shift in cinematic expression burgeoned filmmakers who sought to emphasize the geopolitical space of Berlin through film (Scharf 393).

They developed border narratives that strayed from previous works of German cinema and instead focused heavily on the broader scope of everyday life in the divided city. Films like Helke Sander’s *Redupers* (1978), Niklaus Schilling’s *Der Willi Busch Report* (1979), and Reinhard Hauff’s *Der Mann auf der Mauer* (1982), for example, use sentimental characters to delve into the ethics and politics of the Wall and its effects on the city’s culture. Films of the “New German Cinema” also challenged the state and its disconnect with the needs and desires of local Berliners (Scharf 394).

In *Der Mann auf der Mauer*, or *The Man on the Wall*, themes of separation and division are apparent not just in the film’s title, but also throughout the narrative. The main character, Arnulf Kabe, and his wife, Andrea, live in East Berlin. Arnulf is eager to flee to the West, though, and does so by crossing the border and getting arrested by Western officers. However, he soon starts to miss his wife, so in order to be able to cross the Wall at will, he works as a Stasi spy for the GDR. In the end, Arnulf manages to bring Andrea to West Berlin, but after living beyond the Wall for so long, she finds it difficult to adapt to her new setting (Scharf 390).

Reinhard Hauff’s film is a premier example of border narratives in “New German Cinema” because it fully embodies the cultural struggles of the divided city. The Wall serves as both a physical division of people, as well as a symbol of helplessness and desire. Perhaps Arnulf’s concluding remark, “We have to begin to become nobody,” sums it up best (Scharf 393). The remark addresses the idea that Berliners had to cope with their weakening social identity by formulating new ones and abandoning former notions of nationality because they represented disunity and isolation.
Like *Der Mann auf der Mauer*, the overarching theme of most other “New German Cinema” was the idea of Berlin as a city struggling for meaning (Scharf 394). Meanings such as what it meant to be on the “inside”, “the outside” and in “no-man’s-land” were frequently used tropes. Essentially, West Berlin films viewed the city as lacking a distinguishable identity, and its inhabitants were portrayed as being “existentially homeless” (Scharf 395). Unsurprisingly, East Berlin cinema depicted a much different picture of the city.

**PART III: Film in the Soviet Sector**

Under the communist regime, East German cinema was heavily monopolized by the state-owned film studio *Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft* (DEFA). The GDR not only controlled the production of film and its distribution, but it also placed restrictions on the content of narratives. As time went on, though, the Soviet sector faced economic instability, and the East German film industry all but collapsed. To make matters even worse, East German films were largely banned from entering the Western market, thus eliminating the possibility for cultural expansion beyond the realm of the Wall. By the 1980s, the most popular films in East Berlin were actually of American or Western European origin (Horten 86). While Soviet leaders strongly opposed this cultural infiltration, it was the only thing keeping the East German film industry afloat.

Many of the more recognizable filmmakers in East Berlin actually fled to the West because of such heavy restrictions by the DEFA. The goal of East German cinema was to portray a less sentimental picture than that of its Western counterpart and instead use “genuine realism” as a means to develop a narrative of anti-fascism and anti-Nazism (Brockmann 14). “Rubble films” like Gerhard Lamprecht’s *Irgendwo in Berlin* (1946), or *Somewhere in Berlin*, were also popular shortly after the war, portraying both the destruction of Berlin and the terrors of war (Blessing 237). Essentially, DEFA filmmakers attempted to combine the old UFA style and form with modern progressive ideologies (Brockmann 15). However, they made a conscious effort not to simply redevelop or reimagine the propaganda tactics of the Third Reich.

An early example of this is Kurt Maetzig’s *Ehe im Schatten* (1947), or *Marriage in the Shadows*, which tells a story about a man who refuses to divorce his Jewish wife despite pressure from Nazi authorities to do so. Knowing that the wife would soon be sent to her death, the couple decides to commit suicide in lieu of persecution (Brockmann 6). The intent of this DEFA film was clearly to evoke sympathy for Jewish victims of the Third Reich, but it also succeeded in portraying the horrors of the fascist state that existed only two
years prior. In doing so, it makes it seem as though the communist GDR triumphed over Nazism and aimed to offer a better way of life for the German people. While it is not a propaganda film by definition, it certainly supports the political ideologies of the Eastern state.

Surprisingly, some of the more successful East German films were actually dedicated towards children. The GDR was famous for producing fairy tale films that were neither political nor propagandistic (Blessing 245). Films like Paul Verhoeven’s Das kalte Herz (1950) attempted to challenge social and cultural norms that contradicted the communist state. In a way, they portrayed the dreams and desires of East Berliners who were cut off from the rest of the city and the entire Western world (Blessing 245).

CONCLUSION:

It is clear that the film industry played a significant role in the transition from the democratic era of the Weimar Republic to the socialist totalitarian regime of the Third Reich. In a similar way, though, cinema also helped pioneer a new generation of visionaries who used film to express their desire for a united Berlin and a central national identity. Perhaps the DEFA’s weakened grip on East German film production was the final nail in the coffin, as the years that followed were marked by political instability and cultural diffusion of Western ideas into the Eastern sector. While German cinema during Soviet occupation failed to match its successes of the Weimar era, its influence on the local people was clearly enough to energize a revolution that had been brewing for decades prior.

References

ABSTRACT

This paper will explore how Germany’s elementary and secondary education policies have undermined the integration of Turkish students, as well as measures taken in Berlin to mitigate these discrepancies. The first half of the paper will focus specifically on the factors that impact education of students between the ages of 3-10, a period of rapid linguistic and social development that influences how students are placed on their secondary school tracks. The latter half of the paper will examine how current German policies are working to avoid the pitfalls of the second half of the Twentieth Century, which played a major part in trapping Turkish Gastarbeiter families in cyclical poverty. It will pay particular attention to studying the changes that Berlin has recently made to bridge achievement gaps.

PART I: FRACTURED IDENTITIES

Nelson Mandela stressed the importance of quality public education as such: “the power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation” (Mandela & Strauss). Germany, a nation who did not consider itself to be a nation of migrants in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, has been forced to grapple with questions of integration and assimilation on a multitude of levels, including in the context of education policy. An international spotlight was placed on these debates following Chancellor Angela Merkel’s decision to open Germany’s borders to refugees in 2015.

The refugee crisis is not, however, the first time that Germany has seen an influx of migrants. Immediately following the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, West Germany began recruiting guest workers from Southern European nations. The majority of these workers, called Gastarbeiter, came from Turkey. Unlike Gastarbeiter from nations such as Italy and Spain, many Turkish workers elected to extend their visas and remain in Germany after the program ended in the early 1970s. These workers and their children, however, were not recognized as citizens until a change in immigration policy came in 2002. This dissonance of identity was impacted by, and in turn impacted, German elementary and secondary education policy.
PART II: EMERGING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Germany’s failure to acknowledge its large migrant population ultimately jeopardized the education that these migrants received. This failure persists 60 years after the first guest workers entered Germany. Germany’s failure to meet the needs of its rapidly changing population has revealed deep cracks in its education system. Germany’s education system has amplified social and economic disparities between German and Turkish student performances instead of leveling them out. A cycle of poverty has been established in the Turkish community that has been only slightly alleviated with each generation.

