

Lebanese Diasporic Village Communities and their Practices of Reproduction and Community Development

MARIE KARNER

JANUARY – DECEMBER

In May 2017 the Lebanese-Canadian House was officially inaugurated as part of the Lebanese Diaspora Village in the historic centre of Batroun, a coastal city in North Lebanon. Three successful business people from the Canadian City of Halifax (Nova Scotia) had secured funding for the renovation works and curated the exhibition inside the house. The initiators are also actively involved in the Lebanese community in Halifax holding positions such as the "Lebanese Honorary Consul for the Maritimes" or the "President of the Lebanese Chamber of Commerce." The honorary consul is among the well-known property developers with roots in the Lebanese village of Diman. While the first immigrants earned their income as peddlers, today's so-called "Diman developers" are much involved in the emergence of Halifax's skyline thanks to their large investments and lobbying activities.

Lebanese diasporic village communities have emerged in consequence of intensifying emigration since the end of the nineteenth century. Many Christians left their villages in Mount Lebanon to seek better economic opportunities abroad. Their villages of origin have evolved into points of shared reference and identification for descendants in different parts of the world. Those who live in adjacent neighbourhoods have often formed local associations with specific objectives and strategic orientations (e.g. "Diman Association Canada" in Halifax, "Australian Blouza Association" in Sydney). At the same time, Christian Lebanese individuals have long been socio-economically integrated in traditional Anglophone immigration countries. Building on these observations, the research project explores the following questions: What are the motives that drive individuals to engage in diasporic village communities? Through which practices do members contribute to the preservation, development and local incorporation of these communities? What are the normative directives within Lebanese diasporic village communities? Marie Karner compiled qualitative data based on a multi-site approach that involved field research in villages of the Qadisha Valley as well as in several cities with established vibrant Lebanese communities (e.g. Sydney, Halifax, Easton). The fellowship at the OIB enabled her to link the data analysis with further empirical research. She conducted interviews and participant observation at local gatherings like village feasts and religious ceremonies. She also gathered supplementary data on seasonal dynamics in the villages of origin, social relations between residents and visitors from overseas as well as on the digital communication of community members and their transnational connections.



Andrea Jud

OIB Cairo Office

ANDREA JUD works at the Cairo Office of the OIB. She is a PhD candidate in Media and Communication Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. Situated at the intersection between Media Studies, Middle Eastern Studies and Political Science, her thesis analyses the different constructions of Islamist identities in Egypt between 2011 and 2013. Andrea studied in Basel, Damascus and Erlangen and graduated from the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany, with an MA in Islamic Studies and Political Science in 2011.



Marie Karner

Doctoral Fellow

MARIE KARNER is a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Geography at the Johannes Gutenberg University (JGU) Mainz, Germany. In her dissertation she studies different Lebanese diasporic village communities and their practices of reproduction and community development. Her comparative analysis also considers micro- and macro-structural particularities so as to understand the different characteristics of diasporic village communities.

Marie has organised international workshops on "Migrant Narratives – Moving Stories" (2017) in collaboration with the Center for Intercultural Studies (ZIS), the Institute of Geography (JGU) and the Victoria University of Wellington, and on "Migration Studies: Reflection and Challenges" (2015) in collaboration with the Institute of Geography (JGU) and the Institute for Migration Studies (LAU). Apart from topics related to migration and the diaspora, her research interests include urban geography, tourism geography as well as empirical research on atmospheres on cruise ships. She has a Diploma in Geography for a thesis on the transformation of the historic centre of Byblos/Jbeil (Lebanon) which received a commendation in connection with the Otto-Borst-Prize 2015 of the "Forum Stadt – Network of Historic Cities e.V."

