A 'Berlin Wall' Colloquium:
Old and New Walls
in Germany and Tanzania

"Between Protection and Separation: What are Walls for?"

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Between Protection and Separation: What are Walls for?

- This presentation examines how, the Berlin Wall can be used to interpret and make sense of the psychological make-up of the German and Tanzanian people.

Between Protection and Separation: What are Walls for?

- We can use the Berlin Wall, as an interpretive resource to think about a divided society, and to make visible, decipherable, and classifiable, the inner life of peoples.

Between Protection and Separation: What are Walls for?

- Even after its fall, the Berlin Wall continues to serve as a basis for categorizing human suffering. Today it can rhetorically be transformed into a "mental wall" offering a compelling metaphor for modern Germany's and Tanzania's apparent psychological and cultural divide.

Between Protection and Separation: What are Walls for?

- I hope that this Colloquium can use the Berlin Wall, as interpretive resource to reflect on psychological issues, make sense of societal transformations, and create and solve social problems.

"Between Protection and Separation: What are Walls for?"

- The right to move around is a fundamental human right. Back in 1948, the United Nations declared that all men and women have the right to roam freely in their homeland, to leave, to return if they choose, and to exit again. That political vision recognized a basic **psychological** truth—that it is a violation of human nature to fence people in.

Yet……The **Berlin Wall!**

• a barrier constructed by the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) starting on 13 August 1961

• completely cut off West Berlin from surrounding East Germany and from East Berlin

• included **guard towers** placed along large concrete walls, which circumscribed a wide area that contained **anti-vehicle trenches,** and other defenses.

The **Berlin Wall**

• The Eastern Bloc: wall erected to **protect** its population from Nazist/fascist elements conspiring to prevent the "will of the people" in building a socialist state in East Germany.

• In practice: the Wall also served to **prevent** the massive emigration and defection that marked Germany and the communist Eastern Bloc during the post-World War II period.

The Berlin Wall

- Along with the separate and much longer Inner German border between East and West Germany, both borders came to symbolize the "Iron Curtain" that separated Western Europe and the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War.

The Berlin Wall

Between 1961 and 1989, the wall prevented almost all such emigration. During this period, around 5,000 people attempted to escape over the wall, with estimates of the resulting death toll varying between 100 and 200.

The Berlin Wall

- In 1989 political changes occurred in the Eastern Bloc, associated with the liberalization of the Eastern Bloc's authoritarian systems and the erosion of political power in the pro-Soviet governments in nearby Poland and Hungary.

The Berlin Wall

- April 5: Poland. The Communist government and Solidarity agree to share power and hold free elections.

- June 4: Poland. Solidarity wins a huge majority of the vote, including 96 of 100 Senate seats.

- Aug. 19: Poland. Mazowiecki is elected as Poland's first non-Communist prime minister.

The Berlin Wall

- Sept. 10: Hungary. 60,000 East Germans go through Hungary to cross into Austria.

- Sept. 27: Yugoslavia. Slovenia asserts its right to secede from Yugoslavia.

- Oct 7: Hungary. Socialist Workers Party (formerly Communist) renounces Marxism, embraces democratic socialism, and is renamed the Hungarian Socialist Party.

The Berlin Wall

- Oct. 18: East Germany. Mass demonstrations force President Eric Honecker to resign.

- Oct. 18: Hungary. Parliament ends the one-party monopoly and announces elections for next year.

- After several weeks of civil unrest, the East German government announced *on 9 November 1989 that all* GDR citizens could visit West Germany and West Berlin.

The Berlin Wall

- Nov. 9: East Germany. The **Berlin Wall is opened** and **five million people come to Berlin** to celebrate the end of the **Wall**, the end of the Cold War, and the end of Communism,

- The fall of the Berlin Wall paved the way for German reunification, which was formally concluded on 3 October 1990

The 'walls' which hinder Tanzania achieve her goals

- **Political** walls: corruption, god-fatherism, civic illiteracy
- **Economic** walls: poverty, poor-rich-divide
- **Socio-cultural** walls: antagonistic interest groups/classes,
- **Technological** walls: scientific illiteracy, digital divide
- **Environmental**: poor biodiversity management, poor land planning
- **Legal walls**: constitutional constraints, regulatory discrimination: business environment remains hampered by continuing problems in the regulatory framework. Business Freedom Index 2011: *46/100*

The 'walls' which hinder Tanzania achieve her goals

- **Psychological** walls: less visible and stand in the way of building sustainable security and peace in today's world;

- Mapping today's **psychological** or mental **walls** in a more systematic way would include **misperceptions**, **denial, reductionism** or the absence of the big picture, **lack of creativity** and **innovation**,

The 'walls' which hinder Tanzania achieve her goals

- **lack of empathy**, the **absence of the ethical mind** or the **professional responsibility** for what we do and for what we do not do
- Dismantling them tend to be accompanied with strong resistance and emotions.

Dismantling the 'walls' which hinder Tanzania achieve her goals

Five minds which are crucial for dismantling the wall:

- (1) **The disciplined mind** which masters at least one discipline. A disciplined mind helps the individual to think independently. Without mastering at least one discipline, the individual is doomed to march to someone else's drum.

- (2) **The synthesizing mind** takes information from different sources and puts it together in ways that makes sense to the synthesizer and to other persons. A synthesizing mind helps the individual to see and understand the big picture.
- (3) **The creating mind** breaks new ground, presents forward, fresh ideas, raises unfamiliar questions, explores alternative solutions, frames the problem in new ways, gives unexpected answers and opens new perspectives.

Pulling down the 'walls' which hinder Tanzania achieve her goals

- (4) **The respectful mind** notes and welcomes differences between human individuals and between human groups, tries to understand the 'others' and seek to work effectively with them.

- (5) **The ethical mind** reflects on the nature of one's work and the needs and desires of the society in which one lives. It conceptualizes how people can serve purposes beyond self-interest and how citizens (and nations) can work unselfishly to improve the lot of all. It also reminds us that we are responsible not only for what we do but also for what we do not do.

Conclusion

- "We, the people of Tanganyika, would like to light a **candle** and put it on top of Mount **Kilimanjaro** which would shine beyond our borders giving hope where there was (wall of) despair, love where there was (wall of) hate and dignity where before there was only (wall of) humiliation". *Mwalimu Nyerere*

- Ahsanteni sana!
- Thanks very much!