In her article on the structural issues facing the German education system and the resulting effects on Turkish students, Fernandez-Kelly lays out the following statistics: 48.3 percent of students of Turkish background were enrolled in Hauptschule, whereas only 16.6 percent of students with at least one German parent attended. Next, 22.1 percent of Turkish students attend Realschule, while their German counterparts attend at a rate of 38.6 percent (Fernandez-Kelly). Finally, only 12.5 percent of Turkish students go on to attend Gymnasium, while their German peers attended it at a rate of 33.2 percent (Fernandez-Kelly). It is easy to pass over these statistics as pure numbers. However, when one considers that these numbers are a part of a third generation of statistics, a troubling family portrait begins to emerge. The underrepresentation of Turkish students at the Gymnasium level has not changed meaningfully over the years.

PART III: TRACKINGSTARTS EARLIER THAN AGE 10

Moreover, it has become apparent that by the time a Turkish child is three years old, the factors that impact their assigned academic track will have started to emerge. Even though German states technically track students at the age of 10, tracking effectively takes place much earlier. In their article entitled “The Educational Attainment of Turkish Migrants in Germany,” Janina Söhn and Veysel Özcan found that as of 2007, foreign students aged zero to five enrolled in kindergarten at rates that fell 10% behind the national average (105). Söhn and Özcan posit that this lag in kindergarten enrollment can be partly attributed to the fact that public school is not compulsory in
Germany until the age of six (106). However, they also argue that cultural differences exacerbate the issue. They note that Turkish mothers are more likely to take on traditional roles within the private sphere, and are thus generally more likely to spend time taking care of children within the home. This means that Turkish families are more likely to have young children in a Turkish-speaking environment at home instead of attending a German-speaking kindergarten. If a child does not interact with German-speaking peers enough, as one would have the chance to do during kindergarten, the child can experience delayed German language development once he or she enters primary school (106).

Söhn and Özcan found that while there is no clear correlation between a German child’s time spent in kindergarten and their future secondary school placement, a troubling correlation emerges for foreign students (105). It must be noted that the Federal Government’s Commission for Migrants, Refugees, and Integration combined all foreign and migrant background students while presenting their data on Kindertagesstätte. Söhn and Özcan write that of the 6.4% of foreign students that do enroll in Kindertagesstätte, or KiTas, “51.4 percent succeeded in entering intermediate or higher secondary school tracks. In contrast, only 21.3 percent of the children who had not attended kindergarten reached the same school level” (105). This means that 78.1 percent of foreign students who did not attend kindergarten-- already the majority of the demographic-- are being routed towards the lowest secondary track by the time they turn six years old. Essentially, if the German state can level out the playing field for German students, why can it not do the same for foreign students?

Some states have pushed to amend the tracking system in order to distribute foreign students more evenly among the workforce. Berlin, a city with a sizeable number of residents of Turkish origin, is one such example. In their article for Humanity in Action entitled “‘I Think I Know the Way!’ A Closer Look at Berlin’s Bilingual Education System for Children of Turkish Origin” authors Nilakshi Parndigamage and Ingo Schiermeyer write that “an estimated 180,000 ethnic Turks live in Berlin, making the city one of the largest Turkish cities in the world” (Parndigamage & Schiermeyer). This large population is notable not only because it is one of the largest populations of ethnic Turks outside of Turkey, but also because this population, along with other foreigners in Berlin, is experiencing an unemployment rate of 40 percent (Davis). In his series for the Pulitzer Center called “Repairing the Cultural Divide: Integration, Education, and the Turkish Community in Berlin,” Pulitzer fellow Austin Davis examines the ways in which Berlin has developed policies and community programs in order to integrate students of Turkish descent into
the public education system in hopes of promoting economic equality.

Faced with an immediate and devastating economic challenge, Berlin began to address economic inequality through its educational policy. Davis writes that beginning in the 2014/2015 school year the city “dismantled the tripartite structure of [secondary] schools in favor of a two column approach: a virtually unchanged Gymnasium, with a new Integrated Secondary School (ISS) running along side it… [which] both offer all levels of certification, including Abitur” (Davis). Allowing all students to receive some sort of certification-- something that is not possible at Hauptschule-- is perhaps the most remarkable step. By doing so, Berlin’s students are armed with some sort of professional skill. This improved economic mobility will become increasingly important as Germany’s working population continues to retire at rapid rates (Fuhrmans). Berlin, in theory, will have group of skilled workers prepared to fill the positions.

CONCLUSION:

While Germany’s approach to public education once stood as a model for other developed western nations, its system is now beginning to show the wear of time. The system, which was not initially conceived with immigrants in mind, struggled to incorporate and integrate students of diverse backgrounds and needs. As such, Germany’s migrant population was disproportionately undereducated, and thus met with cyclical economic challenges. States such as Berlin, however, are now working to quickly and effectively amend, rather than entirely dismantle, the country’s signature education system.

Unfortunately, time must pass before the outcomes of such initiatives can be measured and other, more cautious, states follow suit.

References

ABSTRACT

As a signatory of the Paris Agreement in 2015, Germany established itself as a leading advocate for the issue of climate change. This agreement upholds the worldwide fight to lower climate change effects by engaging in renewable practices. Following the path of Germany, Berlin is “proud to be one of the most climate-friendly cities in Germany” (Berlin’s Climate Protection and Energy Policy). Berlin has developed many policies over time that limit greenhouse gas emissions, energy and water consumption, and waste pollution. These policies include Berlin’s energy and climate protection policy (BEK) that was adopted in June of 2016 (Berlin’s Climate Protection and Energy Policy). The Smart Grid Program, led by Stromnetz Berlin, works to control energy consumption. With the integration of many programs into their city along with the collaboration of many leaders, Berlin is well on its way to “[becoming] a climate-neutral city by 2050” (Berlin’s Climate Protection and Energy Policy).

PART I: GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The first step to reducing greenhouse gas emissions is becoming aware of the effect they have on the environment. Protecting the climate is highly dependent on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and this can be done by transferring fossil energies to renewable energies (Senate Department for the Environment, Transport, and Climate Protection). The goal of becoming climate neutral by 2050 requires collaboration across the city. Cooperation between political leaders, businesses, the community, and society is the only way greenhouse gas emissions can successfully become reduced. Berlin is spread out across about 350 square miles, emits a high level of CO2 and other harmful gases. In order to achieve its goals of cutting down greenhouse gases, Berlin is making changes within every aspect of city life including “buildings and urban development, private households and their consumption, [and] mobility and business” (Berlin’s Climate Protection and Energy Policy). Over the last 25 years, Berlin’s “carbon emissions have already been reduced by about 30%. (Working Together for Climate Change Mitigation in Berlin). This reduction can be attributed to a variety of projects that the city has developed with the help of businesses. These projects, called Climate Protection Agreements,
are agreements made between the city of Berlin and businesses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The guiding idea is that “the signatories pledge to take concrete action in order to achieve the region’s climate protection targets” (Working Together for Climate Change Mitigation in Berlin). Companies and organizations such as Vattenfall, BSR: Sanitation for Berlin, Vivantes, and the Free University of Berlin have all made adjustments to their business plans to assist in protecting the earth. These adjustments consist of recycling water in a more efficient way, “[increasing] the share of gas and biomass” (Working Together for Climate Change Mitigation in Berlin) to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and decompose biowaste to create energy. The projects are leading the city to its goal of becoming a climate neutral city, meaning a city that is going against the trend of increasing climate change.

