

A VOLUME IN INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL STUDIES FORUM

Mending Walls

Historical,
Socio-Political,
Economic, and
Geographical Perspectives

Richard A. Diem and Michael J. Berson, *editors*



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A volume in
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Richard A. Diem and Jeff Passe, *Series Editors*

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PREFACE

This volume of the International Social Studies Forum offers papers presented at the 2016 Social Studies Education Consortium International Conference that was held in Berlin, Germany, in June 2016. The conference theme highlighted *Mending Walls: Historical, Socio-Political, Economic and Geographic Perspectives*. *Mending Walls* is based on Robert Frost's poem and has multilayered meanings for the social sciences. Conference presentations explored the metaphor of "good neighbors, walls," and other applications relevant to the social sciences and/or historical context of Berlin.

The authors of the chapters that comprise this book represent a cross section of social studies, citizenship, and policy academic specialists from across the United States and Germany. Their work here highlights their research interests in the areas of social studies, democratic and civic education, cultural studies, historical interpretation, and perspectives on how educational policy affects choice and activism. The issues and structures discussed in their chapters all focus on how education, and specifically social studies education, can offer ways to mend the walls dividing societies, both internally and externally, across the globe.

A highlight of the conference was the celebration of the work of several "young scholars." These individuals, members of the professoriate for less than 5 years, offered new, and in some cases groundbreaking, ideas for debate and discussion. They are identified in the table of contents with the tag young scholar below their name and professional affiliation.

When the International Social Studies Forum was initially launched more than 13 years ago, first as a journal then as a book series, one of its goals was to provide an outlet for social studies educators and academicians interested in presenting their scholarship on topical issues, historical analyses, and research findings. Our intention is for this volume to continue that tradition.

The editors would like to thank all those who contributed to this effort. We extend special appreciation to Murry Nelson, who organized the conference, and Jim Davis, the Social Science Consortium executive director, who is the heart and soul of SSEC.

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INTRODUCTION

Imagine 11 young social studies/social science education scholars gathering in Berlin, Germany, June 21–25, 2016, eager to share their knowledge, excitement, and commitment to their academic field. This is exactly what occurred at the 51st annual meeting of the Social Science Education Consortium (SSEC). The young scholars, as well as several senior scholars, formed the basis of 15 paper presentations at the conference around the theme: “Mending Walls: Historical, Socio-Political, Economic, and Geographic Perspectives.”

The background of the Berlin event began in April 2015 with an intense weekend meeting of current and past SSEC board members and invited young scholars. (A young scholar is loosely defined as a doctoral graduate within about the past 5 years.) The charge to the group at the April 2015 meeting was to agree on the future of the SSEC. Should we close up shop? Should we use our modest capital fund to give a few scholarships? Should we give our capital fund to a worthy cause? Should we use our funds for a party of members? It was decided at the April 2015 meeting to create incentives for young scholars to attend an annual meeting of the SSEC by waiving their conference fee and offsetting some of their travel expenses. We established the Nicholas and Suzanne Young Scholars Fund from our modest capital fund to pay the young scholars. Another incentive was to publish both young scholar and senior scholar papers presented at the conference through Information Age Publishing of Charlotte, North Carolina. By providing these two incentives, we are hopeful that the young scholars

will continue to build on their Berlin experience to continue to grow the organization.

We were fortunate that Murry Nelson, emeritus professor of American studies and education at Pennsylvania State University and past president of the SSEC, was willing to organize our annual meeting in Berlin with the assistance of the local Fulbright Kommission. With the able assistance of Reiner Rohr of the Fulbright Kommission, Murry created a blockbuster of a four-day conference. The conference site visits included a full day in Dresden, visits to the German Historic Museum and the Jewish Museum, a behind the scenes tour of the Pergamon Museum, and a tour of the Sachsenhusen Memorial and Museum Site. Longtime SSEC member Carole Hahn chaired an excellent panel on research and issues in German social studies/civic education. Panelists were Professor Sibylle Reinhardt of Halle University, and Tilman Grammes of the University of Hamburg. In addition, conferees had time to visit many places on their own in Berlin, a vibrant and growing city, with an easy-to-use transportation system.

Michael Berson, SSEC board member, and Richard Diem, current SSEC president, organized the conference paper presentations. They have given their time to edit the papers for this volume. The titles of the conference papers appear in the table of contents. Here are the topics addressed in the papers and presented at the conference: global education and teacher navigation of failed citizenship, increasing primary school students' civic proficiency, mending walls through conflict and forgiveness, how nations use schooling to mend or dismantle political and social walls, African American involvement in the liberation of Jews during the Holocaust, a place-based exploration of the Holocaust in Berlin, big history and the great wall of China, the dilemma of creating a protective wall, learning about culture through photos and journal writing, deconstructing otherness social studies teachers' representations of Middle Eastern populations, exploring the persisting walls between ability and disability in schools and society, and disrupting spaces for education and policymaking and activism.

The Social Science Education Consortium is pleased to collaborate with Information Age Publishing to present this most useful volume to the field.

James E. Davis

Executive Director

Social Studies Education Consortium