

DIVIDED: WHY WE'RE LIVING IN AN AGE OF WALLS

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Divided is all about creating walls, their perceived necessity and their impact. Deep divisions based on wealth, race, religion and politics are the reasons behind barriers preventing violence and maintaining defence. Tim Marshall stated that in this world, there have always been boundaries, ranging from small scale to larger ones. Physical boundaries are mostly demarcated on maps and the ground, and movement through them is restricted. Barriers at every level create a 'US' vs 'THEM' mentality and are somehow crucial for the promotion of national identity. Thousands of miles of walls and fences have been built worldwide in the twenty-first century. The growing higher walls and barriers are reshaping the world. The author has discussed barriers in China, the US, Israel-Palestine, the Middle East, the Subcontinent, Africa, Europe and the UK.

China has been a strong nation with several divisions within its borders, such as regional unrest and wealth disparity that threaten national unity, economic progress, and power. The Great Wall of China once served as a symbol of the divide between the civilised and barbarian world; the Great Firewall has now emerged in the age of the internet, also known as the Golden Shield by the outside world is intended to protect the Chinese people from the concept of democracy, free speech and unplugged culture. More than 2000 years later, the power of leadership, Han unity, and national unity are paramount, even if unity is achieved through a digital wall that divides China from the rest of the world.

The US has a divide based on race, religion and politics. The US population is approximately 324 million, including white (72.4%), black (12.6%), Asian (4.8%) and Amerindian (less than 1%), according to the 2010 census. There is also diversity in religious beliefs and practices, Christian (80%) – Protestant (46.6%) and Catholic (20.8%) - Jew (1.9%), Mormon (1.6%), Muslim (0.9%), Buddhist (0.7%), Hindu (0.7%) and a plethora of other smaller groups. There is a deep political divide. Democrats describe themselves as consistent liberals, while Republicans describe them as

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consistently conservative. President Trump's rhetoric about the Wall plays on historical and new division within the nation, while Obama's view of his country embraced the idea of 'E Pluribus' (one of many).

The border between Israel and Palestine is defined but has many internal divisions. Israeli society has many rifts, and the country's politics is highly divided, with left-wing and right-wing political parties, Arab parties and further subdivisions within these categories. The Jewish majority is divided into Ashkenazi and Sephardi, and the sharp religious divide within the Jewish population between Secular (49%), Traditional (13%) and Ultra-orthodox (9%), and also the economic divide is growing. The non-Jewish communities are divided religiously and ethnically into Muslim, Bedouin, Christian and Druze. The most significant divide in Palestinian territories is territorial, and there are numerous obstacles to forming a single Palestinian state. The region is divided not by geography but by politics and ideology. The Fatah movement governs 2.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank, and Hamas governs 1.7 million in Gaza. The Bethlehem Wall enables Israel to maintain control over its territory. The West Bank barriers remained an attempt to contain the violence that erupted so fiercely and frequently since Israel's inception.

The author notes that small walls in the Middle East can be found in Baghdad, Damascus, Amman, Sana, Beirut, Cairo, Riyadh and almost every capital city. Saudi Arabia has built hundreds of miles of fences along its northern and southern borders, Kuwait has fenced its border, Jordan has fortified its border with Syria, and Turkey has built walls 10 feet high and 7 feet thick, while the convulsions in Libya have led to Tunisia and Egypt to build fences along the borders. The region has numerous people, religions, sects and languages, including minorities Kurds, Druze, Yazidis and Chaldeans.

India is separated from Bangladesh and Pakistan through fences. The longest border fence in the world runs along India's border along most of Bangladesh's 2500-mile border with India; hundreds of miles of this barrier are double layered with part of its barbed wire, electrified and floodlit that divided communities that have lived without physical division for centuries. India has constructed a 340-mile-long barrier along the disputed Line of Control inside Kashmir, a region claimed by both countries as their sovereign territory. Pakistan's western border with Afghanistan stretches for 1510 miles and remains a problematic frontier dividing Pashtuns into citizens of various countries. India shares a long border with China. The Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China and India claim, has concluded building a barrier to prevent infiltration. Furthermore, India has significant internal division due to the caste system with four major groups: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras.

Africa is estimated to have at least 3000 ethnic groups, each with its language, religion and culture. In Ethiopia, the largest are Amhara and Oromo, who number 54 million. Nigeria alone has between 250 and 500 tribes. The Shona in Zimbabwe, the Zulu in South Africa, and the Ashanti in Ghana each have a population of 10 million people. There are numerous subgroups and smaller groups. South Africa pioneered the

African gated trend. The gated communities have the potential to undermine social cohesion. Despite barriers, many people cross into South Africa, and the high level of immigration has caused tension.

Across Europe, the very concept of the EU is under threat, and walls go up, indicating that the difference between Cold War and nationalism has not vanished in the age of internationalism. The Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain were stark physical reminders that a continent with shared history, interconnected culture and ancient trading routes had been entirely driven by ideology and great power politics. The divide in modern Germany is not nearly as sharp as it was during the Cold War, and some of it is due to the factors that predate the communist and capitalist split. The Russian annexation of Crimea led Ukraine to begin fortifying its borders. Estonia and Latvia began erecting fences along their border with Russia in 2015, and Lithuania reinforced conscription in response to Russian action in 2017. In 2011, Greece built a razor wire fence along its border with Turkey to keep migrants from the Middle East and Africa out, and Bulgaria followed suit in 2015. Hungary built the barrier, and several other countries followed suit. Slovenia built a fence along its border with Croatia; Macedonia built a fence along its Greek border; Austria built a wall in Calais to prevent migrants from crossing the English Channel. The idea of a barrier run counter to EU ideals and is one of the growing divides threatening to splinter the union.

The UK, the Hadrian's Wall, became a symbol of the Roman Empire's vast reach for 1500 years, and it fell into despair after the Romans left. In the 21st century, most of the wall has long gone; even though part of the wall is south of the Scottish border, the Roman fortification still represents one of the main divisions in the UK. In the UK, there is a growing movement of 'US' vs 'THEM' within the nation it comprises and within its populations. Many people feel more divided than ever. Culture and identities are diverging, interacting in novel ways with more significant issues such as globalisation and the EU.

The author concludes that, given the nature of the world, nations are compelled to erect barriers and fences. It is human nature to draw borders to defend its interest. Those supporting walls have greater strength than those that are against barriers. The threat of mass migration, terrorist attacks and violence make it rational for the state to create barriers and protect its national identity. Tim Marshall has a very deterministic view of the world and state behaviour. He does not discuss how society has become more accessible and more interconnected despite the creation of walls and barriers. The author does not cover Russia, its division, and the walls. The book does not cover the divide between Muslim and Western civilisations. In the chapters on India and Africa, Marshall only touches on the complex barrier the British had built throughout colonial history. He shows a biased approach in chapters on Israel, Palestine, and the Indian Subcontinent. Overall, this book provides a fascinating analysis of deep divisions within countries, intra-regional tensions, and physical barriers that will shape the world in the coming years.