**PART II: ENERGY CONSUMPTION**

Berlin is working to increase the level of renewable energy sources that are present in the world. Figure 1 illustrates the development of energy sources in Berlin. The city’s dedication to producing more renewable energy is shown in the actions of companies that specialize in energy consumption and production. Their energy transition “is one of the most important projects of its age” (Stromnetz Berlin).

One of Berlin’s energy companies, Stromnetz, is working to transform Berlin’s energy grid into a smart grid. This smart grid focuses on efficient and renewable distribution of energy throughout the city. They are incorporating “photovoltaic plants, wind turbines, [and] thermal power stations in a wide range of sizes and bioenergy plants,” (Stromnetz Berlin) to be connected to this new distribution grid. These tactics can significantly decrease the level of energy usage in a city as long as they are incorporated into all aspects of the city’s energy systems and grids. Vattenfall, which is another larger energy company, holds a lot of responsibility for Berlin’s electricity and heating and cooling. Vattenfall “has built its business on innovative products and services, environmental consciousness and customer service,” (Vattenfall Europe AG) which falls in line with Berlin’s sustainable energy programs. Berlin is not only trying to create more renewable energy sources but establish agreements with major energy companies in order to increase the level of energy efficiency provided to the city as a whole.
PART III: WATER USAGE

Water is one of the most desirable natural resources on earth. It is becoming scarce as more people are overusing it. Berliner Wasserbetriebe, BWB, is the largest water supplier and disposer in Germany. They supply drinking water to 3.5 million Berlin citizens. Berliner Wasserbetriebe provides naturally rich water full of minerals to its consumers. It does not possess chemicals and toxins that most water does and they have mastered their treatment process, to ensure clean water from the ground to the tap. Not only do they efficiently supply water to citizens, but they do it in a sustainable way. “Environmentally sound disposal and treatment of wastewater,” (Berliner Wasserbetriebe) is crucial in maintaining a healthy and clean environment. With advanced science and technology, BWB is able to treat and dispose of water so that it can be run back into its natural cycle. Stiftung Warentest confirmed that Berlin’s unused water “flows back to nature. [They] preserve our natural resources so that future generations in Berlin can also have water of the best quality” (Berliner Wasserbetriebe). Berlin can use all water so that none is wasted. With the issue of climate change, it is key that water is regulated in an environmentally friendly way to avoid any issue of a declining balance of water due to overuse or pollution.

PART IV: WASTE MANAGEMENT

Policies need to be set in place to keep the waste management organized and efficient. A separation strategy for collecting waste is an efficient way to keep the city environmentally friendly because of the universal implementation across all areas of the city. “The measures for waste prevention and waste management” in Berlin are shown in Figure 2 In January of 2013, “Berlin was the first German federal state to introduce a model waste separation strategy” (Municipal Waste Management in Berlin). This strategy works to separate different waste materials from one another to create an efficient process of recycling. Since its introduction, it “has proved very effective” (Municipal Waste Management in Berlin). Rather than simply having waste containers for trash and plastic, Germany as a whole integrated a variety of waste containers into the countries waste management system. These include paper, waste, bio-waste, metal, and glass. Berlin takes this waste separation very seriously--there are consequences for disobeying it, usually fines.

![Figure 2: The Measures of Waste Prevention and Waste Management](image)

PART V: FUTURE GOALS

Berlin has developed a ten-year Environmental Relief Program (ERP) that can
ultimately drive Berlin to be one of the most environmentally friendly cities in the world and with green research and development, Berlin they are already working towards greater technology and innovation that can be used to better the environment. Their plan incorporates rainwater management, energy and climate protection, greenhouse gas emission reduction, and green research and development. In order to ensure efficient and safe rainwater management, Berlin is focusing on the elements of infiltration, storage, and purification. The ERP assists in constructing facilities that allow for these innovative processes to run. To aid in energy and climate protection, the ERP funds projects where “90 percent of the funded projects achieve primary energy savings or reductions in CO2 emissions of more than 40 percent” (10 Years Berlin Environmental Relief Programme). This project funding is also applied to help companies cut down on greenhouse gas emissions. One of these innovations is “the use of small wind turbines on urban buildings” (10 Years Berlin Environmental Relief Programme). The addition of small wind turbines creates environmentally friendly sources of energy across the city by utilizing open space. With the success Berlin has experienced in the past when implementing environmental policies, their goals are well within their reach. By working to put the environment first and achieve the goal of becoming climate neutral, Berlin will be a city that can be the example for the rest of the world by reducing climate change. The importance of controlling the climate now will only ensure a positive and healthy lifestyle for all future generations.

CONCLUSION:

Berlin is already one of the more green cities in the world, but that hasn’t stopped them from continuing to implement green policies. They focus on many aspects of the environment such as greenhouse gas emissions, energy and water consumption, and waste management. Through collaboration with businesses, leaders, and citizens, the city is able to create innovative programs and projects to enhance the wellbeing of the environment. Their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, use renewable energy sources, ensure an efficient water cycle, and control waste in an environmentally friendly way shows their dedication to the environment. By being able to control these four contributors to climate change, Berlin will be a place that sets an example for other cities.

References


Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment, Dec. 2013,

8. “Water for Berlin.”

ABSTRACT

After the fall of the GDR, information about the Stasi secret police became public and demand for access to files rose dramatically. The opening of the Stasi files became a nuanced avenue through which Berliners could process their past. The declassification of the files symbolizes an end to the oppressive state apparatus of the GDR and the freedom of its residents. However, these documents reveal deep schisms in the population and ask the question: is knowledge necessary for healing? The Stasi files, while a symptom of the GDR, are deeply flawed in their storytelling and analytical approaches and create hostile biographies. Ultimately, biographies should be in the hands of the people who lived in East Germany rather than through the lens of the GDR’s observations.

PART I: I Want My File!

After World War II, Germany was split between East and West, this schism represented concretely by the Berlin Wall. The GDR, controlled by the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, ruled over the East. The GDR was supported by the Ministry of State Security (Stasi) and is known today as one of the largest secret police in history, employing 110,000 full-time employees and 170,000 secret informants who compiled over 6 million dossiers. These documents included 180 kilometers of files, a million pictures, and 200,000 tapes on its own citizens.¹ This tremendous espionage mission, employing 1 in every 38 adults, fostered paranoia; neighbors spied on neighbors, husbands spied on wives. When the Berlin Wall fell, and along with it East Germany, the city remained divided in many ways.

One issue that deepened the schism between East and West was the question of what to do with the Stasi files. On January 15, 1990, 50,000 East Berliners stormed the Stasi headquarters, an event compared to the storming of the Bastille. This event led to a media fascination with the activities

of the secret police and soon Berliners had to address the issue of the Stasi files. Some argued for the destruction of all documents, claiming that they were obtained illegally by a police state and could be exploited in the future. Others worried that if the files became public it would result in an eruption of violence and further division among neighbors and friends. Ultimately, a strong voice of opposition erupted, proclaiming the citizen’s right to view their own file. On December 20th, 1991, the Bundestag passed a law granting every individual the right to view their file. ² This decision symbolized freedom from decades of oppression under the GDR.

² Ibid. pp. 37.
⁴ Ibid.

