

Book Review of: **Peleikis, Anja (2003): Lebanese In Motion - Gender and the Making of a Translocal Village. Bielefeld.** Transcript Verlag 210 p., kart., 29,80 € ISBN 978-3-933127-45-7.

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Teaser: This book combines recent theoretical developments in the studies of migration, especially the approach of transnational social spaces and the study of gender in migration with the case of lebanese population flow between a village in South Lebanon and Ivorian capital Abidjan in West Africa. Transcontinental information exchange generates a common social space, the „translocal village in the making“.

The book „Lebanese in Motion – Gender and the Making of a Translocal Village” is one of the most recently published books about Lebanese migration to West Africa. Its approach follows the theories of transnationalism and multi-localism. Peleikis’ task is “to understand the ongoing and continuing ways in which current-day migrants construct and reconstitute their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society.”(Peleikis, 2003: p.19)

In her research she develops a new view on Lebanese in West Africa, a perspective which differs much from most of the recent works concerned with this people-group, which mainly focus on economic topics or on the relation of the Lebanese towards their African environment. Peleikis chose to set her focal point on the Southern Lebanese Shi`ite village of Zrariye. By doing so she develops her main theoretical idea, which is that of a translocal village, which is constructed by the village people in Lebanon and their migrants kin in the Ivory Coast (mainly in the city of Abidjan).

Information is fast and easily spread between the South-Lebanese village of Zrariye and Abidjan through phone calls, video and audios tapes and last but not least the ongoing travelling of people between both places. Peleikis shows how people are able through today’s information technologies to produce ways of communication which are nearly as effective as face-to-face interactions in former village life. By this, people who consider themselves members of one village, but living miles and miles away from each other are still strongly connected to each other in a social space in which they negotiate common issues and social identities.

Peleikis shows this in an example of different types of Lebanese women identities. By carrying out biographical interviews in both of her areas of fieldwork she develops identity types like for instance the “modern Muslim women” or the “Westernised woman”, and outlines these with empirical examples with cases from Lebanon and the Ivory Coast. This typification is a main link to Peleikis second emphases of her work, gender, as expressed in the books title.

Following this she stresses the differences in the migration process for men and women. Compared to the humble village life, a lot of young men enjoy their new freedom and opportunities when they’re heading to the destination Abidjan. In the contrary for women this step often means a limitation of their mobility, especially due to the fear of becoming a victim of crime in the African metropolis Abidjan – a possible danger they were not facing in their familiar village area in Lebanon.

Peleikis describes and discusses the emergence of a group of “new rich” on the Southern Lebanese side, which is composed of successful West African migrants, which has built

beautiful and big houses in the villages of the South. This group is described as a growing political force in the political field, both for South Lebanon as well as on a national level. Alongside the two main emphases of the work, the translocal village and gender, Peleikis also gives a short but informative overview on Lebanese migration to West Africa and the establishment of an entrepreneur's minority.

To conclude Peleikis' work provides a valuable contribution to the discussion about transnational social spaces, localism and gender in the migration process. It is therefore recommended to those who are involved in the wider discussion of recent development in migrations processes. The strength of the book lies in the combination of the outcome of this recent debate about migration with the interesting case of Lebanese migration toward West Africa. For those who are researching on Lebanese migration or those who focus on West Africa in particular this book is a rich resource of new information.

Björn Zimprich, Berlin