

# THE EFFECTS OF LIFESTYLE MIGRATION OF JEWS FROM WESTERN COUNTRIES ON JERUSALEM

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## ABSTRACT

### **The Effects of Lifestyle Migration of Jews from Western Countries on Jerusalem**

Lifestyle migration has mainly been studied in the context of rural or coastal tourist destinations, less in cities. This case-study deals with the immigration of Jews from Western countries to Jerusalem, Israel's capital city. These immigrants generally enjoy a high socio-economic status, and are motivated by ideological and religious reasons. Moreover, these immigrants are highly desired by the State in their 'homecoming'. The article focuses on Baka, a neighbourhood in Jerusalem, where large communities of English- and French-speaking immigrants reside. This case-study contributes to the understanding of the effects lifestyle migration has on places, particularly gentrification, and expands our understanding of who lifestyle migrants are, what motivates them and how they live in their adopted countries.

KEY WORDS: lifestyle migration, gentrification, homecoming, Jerusalem, Israel

## IZVLEČEK

### **Učinki življenjsko-stilskih migracij Judov iz Zahodnih držav na Jeruzalem**

Življenjsko-stilske migracije so navadno proučevali v podeželskih ali obalnih turističnih destinacijah, manj pa v mestih. Pričujoča študija proučuje priseljevanje Judov iz Zahodnih držav v Jeruzalem, glavno mesto Izraela. Imigrante z večinoma visokim družbenoekonomskim statusom motivirata ideologija in vera, poleg tega pa so ti migranti ob »prihodu domov« s strani države močno zaželeni. Članek se osredotoča na jeruzalemsko četrt Baka, kjer prebivajo velike skupnosti angleško in francosko govorečih migrantov in prispeva k razumevanju učinkov, ki jih ima življenjsko-stilska migracija na kraje, predvsem na gentrifikacijo, širi pa tudi razumevanje o življenjsko-stilskih migrantih, njihovih motivih in načinu življenja v svojih privzetih državah.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: življenjsko-stilska migracija, gentrifikacija, prihod domov, Jeruzalem, Izrael

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## INTRODUCTION

One Saturday morning, in the spring of 2008, I was strolling up my street in the Baka neighbourhood in Jerusalem, dressed in trousers and a sleeveless shirt carrying a cup of coffee I had just bought. Several groups of people, coming from their Saturday morning prayers in the three synagogues that operate on this small street walked past me. The first were English-speaking and the second were French-speaking. They were all dressed in their finest clothes, women with head-covers, skirts and sleeves. I felt completely out of place and hurried inside my building.

At the time I had lived in Baka for three years, and it seemed to me that the neighbourhood was undergoing some change. As a secular native-Israeli I felt as an extinct minority, in Baka, and in Jerusalem as a whole. I wanted to understand the effects of migrants on the neighbourhood and made Baka the topic of my ethnographic research from 2008 to 2013.

Baka, located in the south-central part of Jerusalem, is small both in size and population: covering less than half a square kilometre with only an estimated 7,500 inhabitants. In the course of my fieldwork, I conducted 100 formal interviews, 41 of which were with Western immigrants, and had many informal conversations, with neighbourhood residents, community leaders, religious leaders, merchants, architects, realtors, representatives of absorption organisations, and political and civic activists. I conducted numerous participant observations – in synagogues, neighbourhood parks, streets, supermarkets, cafés, shops, schools, private homes and community institutions. I monitored newspapers articles on issues related to my research in national and local newspapers, as well as in the French and English media in Israel. I researched the municipality's archives and conducted online research that included content analysis of email correspondence, Facebook discussions and new immigrants' forums. I also studied the history of the neighbourhood since its establishment by wealthy Palestinians in late nineteenth century. This case-study aims to contribute to the understanding of the effects lifestyle migration has on cities, neighbourhoods and housing markets and to elaborate the understanding of who lifestyle migrants are, what motivates them and how they live in their destinations.

The Jewish Western immigrants in Baka can be regarded as privileged lifestyle migrants: they are immigrants by choice, often highly-skilled individuals, emigrating from economically and culturally powerful countries. They see themselves – and are seen by others – as performing a 'homecoming' when immigrating to Israel. They believe that in Israel they can lead a Jewish lifestyle and gain a sense of belonging to a larger collective entity. As these immigrants seek to improve their quality of life and not their standard of living, I prefer to speak of them as lifestyle migrants instead of using the commonly used ideological term '*Aliya*' (to ascend), which refers to Jewish immigration to Israel.

Lifestyle migration has mainly been researched in the context of rural or coastal tourist destinations (see Benson and O'Reilly's 2009 book and Janoschka and Haas 2013, for example) and less in the context of cities (Griffiths and Maile 2014, on Britons in Berlin, is an exception). The case study presented here deals with the State supported and highly encouraged immigration of Jews from Western countries, particularly the United States, France and Britain, to Jerusalem. As an urban case-study, it illuminates a somewhat blind spot of the lifestyle migration literature. This case-study is also unique in the sense that this is an ethnic (as well as ideological and religious) migration which is interconnected with class habits.