PART II: Reading My File

By 1997, there were 3.7 million petitions to view files.³ The media flocked around salacious stories of lovers spying on lovers, and many were surprised by their contents. 25 percent of those who requested to view their files were disappointed to find they didn’t have one.⁴ Frederic Pryor, an American economics professor who was imprisoned as a spy in East Germany, relays his experience reading his Stasi files. His dossier included over 5,000 pages of material including a copy of his dissertation and a German translation, reports from five months of interrogations, and 350 pages of notes from his cellmate.⁵ Pryor recalls reliving the fears of his imprisonment while reading his file, including the anxiety and hopelessness inspired by tactics such as isolation and the feeling that he could not trust anyone. Mostly, Pryor describes the contents as factual and sober, focused on the smallest details. “This was a prison run by bureaucrats, not philosophers” recalls Pryor.⁶ As a student, he did not understand why he was being imprisoned. Years later, Pryor discovered that his cellmate suspected him of preparing a foreign trade blockade of the GDR, and from that point on fit every piece of information he gleaned into this framework. Pryor concludes that he read his files to come to terms with his past. His overwhelming feeling was that of relief; he had been concerned that his contact with East Germans had caused them to fall under suspicion.

Many who read their files observed that the files were factually true but did not “communicate

the essence of their lives.” Irene Kukutz attributed this phenomenon to the fact that the observers were unable to recognize the underlying meaning of behavior. This surveillance, which consisted of watching from a distance and involuntary interrogations, demonstrates no concern for the rights of the person or respect for consent. Lack of consent in interrogation leads to bad data. The data was tied to the interest of the state, concerned not with understanding the lives of citizens but rather in the control of the state. Andrews concludes that this is simply bad research. A glaring example is that of Women for Peace, an anti-government women’s coalition. The Stasi completely overlooked this organization as it searched for the man behind the scenes pulling the strings. The prejudices of the spies and their motives disguised any information that did not fit into their preexisting framework of understanding.

PART III: File as Biography

Some historians argue for the preservation of the Stasi files because they are the largest sample of personal histories in existence. However, the files do not represent reality, or if they do it is a reality completely altered by the ideology of the GDR. According to Molly Andrews, the files replace the reality of the actor with the reality of the observer. They were not created to serve the interests of the people and they never will. History used to disempower people has no conscience, and therefore, no tie to reality. For this reason, it is important to examine the implication of the files. The current Stasi Records Commissioner, Roland Jahn, once stated that “Germany has shown how to consistently face the past and deal with it” and argues that only by making all Stasi files public, including those shredded files which must be rearranged, can Germans confront and process their pasts. In “Reading and Writing the Stasi File: On the Uses and Abuses of the File as (Auto)Biography,” Alison Lewis presents a compelling argument against those who lift Stasi files up as resources for study and storytelling. Lewis examines the implications of the Stasi files as biographies and histories. She argues that because the Stasi files were compiled by an oppressive state apparatus, they function as hostile biographies. She also examines the implications of utilizing these files in constructing one’s own biography. In examining the history of the Stasi files as well as accounts of reading one's own file, it is clear that the disconnect between the intentions of the authors and the reception of the subjects creates an account that can only be destructive.

---

9 Goehler, Laura, "The Stasi Files: Germany’s 600 Million Piece Puzzle." CNN Wire, 2014. EBSCOhost.
CONCLUSION:

Debate continues around the Stasi files and their future remains in limbo. The computer, which has been slowly reassembling shredded files, recently ceased its work. Major players in Germany have pushed for the closure of the files. Today, the Stasi files represent yet another debate about the appropriate way to handle a fraught past. The files can be read in many ways: as historical documentation, as factual but analytically flawed accounts, and as hostile biographies. By examining historical context and personal accounts, it becomes clear that the transparency with which the files are currently handled is conducive to healing despite providing evidence of deep schisms and breaches of trust. However, the files should be seen for what they are, the records of an oppressive state apparatus firmly positioned within the framework of a socialist and totalitarian regime. While the information contained within the files is accurate, they fail to capture the reality of a subject’s experience and life. Auto-biographies should rest securely in the hands of the German people.

References

ABSTRACT

Berlin is a city covered in graffiti and street art. To some these bright colored marks on the city are an eyesore; however, the street art in Berlin is a continuation of a larger culture of rebellion through art that grew out of Berlin’s social and political history. The counterculture squatter houses and art communes of the ‘70s, ‘80s, and 90’s created a strong community dedicated to rebellion through spatial occupation. Today this tradition is threatened by the forces of gentrification; however, it has also grown to encompass much of the city of Berlin expanding beyond spatial occupation to visual occupation through the mobilization of street art and graffiti. In recent years, graffiti and street art in Berlin and other major cities has become legitimized, with increased scholarship as well as public and tourist interest in viewing and discussing these elements of urban spaces.

PART I: Counterculture in Berlin

In the 1970s, the West Berlin squatter movement was building; specifically, in the districts Wedding, Schöneberg, and Kreuzberg. The squatter movement was comprised of artists, students, and activists who lived in and occupied abandoned or dilapidated buildings in protest of housing policies. These policies were pushing West Berliners into newly constructed high rises in the cities outer districts (Pugh, 201). These squatter communities shared common purposes: to both occupy space in opposition but also to create space for counterculture movements and marginalized communities. These alternative living communities became hubs of political activity and counterculture in Berlin; however, these communities were often threatened by eviction and raids (Besetzt). The activist roots of alternative living communities in Berlin has allowed some of them to remain active to this day; with their members defending the spaces through both protests and lawsuits. Others, such as the famous squats, such as Tacheles, have been taken over by developers due to increased gentrification in Berlin.
PART II: Kunsthaus Tacheles

Squatter houses also served as a place for artists to display their work. Possibly the most famous example of this comes out of Kunsthaus Tacheles. Tacheles was originally built in the early 1900s as one of the largest department stores in the city, Friedrichstraße Passage. It was later occupied by the Nazi regime and was used as an SS office. The building was damaged during the war but remained structurally sound. In 1990, the building became occupied by the Artists Tacheles (History Kunsthaus Tacheles). The name Tacheles came from a German jazz band who were some of the first to reside there. The name means “straight talk” in Yiddish (Falconer). This group of artists occupied the building and covered it with art and even created sculptures from the buildings’ rubble. The space once held 30 studios, exhibition and sales spaces, and areas for movie screening, concerts, readings, dance and theater performances (History Kunsthaus Tacheles).

Over the years there were many attempts to evict the artists from the building. In 2012, the artists finally lost the fight against gentrification, a force which is quickly reshaping Berlin. It is unclear what the future holds for the building or the lot but as of Spring 2018 there was construction on the site. Tacheles stills stands, a shell of its former self, covered in street art and graffiti but empty and inaccessible to the public. Tacheles was one of the most famous squatter properties in Berlin and a significant venue for artists in Berlin, its closure shows gentrification is reshaping the city. This loss of a space that was physically occupied by artists and visually occupied by their art was felt strongly by many in the community. “The closure of Kunsthaus Tacheles, Berlin’s landmark for independent art and culture, brought that sour feeling that the city is no longer a bohemian hub for alternative culture and lifestyles” (Berlin Street Art).

