

Preface

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This book, too, is the result of an adventure. It began in 1995 when the author of this foreword began his work at Potsdam University with a longitudinal study of the political socialization of young people, in which he sought to predict the behavior of first-time voters from his new home Brandenburg, one of the new German states, in the Bundestag election of 1998. To this end, the study was to begin with students of grade 10 of the *Gymnasium* (college-prep-track school), continue with two more waves of data collection in grade 11 and 12, and end with a fourth and final wave after election day in grade 13. The plan for the investigation stipulated questioning all parallel classes at representatively selected schools, in order to comprise as many friends as possible, thus making it possible to make their mutual socialization influence accessible to analysis. Additionally, both parents of each pupil were to be questioned, in order to set their influence in relation to that of the friends.

It was fortunate that Karin Weiss, with whom I had already worked together for several years on research projects at Berlin's Free University, received a professorship at the University of Applied Sciences in Potsdam, providing the opportunity for renewed cooperation. Karin Weiss developed the plan to carry out a parallel study with students at "Real- and Gesamtschulen" (non-college-prep-track schools and mixed comprehensive schools) and to introduce conditions in occupational education and on the job as additional socialization factors. This allowed us to cover the entire group of first-time voters in Brandenburg and to compare the emergence of first-time voting behavior of students at *Gymnasien* with that of young people already integrated in the working world. The *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG – German Research Council)¹ supported both longitudinal studies, in which we conducted four waves of questioning, beginning with the 10th grade, to inquire into the development of political interest, political attitudes, identifica-

1 For the project at Potsdam University, we were able to win the support of Edith Schütte, Hans-Peter Kuhn, and later Christine Schmid as research colleagues. Research colleagues Janette Brauer and Katrin Isermann took part in the project at the University of applied Sciences.

tion with parties, willingness to vote, and – after September 1998 – actual voting behavior. A book has meanwhile been published on the Brandenburg first-time voters (Kuhn et al. 2001). Analyses in the framework of a broader concept of political socialization and identity formation are presented in this volume.

When we had just carried out the first wave of questioning of 10th-graders, our attention was drawn to the possibility of receiving funding from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for trilateral cooperation projects between universities in Israel, the Palestinian Autonomy Regions, and the Federal Republic of Germany. These projects, under German aegis, were intended to promote the peace process through cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian researchers. The idea was to reduce mutual distrust and to strengthen the research capacity of Palestinian universities. We had the great good fortune of finding Zvi Eisikovits and Gideon Fishman, two liberal social science professors at the University of Haifa in Israel, who were not only interested in the topic of political socialization among young people and had the corresponding research experience, but were also willing to work together with Palestinians. It was extraordinarily helpful that the two professors were simultaneously the directors of a Minerva Institute for Research on Youth, which has excellent research infrastructure.²

We found a Palestinian researcher equally willing to cooperate and experienced in social science: Prof. Bernard Sabella of Bethlehem University in the Palestinian Autonomy Region in the West Bank. Like all Palestinian institutions of higher education and unlike Haifa University, Bethlehem University is very poorly funded and lacks adequate material infrastructure for research. If researchers like Dr. Sabella nevertheless conduct research, they do so despite the adverse conditions on the basis of their own extraordinary initiative. Among the unfavorable conditions is that the University of Bethlehem awards only B.A. degrees and has no Masters program. Like all Palestinian universities, Bethlehem is not authorized to award doctorates, and thus well-trained young social scientists are hard to attract. All these conditions, along with mistrust and ideological differences, are further reasons why it is difficult to bring about cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian researchers.³

Together with Zvi Eisikovits and Gideon Fishman of Haifa and Bernard Sabella of Bethlehem, we worked out the idea of replicating the Brandenburg study in Israel and in the West Bank, so that the political socialization of youth in Brandenburg, Israel, and Palestine could be compared. The replication was to consist in having young people in Israel and the West Bank fill

2 Avi Griffel, Guy Enosh, Michal Grinstein-Weiss and Gustavo Mesch worked as the project's research colleagues at the Minerva Institute.

3 Margo Sabella and Nicola Marzouka worked as the project's research colleagues at Bethlehem University.

out questionnaires on political socialization three times at intervals of one year, beginning in the 10th grade. The questionnaires corresponded for the most part with those in the Brandenburg study. As in Brandenburg, parents and friends of the young people would be involved in the investigation. Details of the actually performed investigation are described in the appendix of this book. The reviewers at the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft approved the application for this trilateral social science project. The financing was administered through Potsdam University.