- 12 JANUARY Michela de Giacometti (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Negotiating a Common Life: Marriage, law and the state in Lebanon*
- 19 JANUARY Adelle Chevee (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Popular Intellectuals of the Syrian Revolution, 2011-2016: preliminary findings of a fieldwork in Beirut*
- 26 JANUARY Ines Fabiunke (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *The Production of Arab Pop: Studying a transnational cultural industry*
- 2 FEBRUARY Felix Wiedemann (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Remixing Battle Rap and Arabic Poetic Battling*
- 9 FEBRUARY Andrea Jud (SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR OIB CAIRO): *Identity Construction and Political Differentiation in Egyptian Islamism 2011–2013*
- 16 FEBRUARY Peter Blank (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Struggling for Power: The transformation of the Lebanese Forces from an armed group into a political party*
- 23 FEBRUARY Helena Nassif (OIB POSTDOC FELLOW): *To Fear and to Dare: On emotions in the field*
- 2 MARCH Marie Karner (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Lebanese Diasporic Communities: A preliminary model to explain the cohesion and continuity of diasporic communities*
- 9 MARCH Liza Franke (OIB AFFILIATED RESEARCHER): *Private Pieties: Mundane Islam and new forms of Muslim religiosity in Alexandria/Egypt*
- 16 MARCH Fouad Gehad Marei (OIB POSTDOC FELLOW): *More than a Call to Arms: Hizbullah and the making of 'the resistance society' in Lebanon*
- 23 MARCH Tim Sontheimer (OIB AFFILIATED RESEARCHER): *Security Assemblages and Technologies of Policing Protest in the Middle East*
- 30 MARCH Mohamed Maslouh (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Mamluk and Mongol Diplomatic Correspondence in Medieval Arabic Historiography: Unanswered questions, and new approaches in Mamlukology*
- 20 APRIL Esther Möller (OIB POSTDOC FELLOW): *Redefining Humanitarian Aid in the Arab World: The Egyptian Red Crescent and its global connections, 1940s–1970s*
- 27 APRIL Nicola Pantiç (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Networks of the Holy: Popular religion of the eighteenth-century Ottoman Levant*

- 11 MAY Jonathan Kriener (OIB RESEARCH ASSOCIATE): *Social Sciences at Cairo University Before and After February 2011: Academic Freedom without rules?*
- 18 MAY Open discussion about format and objectives of the internal colloquium
- 25 MAY Pamela Klasova (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī and the Power of Oratory: Legitimizing a schoolmaster as god's chosen ruler of Iraq*
- 8 JUNE Mounir Mahmalat (AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT): *Do Crises Induce Reform? The Context of Lebanon – Assessing the role of perceptions among social interest groups for collaboration on structural adjustment in times of economic hardship*
- 29 JUNE Borja de Aristegui Arroyo (OIB AFFILIATED RESEARCHER): *The Opening of Diplomatic Relations between Spain and the Arab States*
- 6 JULY Adey Almohsen (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Cultures and Ideas of Palestinian Identity Between Amman and Beirut, 1965–1975*
- 28 SEPTEMBER Sarah Epstein (OIB POSTDOC FELLOW): *Comparative Critical Thought (Part II)*
- 5 OCTOBER Marieke Krijnen (OIB POSTDOC FELLOW): *The Crisis that was a Boom: Emerging mortgage markets in Lebanon*
- 26 OCTOBER Michele Scala (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *Work Conflicts in the Contemporary Lebanese Labour Context: the cases of the Électricité du Liban and Spinneys precarious workers' struggles*
- 16 NOVEMBER Stefan Maneval (OIB POSTDOC FELLOW): *Negotiating Differences: Interreligious dialogue in Lebanon*
- 23 NOVEMBER Jonathan Kriener (OIB RESEARCH ASSOCIATE): *Bologna for Lebanon? Debating Lebanon's relations with the European Higher Education Space*
- 30 NOVEMBER Jennifer Viehl (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *(Re-)Discovering Good Governance: A non-Machiavellian reading of late medieval political advice literature*
- 7 DECEMBER Joseph Ben Prestel (OIB POSTDOC FELLOW): *Revolutionary Arabesque: Palestinians and the West German radical left, 1967–1979*
- 14 DECEMBER Marie Karner (OIB DOCTORAL FELLOW): *"What do you think the lesson is from this story?" – The reproduction of Lebanese diasporic communities through collective narratives*