PART III: Haus Schwarzenberg

Haus Schwarzenberg, another artist community, was originally founded in 1995 as a community space for artists. None of the artists who were in the community lived there but the space has always been dedicated to countercultural art, similarly to Tacheles. Today the space has a gallery and shop with work from artists in the community. To get to these spaces however, one must pass the impressive collection of street art.
(Haus Schwarzenberg). This alley is an outdoor space that allows both commissioned professional artists and amateurs to express themselves, with a side for larger pieces of street art and a side for smaller graffiti. This space is home to large pieces such as the portrait of Anne Frank by British street artist Jimmy C as well as a mural by artist Sky Black and other prominent street artists (“Haus Schwarzenberg- More than just a Street Art Hotspot in Berlin.”).

The building has changed hands multiple times since the community was founded but the art has remained. It is currently rented out by the artist’s collective who uses it. Since they are not squatting on the property the threat of eviction does not loom in the same way it does for squatter communities; however, gentrification still threatens artist’s communities that own their spaces. From its courtyard location, this street art display stands out in the heavily gentrified neighborhood surrounding Haus Schwarzenberg. Today this street art as well as Haus Schwarzenberg itself stands in opposition to the rising rent prices in the neighborhood due to commercialization and gentrification, new challenges facing much of Berlin, by remaining open as a nonprofit art community. Haus Schwarzenberg is just one example of how the occupation of physical space, is connected to the occupation of visual space through art and graffiti. Both occupying forces have been used in Berlin, from the 70’s to the present, to fight for space against the forces, such as development, commercialization, and gentrification, that would push out countercultural movements and artists, as they did with other countercultural art spaces such as Tacheles.

CONCLUSION: Graffiti in Berlin

While physical spaces for counterculture art and artists are being threatened by gentrification the occupation of visual spaces on the city’s walls through graffiti and street art are gaining support. Natalia Samutina and Oksana Zaporozhets argue that street art has become legitimized. “In the last 15 years street art has come all the way from being a trendy urban novelty to gaining a permanent position in official tourist guidebooks on cities and individual neighborhoods such as Berlin’s Kreuzberg…” (1). In the past decade, there has been increased scholarship and media attention to street art and graffiti, as well as tours and guidebooks for people looking to find street art (Samutina, Natalia, and Oksana Zaporozhets). This increased public interest toward street art shows how it has been legitimized and even accepted as part of urban spaces. “While graffiti is historically associated with vandalism and urban decay and street art has been rewarded with more acceptance both from public opinion and the art world, both practices frequently overlap and can be defined as mainly unsanctioned visual interventions in public spaces” (Pinto 62). This acceptance and even legitimization of street art and graffiti in Berlin takes it far from its origins as part of the art tradition of Berlin’s counterculture; its role as a way to claim visual space for countercultural movements even when their physical spaces are threatened.

Over the past few decades, Berlin’s visual and physical space has increasingly become a topic of conversation for academics as well as citizens of Berlin. The discourse surrounding graffiti and
street art has changed dramatically to become legitimizing and accepting rather than condemning. This change in discourse has taken public opinion about graffiti and street art far from its roots as rebel art: a mode of visual occupation of space for counter cultural movements, paired with traditions of squatting to occupy physical space. This shift has not changed the ever-present threat gentrification poses to remaining art communities in Berlin, such as Haus Schwarzenberg. The eviction of the artists from Tacheles has proved that, no matter how historically significant, no space is immune to these forces. Even with these threats looming, new pieces of graffiti and street art appear on the streets of Berlin all the time; showing that even when their spaces are threatened, Berlin’s countercultural artists will find a way to make an impact.

References

ABSTRACT

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, German women in Berlin began protesting for their rights. These rights included the right to healthcare, such as the right to have an abortion, the right to be given the same opportunities and treatment as their male coworkers in academic settings, as well as many other rights that the women knew they were being denied. The history of Germany is full of women standing up for what they believe and refusing to give up until they get what they seek. Public demonstrations, protests, pamphlets: all are some of the ways women fought for themselves and for each other in the modern age.

PART I: The 20th Century Feminist Movement

Feminist movements are often divided into waves. Each wave has a different goal, or method that makes each unique to their movement. The most prominent issues that the feminist movements in the 20th century was concerned with were violence, in particular sexual assault against women, and sexuality (Gebhardt). This first women’s movement in Germany looked to destroy the divide between the public and the private sphere, and to allow women to break into the public sphere, albeit through “traditionally feminine” ways (Gebhardt).

In the 1970s, the second feminist movement, or wave, took place. This movement was dedicated to both the same issues as the first feminist movement issues, such as gender-based violence, but also new issues: “subverting traditional gender roles, lobbying for healthcare and reproductive autonomy, and battling structural institutions that failed to provide support” (Clayman). This movement was deemed more successful, and it was able to gain support and traction in ways that the previous feminist movement had not.

PART II: Demands for Reproductive Rights

The discussion about abortion rights has remained in the public sphere for decades, each year more controversial than the last. It is an
important conversation for a reason. The conversation surrounding abortion is about deeper politics than just the rights of the fetus in question. The politics of abortion and the politics of unification are intricately linked. They were linked, according to newspapers at the time, because those advocating for abortion rights were causing dissent in Germany, and among the citizens of Berlin in particular. This, of course, caused the women advocating for abortion rights to be more easily dismissed. Their argument was silenced in the excuse of keeping the country together (Wuerth). Before the fall of the Berlin wall, abortion rights varied depending on where in the city one lived. In West Berlin, abortion was illegal and any women who sought out the procedure and received one could be prosecuted, unless a panel of doctors deemed it necessary to help a woman’s health. In East Germany, the abortion procedure was not only legal, but it was also free through the twelfth week of pregnancy (Cad). With unification, one political party known as the Christian Democratic Party demanded that Germany Revert back to the West’s more restrictive abortion laws and make abortions illegal everywhere. (Wuerth). At hearing the news, the women living in Berlin took to the streets in order to demand their reproductive rights remain, and in the case of the women in the West, to have the same rights as the women in the East.

This protest did not begin when the Wall fell in 1989. In the year 1979, the Women’s Feminist Health Center in West Berlin—the Feministisches Frauen Gesundheitszentrum, or FFGZ—called a press conference about their practices and their mission. One inquiry was surrounding contraceptives, a practice that the center had believed in for many years. The business that the FFGZ primarily dealt with was information, information regarding women’s reproduction, both the bodily system and a woman’s rights, as well as information concerning women’s health in general and self-help guides (Grunwald). The center was viewed with much controversy because of its practices, despite its intention to help women help themselves be confident in their decisions and knowledgeable about their bodies. The center’s efforts, and women’s movements throughout the years began in the early 20th century and have continued to this day.

PART III: Demands for Gender Equality in Academia

The academic field has long been considered one of the most competitive and cutthroat fields in which to work. For women, not only was this no different, but it was even worse. Berlin universities were not open to women until the early nineteenth century, and today the universities’ attitudes towards the women seeking to learn, to research, and to teach, are not welcoming (Cassara). It is a struggle to make the same academic degree of success as a man. Women only make up twelve percent of the combined faculty body of Berlin’s four top universities. When interviewed, the women that have made a name for themselves said that they did so by following male patterns of success: they remained unmarried and had no children in order to spend all their energy on academic pursuits (Cassara). By their own admission, women who desire a rich and fulfilled academic life have to sacrifice any sort of personal family life, and as a result can be left feeling very alone. To do anything less than that,
however, is to not be taken seriously in the academic fields.

