

eine undankbare bis unmögliche Aufgabe, die Kernaussage eines Sammelbandes in drei Worten zusammenfassen zu wollen. Hier allerdings ist dies kein Problem. Sie lautet: Der Strukturalismus lebt.

Thomas Reinhardt

Zeis, Eva-Maria: "I Have a Very Good Trust in My God." La construction de la religiosité des jeunes gens Sunnites à Beyrouth. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2009. 123 pp. ISBN 978-3-87997-360-6. (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, 288) Price: € 36.50

The booklet is a dissertation written for a master's degree in religious sciences submitted at the Université Saint Joseph in Beirut, Lebanon. What triggered the author's interest in the subject of religion in Lebanon is her fascination with the depth of the religious dimension in Lebanese society. It is at the core of the Lebanese identity. Nevertheless, her book is not yet another study about the intensely polemical issue of identity in Lebanon but an attempt to examine the impact of religion on young Sunnis in Lebanon. The word used in French by the author is "religiosity," which is not piety per se but the external manifestations of adherence to religion. She uses the term "religiosity" in reference to Emile Durkheim's own definition (12). It is a cultural construction in a religious tradition and in a specific cultural context that define its form and content. In a footnote, which this reviewer believes should have been part of the body text, the author explains the origins of the term in reference to Islam. Islamic religiosity is a system of thoughts and actions integrating all aspects of social life in a coherent structure in order to please God (13).

The author does not explain her interest in young Sunnis' religiosity. She acknowledges the scarcity of research on Lebanese Sunnis and their religiosity yet she does not indicate why such research is necessary. Her declared purpose is to investigate the self-describing vision young Sunnis have of themselves and their religion (17). She proposes to analyze the religious motivations of believers in their implementation of their religious practices (17). Still, no reason is given for her endeavor and what added value it will bring to the body of knowledge. If one were to be paranoiac, one would suspect it is a study on how to influence and manipulate young Sunnis, either for political purposes or to undertake a missionary assignment!

The author devised a set of questions about young Sunnis' beliefs, their impact on their lives and how they saw them; the sources of their religiosity; the means and mechanisms of transmissions of such beliefs and basic tenets of their faith; how they relate with the outside reality and non-religious matters; how they explain and justify their convictions in relation to their environment. These questions were directed to a group of fifteen interviewees where eleven of them would be the core of the sample, as she says (18). The reason is that some of the interviewees were declared agnostics or secular (*laïc* is the term used, usually translated as secular). The other two were discarded for "technical reasons" (18). The small sample units were all students or fresh graduates between 18

and 30 years old. Most of them were involved in scientific, technical, or economic careers. They were spread over four universities located in the capital Beirut. Since tuition fees are relatively high, then the author assumed that the interviewees were from upper economic classes, a fact that seems to be validated by the professional occupation of their fathers.

The interviews were conducted over a span of forty five minutes to one hour and a half, in English, or in French. She used the methods of Michael Meuser and Ulrike Nagel who developed systems of interviewing experts in their field. The interviewees in the sample were certainly not experts on Islam but were considered as experts in their own religiosity (23).

The facts she gathered are common knowledge to Lebanese and to those who have worked on Lebanon's different aspects (political, economic, social, and cultural). As such, few of the findings are new. For instance, she discovered that religious pluralism in Lebanese society is quite specific to Lebanon and differentiates it from the rest of the Arab world. As such, Lebanese Sunnis feel they are in a competition not only at the political level but also at the ideological and normative levels: "To be a Sunni Muslim in Lebanon, also means not to be either Shiite, or Druze, or Christian" (29).

Religiosity among young Lebanese was not always a fact of life. Quoting a study undertaken in 1972, religion was not a major determinant among young Lebanese in general. Only within a small minority one could find a strong impact of religion (38). However, in 1999, another study's findings were totally different. Faith was a major factor among interviewees. Over 70 percent of interviewees have expressed a significant interest in religious books (39). Over 90 percent believed that faith and patience are sources of strength.