The Baka neighbourhood in Jerusalem has large numbers of English- and French-speaking immigrants, who moved there starting from the late 1960s as part of the neighbourhood's gentrification process. Indeed, in Baka lifestyle migration could be considered a form of gentrification. Now Baka has large and thriving ethnic communities of both English-speakers (identified here as 'Anglos', including American, British and other English-speakers) and French-speakers (identified as 'French', coming from France as well as other French-speaking countries). These ethno/cultural communities are formed by both veteran immigrants and newcomers who spend the majority of their everyday lives within the

boundaries of these communities. Significantly, their communities and lifestyle post-migration closely resemble the lives they left behind.

According to the Baka Community Council and Israel's 2008 Census, Western immigrants comprise about 25% of the neighbourhood's population (the French immigrants constitute about 10%, and the Anglos, 15%). If we include the second generation of immigrants, the numbers are larger and total 30–40% (for both populations) of all residents.

In this article, I shall address some of the main effects lifestyle migration has on its places of settlement. Western immigrants have impacted significantly on Baka as it gentrifies. Gentrification and changes in the housing market are also accompanied by other (related) effects, in the religious sphere (as these are mainly religious immigrants), educational institutions, the commercial sphere and modes of civic participation in neighbourhood affairs.

The next section, I discuss Jewish Western immigration to Jerusalem as both privileged lifestyle migration and 'homecoming'. In the following section, I will address the various effects that this lifestyle migration has on the Baka neighbourhood focusing on the housing market, and the religious and commercial spheres. Finally, I will further discuss my arguments and draw some conclusions.

## **LIFESTYLE/HOMECOMING IMMIGRANTS**

Israel is an ethnic immigration country, and the only criterion for migrant selection is Jewish ethnic origin (Joppke and Rosenhek 2003). The Law of Return (1950) established an open-door policy for Jews and extensive support benefits for immigrants. Moreover, encouraging Jewish immigration to Israel is a central goal for the State (Shuval 1998; Gal 2008). However, in recent years, the number of immigrants has declined. As the source of immigrants from the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopia decreased, the reservoir of potential immigrants consists of Jews from Western countries, not too keen on emigrating, and Israeli expatriates.

The Jews residing in Western countries are often quite successful in professional and economic terms. They also hold a cultural capital which is highly regarded in Israel. Now, most immigrants from the West are religious and Zionist (as opposed to the large numbers of non-Jews or Jews-under-question who immigrated to Israel from the FSU and Ethiopia). Their financial means enable many of them not to burden the State by claiming benefits (again, in opposition to other migrants), and they are perceived as contributing much to the State. Therefore, this population is greatly desired by Israel. Although one would not expect Israel to have a policy regarding highly-skilled migrants (Shpaizman 2013: 184), the State of Israel is actually willing, in various ways, to encourage highly-skilled Western migration. One such way is by giving free rein to private organisations engaged in encouraging immigration from Western countries (Shpaizman 2013). Another way includes financial incentives such as significant tax benefits. These measures have turned Israel into a tax haven for wealthy Jews.

When combined with various push-factors, such as tax reforms (in France for instance), economic crises or growing anti-Semitism, these measures further enhance the attraction of Diaspora Jews to Israel, and their wish to fully or partially immigrate to Israel or merely invest capital. Although privileged migration to Israel is not a new phenomenon, the policies that encourage such migration and facilitate investments by wealthy Jews are a new trend in Zionism. The State of Israel wishes to participate in, and capitalise on, the growing trend of the global upper-middle class to retire or spend significant periods of time elsewhere. Why should Jews invest their money in the Hamptons, coastal Spain or rural France and not in Israel? The Western Jews residing in Baka are more often permanent migrants or people whose centre of life is in Israel, even when making their living overseas. This, however, is not always the case. Indeed, for many Western Jews it is enough to feel deeply connected to Israel by owning property there, without necessarily being resident in it.

While immigration to Israel has been constantly dropping, the number of Western immigrants is actually increasing, and stands at several thousand per year. Immigration from France, in particular, has risen. In 2014, the number of French immigrants reached a new peak – almost 7,000 immigrants, and is expected to rise further in 2015, following the Muslim attacks on ‘Charlie Hebdo’ and the Jewish kosher supermarket in Paris (Hasson et al. 2015).

Jerusalem attracts more Western immigrants than any other city in Israel. In 2011, 34% of all American immigrants and 27% of French immigrants chose to settle in Jerusalem (CBS 2012), while 33% of British immigrants settled in Jerusalem in 2009 (CBS 2010). Many of them find their way to the Baka neighbourhood.

I examine Western immigrants as lifestyle migrants. Lifestyle migration is defined as the migration of ‘relatively affluent individuals of all ages, moving either part-time or full-time, to places that, for various reasons, signify for the migrant a better quality of life’ (Benson and O’Reilly 2009: 609–10). Lifestyle migrants are not driven by economic reasons: rather, many of them desire a more meaningful way of life (O’Reilly and Benson 2009: 4). They predominantly belong to wealthy societies in the West and they choose to relocate to places with lower costs of living, thus capitalising the multiple opportunities that the differences of purchase power and social and symbolic power relations facilitate (Janoschka and Haas 2013: 1–2).