The struggle for gender equality was not only a concern in faculty positions and the student body. Women’s studies were not given a seat in higher academia and were not considered a valuable field of study. In the beginning, lectures on women studies and gender were canceled because of low demand, and in fact, many students who were female refused to call themselves “feminists” for the reputation that the word held at the time. Despite the uphill battle, the area of women and gender studies was pursued and developed by women seeking a change and to further their own research (Werner-Hervieu). This determination matched the women’s protesting counterparts. The second feminist movement sought opportunities not only in academia, but also in the fields of arts, science, politics, and business (Gebhardt). They were more successful than the first women's movement and found their momentum increasing as the days went by.

PART IV: The Women and the Wall

The Berlin wall divided an entire city, and inside that city, its policies were divided as well. As mentioned before, the policies concerning abortion and reproduction rights were different depending on what side of the wall a woman lived, causing many to leave their homes and travel to the other side in order to get the care they needed. West Berlin, it was divided internally as well. It was easier to get an abortion in previously traditional Protestant areas than it was in areas that were traditionally Catholic, allowing religion to get in the way of women’s rights (Cad).

However, the East and the West of Berlin were not only divided on healthcare rights, but also on the rights of women in general. Opportunities for women on each side of the Berlin wall varied in terms of work, education, and family (Clayman). Because of the society of the time, there was an emphasis on the link between “economic achievement” and “political legitimacy,” which, when looked at in relation to the traditional role of women, made it difficult for women to gain traction in their movements in the beginning. However, once traction and momentum were gained, the feminist movement took full advantage of the fact, brought the fight to its head, and continue to fight to this day.

CONCLUSION:

Women have been fighting for their rights for years, and the conversation is only truly getting started. The protests of decades past echo the protests of the current years. In almost every feminist movement, though the emphasis may change, they all fight for the same issues: for
equality for women, and for the defense of women and their rights and protection. Fights for healthcare, the right to have a legal, safe, abortion. equality in the workplace, and for the same opportunities to be granted to women as they are to men continue to this day. The fight for women’s rights and gender equality has been a long, tiring, but nonetheless vital march. The march continues onto in the 21st century.

References


ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will discuss the Weimar Republic through the lens of the classic musical Cabaret. This show sheds light on many of the issues which real Germans faced during Germany’s first democracy. Most notably, these are economic decline and political unrest. A multitude of parties existed in the German government during this time, creating a very divided political front in Germany. However, due to the problems which they were coping with and lack of faith in their government generally, many Germans chose to ignore politics. Instead, they turned to the party lifestyle of the Weimar Republic. These carefree habits of specifically Berliners during this period are reflected in the characters and songs of the musical Cabaret. I will examine the impacts of and issues that arose from the morally-loose way of life led by the characters in this show.

PART I: “Willkommen im Kabarett”

In “Willkommen”, the opening number of the 1966 musical Cabaret, the M.C. entreats his audience to “Leave your troubles outside / So life is disappointing, forget it! / In here life is beautiful”. These lyrics perfectly embody the overarching message of Cabaret as the M.C. urges audience members to ignore whatever problems they may have and, rather, enjoy their time at the cabaret. This idea of ignoring difficult situations and instead savoring the moment is a reflection of the mood of much of society throughout the Weimar Republic. The musical Cabaret displays the rise of the Nazi party in Germany during the Weimar Republic by highlighting the decadence and political turmoil, yet also common indifference of the time.

PART II: History of Weimar Republic and the Berlin Cabaret: “I Don’t Care Much”

The Weimar Republic was the period between the end of World War I in 1918 and Hitler’s achievement of total power through the Enabling Act in 1933. This time is considered to be Germany’s great democratic experiment; a political shift which resulted in great changes throughout all of Germany and catalyzed a cultural boom Germany had not yet experienced so powerfully. Indeed, prior to 1918, “the strict Prussian censorship then in force in Berlin virtually ruled out the possibility of any of the political satire
for which the German cabaret was to become famous in the Weimar period” (Segel 132).

However, in one of the initial decrees of the country’s new provisional government, censorship of art, press and speech were lifted, clearing the path for the strong Berlin cabaret movement that would soon follow. From the cabaret’s conception in Paris in the 1880s, Kabarett “blossomed into a unique medium for political and cultural satire” in Berlin during the 1920s and early 1930s (Appignanesi, 1). In addition to the political and cultural commentary oftentimes found within cabaret shows, these intimate nightclubs were generally places for drinking and smoking which included some form of live performance. In Berlin, there were cabaret clubs for all social classes. Both upscale and lowbrow audiences attended and enjoyed cabarets as a means of forgetting their troubles; most notably, severe economic troubles, as well as looming political turmoil. Most notably, the steep demands of the Treaty of Versailles created latent economic problems in Germany which swiftly ruined the middle class financially as the country plunged into debt.

Additionally, “[t]he 1920s were a terrifying decade in Germany. The befuddled Weimar Republic was barely in control of a country that was being broken on the wheel of war reparations. Revolutions, attempted coups and assassinations occurred like clockwork; order was maintained or restored, often brutally, by paramilitary groups like the Freikorps (many of whom later became Nazi Brownshirts), with which the government tried to circumvent the troop limits of the Treaty of Versailles” (Smith).

It is no surprise that Berliners looked for an escape from their scary reality. Not only was Germany economically unstable, but the political scene in the country was sensitive as well. Laraeu notes that “One might not expect a time of such political and economic chaos to be favorable to entertainment, but cabarets and amusement flourished, as a means of escape on one hand, but on the other and perhaps more importantly, as a means of coming to grips with the strange new environment”. This interpretation of Weimar society is reflected in the musical Cabaret, as characters have trouble coming to terms with the hardships which the Weimar Republic brought not only economically, but politically as well. Just as the Berliners of the time, characters in Cabaret turn to the decadent, party-obsessed cabaret scene rather than facing and combating the tangible problems of the time.

**PART III: Economic Troubles: “Money”**

Two major themes of the Weimar Republic which are reflected within the musical Cabaret are the economic hardship and sexual liberation of the time. As previously stated, throughout the 1920s into the early 1930s, Germany was coping with the repercussions of its loss of World War I. German citizens felt this financial strain as inflation soared and the country was thrown into debt. It was common for Berliners to feel this financial burden and this is seen multiple times throughout the show, highlighting the bleak situations of many real German citizens. For example, when the protagonist of the show, American writer Cliff, is in need of a room upon his arrival to Berlin, he offers Fraulein Schneider 50 Deutsche Marks for a room she normally rents out for 100 Marks. Out of both economic desperation and emotional
indifference, Fraulein Schneider agrees to give Cliff the room for half its normal price. She sings in one of the first songs of the show, “So What”, “For the sun will rise / And the moon will set / And learn how to settle / For what you get. / It will all go on if we're here or not/ So who cares? So what?” Her uncaring attitude portrayed in this song eerily reflects similar attitudes of many Germans prior to Hitler’s rise to power. Her refusal to deal with the economic problems she is facing is parallel to her political feelings later on in the show. Later in Cabaret, the female star vehicle, Sally Bowles, has nowhere to live after she is laid off from her job as a performer at the Kit Kat Klub. She implores Cliff to let her stay with him, but when he asks her how much she will give him, all she can offer is six Marks. Sally’s situation is another example of the economic troubles many Germans faced at the time. Another song in the show literally called “Money” expresses Weimar society’s desperation for financial stability. The entire company of the show is basically screeching “Money” repeatedly throughout the song, as well as the line “Money makes the world go around”. This lyric can be interpreted that due to the economic problems of the time, the lives of Germans were coming to a halt. Indeed, many have compared Weimar Republic to the end of the world, spinning out of control into the willling hands of the Nazi Regime.

