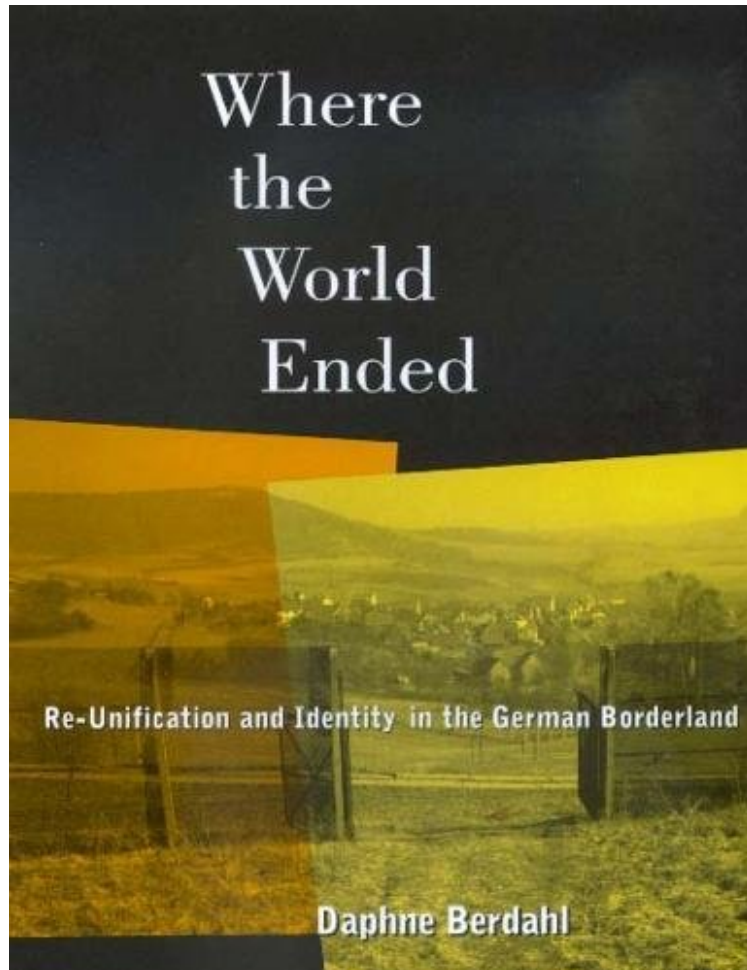


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# Where the World Ended: Re-Unification and Identity in the German Borderland

*Daphne Berdahl*

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6 of 12 people found the following review helpful. wonderfully thought provokingBy A CustomerThis book is extremely interesting. The author has much enthusiasm about the subject and presents the material in a very interesting way. This is a thought- provoking subject and a must read for any anthropology fan or people interested in reunification.

When the Berlin Wall fell, people who lived along the dismantled border found their lives drastically and rapidly

transformed. Daphne Berdahl, through ongoing ethnographic research in a former East German border village, explores the issues of borders and borderland identities that have accompanied the many transitions since 1990. What happens to identity and personhood, she asks, when a political and economic system collapses overnight? How do people negotiate and manipulate a liminal condition created by the disappearance of a significant frame of reference? Berdahl concentrates especially on how these changes have affected certain "border zones" of daily life including social organization, gender, religion, and nationality in a place where literal, indeed concrete, borders were until recently a very powerful presence. Borders, she argues, are places of ambiguity as well as of intense lucidity; these qualities may in fact be mutually constitutive. She shows how, in a moment of headlong historical transformation, larger political, economic, and social processes are manifested locally and specifically. In the process of a transition between two German states, people have invented, and to some extent ritualized, cultural practices that both reflect and constitute profound identity transformations in a period of intense social discord. *Where the World Ended* combines a vivid ethnographic account of everyday life under socialist rule and after German reunification with an original investigation of the paradoxical human condition of a borderland.

"This is a splendid ethnography which deserves to become a standard source on East Germany. . . . Berdahl's is a lucid and sharply observed study which works from the fine materials of everyday life to answer a series of grand questions which anyone might want to ask of East Germany as it existed before, during and after the Wall."--"Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute From the Inside Flap" Berdahl's vibrant book tackles core themes and weaves together pressing issues in dynamic ways. . . . It is theoretically sophisticated and well-written, [and] there are, to my knowledge, no books quite like this in the field at present. Its contribution will be original, its scholarship unquestioned." Uli Linke, author of *Blood and Nation*