We were able to win Dr. Hilke Rebenstorf to be Project Coordinator with offices at Potsdam University. With great circumspection and tact, she ensured that the work began in 1997, that multiply rechecked Arabic and Hebrew versions of the questionnaire were designed, and ultimately even that four waves of data gathering were carried out more or less in parallel with the data gathering in Brandenburg. Dr. Rebenstorf has meanwhile transferred to Hildesheim University and has been succeeded as coordinator by Dr. Hans-Peter Kuhn. We are grateful that, as editor, she continued to coordinate the contributions to this book.

The data gathering in Israel and the West Bank entailed many problems (Rebenstorf et al.), but was so successful overall that each team now has extremely valuable sets of data. The three waves of data gathering originally applied for were carried out in 1998, 1999, and 2000 in Israel and the West Bank. Since the new Intifada broke out shortly after the third campaign to gather data, we applied for another data gathering, in order to carry out a pre-/post-comparison. This additional data gathering was also approved by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and then carried out in 2001. Thus, all three teams have longitudinal data from four samplings. For the research group at Haifa University, this is an invaluable longitudinal supplement to their annually conducted representative survey of youth in Israel. For the research group in Bethlehem, this is the first time that secure knowledge about Palestinian youth over a longer period has existed.

Among the problems we had to overcome was that it was not possible in either Israel or the West Bank to conduct the investigation at schools, so that the manner in which samples were recruited differed in the three studies. To carry out the four waves of questioning in Israel, where school lasts 12 years, in parallel to the Brandenburg study, where school lasts 13 years, the researchers in Haifa began their investigation with the 9th grade.

For reasons of access, the random selection of subjects in the West Bank had to be limited to school pupils. This limitation means that the Palestinian selection greatly overrepresents youth from families with higher educational levels⁴ compared with the samples from the two other regions. Additionally,

4 The Palestinian Bureau of Central Statistics reports for 1997 that thirteen percent of the 15 years old had no formal school education, twenty percent finished grade 6 and only fifteen percent finished grade 13 (Sabella, Chapter 4 of this volume).

in the West Bank, questions related to influences among peers had to be abandoned completely, because the anonymity of the questioning would have been cast into doubt if we had asked for the names and addresses of the young people's friends. In questioning parents, as well, we had to make do with less in the West Bank than in Israel or Brandenburg, because in the West Bank it was only possible to question one parent – either father or mother – from each family. But the constructive solutions found in both Haifa and Bethlehem warded off any danger to the central interest of the trilateral project: to gather data on the development of the political identity of young people over a period of four years. But not all parts of the investigation are completely comparable.

After some results of our cooperative effort have already been presented at international conferences and workshops, we submit this volume as a first attempt to interpret the results of the three investigations comparatively. To do this, we have chosen to write three parallel chapters on each of several selected topics regarding the young people in the three regions under investigation. With few exceptions, we present cross-sectional results and base our findings on the data of the third wave of questioning in Brandenburg (1997) in Israel (2000) and in the Westbank (2000). However, the authors of the chapters 7, 15 and 16 used longitudinal data sets. Additional publications are planned to compare the Israeli and Palestinian young people before and after the outbreak of the second Intifada, as well as to provide detailed longitudinal analyses of each of the three investigated regions separately.

Our trilateral project did not enable us to influence the escalation of violence since Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount in Fall 2000. But we were able to show that the majority of young people in both Israel and the West Bank want peace. With these young people, it would be possible to organize peaceful coexistence in two states. The cooperation with the researchers in Bethlehem and Haifa further showed us that, on this level, there is much good will and hope for a peaceful solution, though no one in the participating teams cherishes illusions that this will be easy to achieve. But our cooperative effort has surely made it more likely that, after a peaceful solution to the problem of the Palestinians, the participants will actively promote increased cooperation and the creation of infrastructure favorable to scientific research in Palestine. We thus hope that our efforts were not in vain in this way, either.

This successful cooperation over what is now more than six years has enabled us to get to know and esteem each other with all our strengths and weaknesses; beyond that, true friendships have developed. For me personally, the greatest gain from the adventurous and strenuous, but also rewarding journey behind us is that today I can be friends with Israeli and Palestinian researchers in the same way without having to be unjust to either side.