PART IV: Sexual Promiscuity: “Two Ladies”

Although the Weimar Republic was a time of financial decline for Germany, it was the time of a huge sexual incline for Berlin. Indeed, this was the period where the metropolis formed its reputation as the most sexually liberated city in the world. According to Marhoefer, “this form of sexual freedom came about because of the long decline of religious morality and the rise of science and secular notions of individual rights, democracy, and citizenship” (7). The abdication of the thrown by Kaiser Wilhelm II may have also caused this loosening of sexual morality. The royalty in Germany worked to emphasize the Protestant religion and the Kaiser acted as the head of the church in Germany. With the abolishment of the German monarchy at the end of World War I, a subsequent loss of religious emphasis may have led to a society more open to sexual curiosity. As such, it quickly became popular that prostitutes could be easily be found at cabaret clubs as shown in the show Cabaret. Additionally, during the shows, “often several women would appear on stage at once, and each would sing a suggestive song” (Jelavich, 21).

Sexual freedom is a major theme found within the musical Cabaret which is meant to mirror the similar promiscuousness of the time. From the very start of the show the audience is introduced to the show’s sexual nature; the M.C. introduces each of the cabaret girls, as well as two of the cabaret boys, in extremely sexual ways. Most of the choreography and costumes in productions of Cabaret are decisively sexual, again highlighting the sexual freedom of the time. Lingerie are usually the costumes of the Cabaret boys and girls in the show. In the most provocative scene in the musical, the M.C., one cabaret girl and one cabaret boy dressed as a woman perform the song “Two Ladies”. The song is blatantly about sexual encounters with multiple people. Mizajewski argues that “the moral looseness of Weimar Berlin, in particular the sexual and
bisexual play in Berlin nightlife, has made possible the tolerance of Nazism” (Mizajewski, 4).

Although it is true that the Weimar Republic was more promiscuous than other periods of previous Berlin’s history, I disagree that this was the cause of their acceptance of Nazis. Instead, I believe that Berliners explored their new sexual freedom as a form of distraction. Exploring their sexuality and being able to express it was a more positive focus than that of the political turmoil or economic hardships of the time. Sex today is still used as a means of distraction for many, it was no different in Weimar Berlin.

PART V: Political Indifference

One of the reasons which ultimately allowed National Socialist German Workers’ Party to assume power was many normal German citizens remaining quiet in the face of evil. Instead of standing up to the political and social turmoil which was on the rise, many Berliners distracted themselves with decadent cabarets, drugs and alcohol. This reality of Weimar Berlin is expressed heavily throughout Cabaret especially in the character of Sally Bowles. Cliff, “As a writer, he will serve as both witness and prophet, through whose authority we will come to understand Sally’s “divine decadence”—as Sally herself cannot—as the moral corruption of a culture that is about to embrace the Third Reich” (Mizajewski, 5).

Further, in a conversation on the future of Germany and the rise of Nazism, Cliff advises Sally “If you’re not against this, you’re for it”. In the show, Sally lives her life whittled with alcoholism and drug addiction, refusing to deal with the many complications in her life. In the title number of the show “Cabaret”, Sally has only a brief moment of clarity when singing about her friend who had died. However, after this short realization, she begins her false-celebratory chorus of “Life is a cabaret!” This famous lyric is the epitome of Cabaret and the Weimar Republic; the cabaret represents living in a decadent and care-free fantasy, rather than in reality with all of its hardships. Indeed, in the “Finale” as Cliff leaves Germany in the wake of Nazi rule, he sadly states “There was a city called Berlin, in a country called Germany. It was the end of the world and I was dancing with Sally Bowles, and we were both fast asleep.” These lines clearly states the lack of care and realization which so many Berliners had in the years leading up to the rise of Nazism.

CONCLUSION: “Tomorrow Belongs to Me”

The Weimar Republic in Berlin is marked by widespread political indifference, despite the clearly troubling signs of Nazi rise. Due to economic hardship and fear of the future of their country, Germans chose to give into the decadence seen within the musical Cabaret. Sexual promiscuity and drug and alcohol abuse where all ways in which characters, as well as real Germans, coped with their troubling surroundings. In today’s modern world, we also have many things that can also distract us from important political and social issues, some the same as those during Weimar Republic. We must learn from the characters in Cabaret and remain cognizant of these problems, rather than resigning to these fruitless distractions.
References

ABSTRACT

Berlin has a developing obesity issue. This issue is prevalent in the poorest district of Berlin: Kreuzberg. The malnutrition of people eating a high nutrition of fats and sugars in the area has led to the increase in Body Mass Index. This paper will revolve around what variables in Kreuzberg have the most impact on obese Berliners, specifically children, living in the area. Many have said that socioeconomic status is the main factor to childhood obesity in Kreuzberg. With the impact of multiple factors of obesity, this paper provides policymakers with a better understanding of factors to consider when decreasing the trend of obesity.

PART I: Obesity and Economic Status

Obesity according to the World Health Organization is “Overweight and obesity are defined as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health,” (WHO, Health Topics: Obesity, who.int). Obesity and being overweight can lead to a variety of risk factors such as Type 2 Diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, and forms of cancer. Obesity is becoming a developing issue in the world as obesity was announced a global epidemic by the World Health Organization in 1998 and is still a problem today as over 650 million are diagnosed obese as of 2016, 41 million of which are children. (WHO, Obesity: Preventing and Managing the Global Epidemic, who.int). Obese children are likely to stay obese into adulthood and more likely to develop cardiovascular diseases. Childhood obesity is prevalent in Berlin, specifically in the district of Kreuzberg. The Robert Koch Institute conducted a German Nationwide Children’s and Youth Health Survey (KiGGS) in 2003 and found that obesity is the most prevalent issue to kids and adolescents (Kurth and Rosario 2007).

The proportion of children overweight in Germany rose from 9% for 3–6-year-olds to 15% for 7–10-year-olds and 17% for 14–17-year-olds. The survey found that socioeconomic status was one of the main factors in obesity (Kurth and Rosario 2007). Dr. Susanna Wiegand and her entire team from Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin conducted a study, in 2011, examining 492 patients under the age of 21 in different districts of Berlin and Brandenburg to test if obesity was prevalent in the area. The team searched for trends such as the patient’s socioeconomic status and obesity. They studied ethnic differences, age, weight, sex, blood pressure, and insulin (Wiegand 2011). The team found results where the difference is most significant in obesity and economic status as she says, “Differences were even sharper when considering social status (SES): 12% of children with low vs. 3.6% with high SES were obese” (Wiegand 2011). Although there is a difference in this study, there were limitations to the experiment.
such as the sample size is too small. The study is inadequate in proving socioeconomics as the main factor for obesity and shows that more variables needed to be tested in Kreuzberg.