From her interviews the author concludes that religious practice among young Sunnis necessarily implies implementing the various teachings and commandments. Ethical values are specifically spelled out and leave no room for interpretation or creativity in implementation. Hence, a young Muslim who commits himself to religion must endeavor more in order to observe and implement religious teachings. The author found no equivocation in the narrative of young Sunnis over that matter (77). Ethics are derived from a system based on the belief in God. The observance of religious teachings creates an ethical paradigm with respect to universal values. Ethics are a derivative of the observance of such commandments and teachings (77). The author believes that it is an important finding for any discussion among Lebanese on civil society. The dialogue must be based on "common values."

Investigating the young Sunnis' perception of the "other," the West and Christianity, she discovered that Sunnis look at the "other" through the prism of religion! They would criticize the West as being materialistic, though they would express their admiration for the scientific findings and discoveries. They would also criticize Lebanese society where pluralism makes the observance and practice of religion difficult. Though only two of the inter-

viewees expressed such views, she felt compelled to infer a tendency among young Sunnis for an ambivalent relationship with their fellow Christian comrades. This is a major drawback of the smallness of the sample and the unwarranted generalizations of some of the findings.

One can dwell on many of the “findings” of the study. As indicated above, one may question their relevance. By and large, the book may have been a good academic memorandum, but as a published book its findings are to be taken with a good deal of reservation and healthy criticism. Among such drawbacks is the author’s lack of investigation of what has prompted young Sunnis to develop such an interest in religion. She tends to dismiss the

political developments in the region as peripheral to such transformation. One cannot isolate the rise of the religious dimension in the behaviour of Lebanese, as well as for Arabs for that matter, from the international and regional developments that took place, starting with the civil war in Lebanon, to Israel’s badgering of Lebanese and Palestinians, to the rise of oil power and the wave of Islamic fundamentalism, to the complacency of Western powers toward such rise that served their strategic interests. Also absent is the appeal of the successes achieved by militant Islam in the region against traditional enemies of Arabs and Muslims. Hence, in the opinion of this reviewer, the book is of limited relevance. Ziad Hafez

Errata. – In the issue 105.2010/2 of *Anthropos* the following errors have been identified:

1. In the article “‘Call Us Kow, Not Citak.’ Constitutive Factors for the Ethnic Consciousness of an Asmat Group,” by Alexander de Antoni, the citation from the book by Frank A. Trenkenschuh (“An Annotated Translation of ‘De Sociale Structuur van de Asmatbevolking’ by G. Zegwaard, M. S. C. and Dr. J. Boelaars, M. S. C.”), placed on page 418, was incorrectly edited. Below the corrected version:

[The] village of Jepem was a Jew with a companion Jew called [Jipim.] Jepem went pig-hunting and asked Jipim to care for their Jew. They did not, so when Jepem returned they found dog crap and other messes in their section of the Jew. A fight developed and the people of Jepem came down river past Fos, Jaosaker, etc, and settled on the coast (Trenkenschuh 1982a: 14).

2. In the section Rezensionen, the name of Carla Stang, the author of the book “A Walk to the River in Amazonia. Ordinary Reality of the Mehinaku Indians,” reviewed on pages 685–686, was erroneously written “Paula Stang.”

3. In the same section, in the review of the book “Einführung in die mongolischen Schriften,” written by Stefan Krist, and published on pages 618–619, an incorrect character Ж was used during the editorial and typesetting process to represent the sign Ж that was originally intended by the author of the review (p. 618, right column, par. 4). The corrected fragment reads as follows:

For the Buryat and Kalmyk Cyrillic scripts no full alphabet tables are given, but Chuluunbaatar names the few characters which are used to embody phonemes not existing in Mongolian and, therefore, added to the Mongolian Cyrillic script, used in both cases as the principle base. But here, concerning the Buryat Cyrillic alphabet, a mistake has happened: It is stated that the letter “ж” has been added to it. This is not true. Such a letter was never used in any Buryat script. But exceptions prove the rule. This is the only error the reviewer has detected in the whole book!

We apologize to the authors and our readers for those mistakes and reiterate our commitment to high editorial standards.

Darius J. Piwowarczyk
Editor