**PART II: Socioeconomic Origins**

There is a myth that obesity is caused by the socioeconomic issues. A study in conducted by Clinical Nutritionist Adam Drewnowski wrote an article in 2009, “Obesity, Diets, and Social Inequalities,” for *Nutrition Review* in the United States about how the poor have access to cheap and refined sugars. Dr. Adam Drewnowski describes, “Simply put, fats and sweets cost less, whereas many healthier foods cost more… The low cost and high palatability of energy-dense foods – mainly sugars and fats – along with the easy access to such foods can help explain why the highest obesity rates are found among the most disadvantaged groups” (Drewnowski 536-537). Dr. Drewnowski continues and says that the access to these low foods are chosen because they are more affordable (Drewnowski 536). His study researched into how the cost per calorie of high-quality foods like fruits and vegetables are much higher than products of sugar and fat (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Relationship between energy density (kcal/100 g) and energy cost (Euros/1000 kcal). Graph from Dr. Drewnowski, “The Economics of Obesity: Dietary Energy Density and Energy Cost.” *(Nutrition Reviews, 2009). Academic Journal.*

Although the study of Dr. Drewnowski was done in the United States, Dr. Nanette Stroble tests his statement that socioeconomically challenged do not have access to higher nutrient food and sees if Dr. Drewnowski’s research is applicable in Berlin. She wrote her research article in the 2011 edition of *The Journal of Public Health* titled, “Assessing The Variety and Pricing of Selected Foods in Socioeconomically Disparate Districts of Berlin,” She did a study comparing the urban development of Berlin districts with low social status or Social Indexes (SI) like Kreuzberg and the urban development of high Social Index districts specifically Steglitz-Zehlendorf. The statement that Dr. Drewnowski proposes was
negated by the research of Dr. Strobele who had differing results and showed how groceries in both areas had equal amounts of opportunities to get high and low quality food in the poorer districts compared to a more affluent district, as she explains, “One possible explanation could be that within the German population, social inequality is less pronounced than in other countries such as the US, and therefore the difference in social status in the chosen urban districts was too small to be a factor in the food environment” (Strobele 2010). She concurs through her study that food is relatively similar in terms of availability and pricing when comparing the districts of Kreuzberg and Steglitz Zehlendorf (see Figure 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low SES (N = 72)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of fruits (SD)</td>
<td>14.21 (5.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of vegetables (SD)</td>
<td>18.75 (6.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apples (1,000 g) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>1.44 (0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas (1,000 g) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>1.39 (0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes (1,000 g) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>1.93 (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots (1,000 g) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>1.30 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes (1,000 g) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>0.85 (0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole wheat bread (100 g) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>0.19 (0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh milk (1 l) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>0.63 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen pizza (300 g) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>0.83 (0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate (100 g) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>0.51 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato chips (100 g) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>0.46 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer (0.5 l) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>0.41 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarettes (17 per packet) in € (SEM)</td>
<td>3.39 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study shows socioeconomics is not the main factor in obesity for Kreuzberg because the prices for low nutrient food and high nutrient food were generally the same. Another study in 2011 by Peter Tinnemann in The European Journal of Health studies charities that are distributing high-quality food, like fruits and vegetables, in impoverished areas of Berlin. He analyzes how many people, that are economically burdened, are using these charity distribution centers over the course of 2006 to 2010. He writes, “The daily number of individuals served each week on average increased by 9% from 231 people in May 2006 to 251 people in May 2010… Clients who bought additional fruits, besides those produce collected at LAIB und SEELE, indicated to have a significantly better health status compared to those who did not…” (Tinnemann 2011). This study also proves that socioeconomic status is not a factor as there are charities that are distributing in the area and available to the economically challenged. Berliners could have had preferences over which type of nutrient to get but they can access healthy nutrients in the area. Thus, the socioeconomic issue is not a factor in determining the main cause of obesity in Kreuzberg.

**PART III: Testing Different Variables**

The search to find the factors that are causing Kreuzberg to be obese has led to the journey of Tobia Lakes and Katrin Burkart of The International Journal of Health Geographics who conducted their own research on childhood obesity in Kreuzberg area in 2016. In their research, “Childhood Overweight in Berlin: Intra-Urban Differences and Underlying Influencing Factors,” they mention that they are aware of previous obesity articles and journals in Berlin that study socioeconomic status and other factors like immigrant versus non-immigrant schooling. Both authors wanted to further investigate these variables by studying 5 to 6-year old boys and girls.
in the area of Kreuzberg and another district of Neukölln. They measured unique variables like socioeconomic status to uncover the main reasons why obesity is prevalent in the area. They looked into other variables like areas away from the park, area away from the local playground, to the number of fast food restaurants available in the area. She writes, “We build upon existing knowledge on the influencing factors of overweight and obesity and use the following explanatory factors: language skills, health status, availability of a TV, kindergarten attendance, migration background, and the social index that combines parents’ education, and employment status” (Lakes and Burkart 2016). The authors go on to what they think is the main factors as Lakes and Burkart explain three variables they want to look at: social index, percentage of non-German children and fast food restaurant density (Lakes and Burkart 2016). Lakes and Burkart both use descriptive research correlation analysis to compare the data of the three variables. They found that “Spatial and environmental characteristics, such as urban vegetation, parks, playgrounds, access to public transport, or walkability did not show a significant effect on overweight and obesity on the aggregated level of analysis in pre-school children in Berlin. The regression analysis revealed that fast food restaurants had a small impact with increasing overweight and obesity in areas with a higher density of restaurants offering fast food, though the validity of this finding is disputable...” (Lakes and Burkart 2016). They also found that children of non-immigrant background are also a factor in obesity, saying, “Our findings are supported with an earlier analysis where 4.4 % of German children were overweight and 2.4 % obese, whilst children with Turkish migration background exhibited an overweight rate of 10.7 %, those of Arab background 9.1 % and those from Eastern European countries 7.3 % (obesity rates were 10.1, 7.6 and 5.3 %)” (Lakes and Burkart 2016). Lakes and Burkart prove that socioeconomic status did not show any significance impacting childhood obesity in the area. They also suggest that the availability of fast food and number of non-German immigrants are important factors to why the children of Berlin are at risk for obesity (see Figure 3).

These variables are promising to validate in Kreuzberg as children in low-income households tend to eat fast food more than healthy options letting them intake more sugars and fats that can lead to obesity. The immigrant association to obesity in Kreuzberg is an unknown factor that also must be tested in depth. This research is not enough to justify that the main factors in the childhood obesity problem of Kreuzberg have been found. Another study needs to be established and the results from this descriptive research correlation analysis must have the similar results.
CONCLUSION:

Berlin is a city that is rebranding its food industry and is using multiple variables to battle the problem of obesity. From earlier studies, we can confirm that socioeconomics was a factor in the childhood obesity epidemic of Kreuzberg. However, it is not the main factor as Kreuzberg is more complex based on recent research of other variables. There is obesity factors of education, integration into the community, fast food restaurants in the area, and stress levels that all play roles in obesity. The recent findings call for different variables measurements as strategies to battle obesity should center on different variables and not socioeconomic status. Socioeconomics can still play a factor but it is not the main one. Once we are able to locate the specific variables, we can make decisions to cure the obesity epidemic in the neighborhood of Kreuzberg.

References