Western immigrants to Israel can be considered lifestyle migrants as they are first and foremost immigrants by choice, motivated by the ‘pull factors’ of Israel more than anything else (Kay 2001; Amit and Riss 2007). Their motivation to immigrate usually stems from cultural imaginaries, national ideology and religion (Sheleg 2000; Cohen 2002, 2007; Amit and Riss 2007). These immigrants seek a better life religiously, nationally and culturally and hope to gain a sense of belonging. For this they are willing to reduce their material quality of life and face the challenges of immigration. However, their quest for a more meaningful way of life does not mean total lack of interest in maintaining, at least partly, the standard of living to which such immigrants have become accustomed, and this issue has significant spatial and cultural meanings, as shall be described shortly.

Western immigrants to Israel are not only lifestyle migrants but they are also performing a certain type of ‘homecoming’. Sociologists Edna Lomsky-Feder and Tamar Rapoport speak of the Jewish immigration to Israel as an ‘ethno-national homecoming’. They argue that this is a political-national return movement sponsored by the nation-state. This ‘return’ is based on the naturalisation of immigrants returning from exile to the historical homeland, the national home, in which their belonging to the national collective is based on common ethnic ties. They further claim that what distinguishes this ethno-national homecoming from other homecomings is the legal overlap between citizenship and nationality. The Israeli law grants rights to ethnic community members living outside the nation-state, often for many generations (Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport 2012: 2). Fran Markowitz and Anders Stefansson (2004) also refer to Jewish immigration to Israel as ‘homecoming’. They argue that these people uproot themselves from the only country they ever knew in order to settle in their people’s homeland (Markowitz and Stefansson 2004: 4). This ‘homecoming’ is therefore symbolic and imaginary in nature. Jews hold an image of Israel as their homeland based on biblical sources and practices of prayer. This image is so deeply rooted in Jewish religion and culture that it is not necessary to know Israel as a real place in order to imagine it as home.

Although Jewish immigrants are welcomed in Israel, once there, they often learn that their sense of belonging to their country of origin is stronger than they thought. They come to realise that social, religious, linguistic and cultural integration in Israel is not easy and that they are actually more ‘American’, ‘French’ or ‘British’ than they cared to admit. Western immigrants, therefore, willingly form their own enclaves or ‘bubbles’ (Zaban 2014), and are even encouraged to do so by absorption organisations. Since these are relatively powerful groups, when they settle somewhere, especially en masse, they influence this place and change it. Lifestyle migration of Western Jews and the formation of ‘expatriate’ communities also occurs in other Israeli cities like Tel Aviv, Netanya and Ashdod (all coastal

cities), where real estate became tied to second home and summer apartment purchases that impacts local populations. Jerusalem, however, attracts immigrants for its religious significance for the Jewish people, but no less significant, for social reasons having to do with the large communities of Western immigrants already residing there.

Several studies deal with the spatial and/or cultural effects lifestyle migration has on its places of settlement, on the relations between immigrants and locals and between immigrants and the authorities. Nadeem Karkabi (2013), for example, writes about Europeans in Sinai, Egypt, and their relationships with the local Bedouin population and with the Egyptian authorities. Michael Herzfeld (2009) writes about the effects of affluent external and internal migration on the Monti neighbourhood in Rome and its lower class residents, who are pushed out of their homes due to external demand. Michaela Benson (2013) and Michael Janoschka (2009) refer to the effects of North-American immigration on Panama and Costa Rica (respectively) in terms of the housing market and rising real estate prices, costs of everyday products, availability of imported food products in local supermarkets, traffic and parking issues and the relations between different social groups. Eva Jeppsson Grassman and Annika Taghizadeh Larsson (2013) refer to the flourishing Church of Sweden and the important roles it fills for Swedish immigrants and tourists across the globe, who were not frequent attenders of the church back home. As Michael Janoschka and Heiko Haas argue (2013: 6–7), there is a need for a more critical view of lifestyle migration, and its outcomes and implications for the places and communities in which it obtains. This is also the aim of this article.

## THE EFFECTS OF LIFESTYLE MIGRATION ON THE BAKA NEIGHBOURHOOD

Baka was established in the late nineteenth century by wealthy Palestinians who were forced out of the neighbourhood during the 1948 war. The abandoned Palestinian homes were declared 'absentee properties' and were soon populated by new Jewish immigrants, mainly lower class *Mizrahim* (Jews from Islamic countries), as well as by some government employees, military veterans and evacuees from the Jewish neighbourhoods damaged in the war. The spacious houses were divided into small units and became densely populated. The rough living conditions soon turned Baka into a poor, crime-infested neighbourhood. The 1967 war was a turning point for Baka as the new city borders turned it from a peripheral to an inner-city neighbourhood. Moreover, a new architectural trend saw value imbued in all that can be termed historic, authentic or 'with character' (Nitzan-Shifftan 2005) and middle class Israelis were re-enchanted by Palestinian homes. Later on, as the demand for Baka properties grew, new buildings sprung up, and even the poorly built housing developments of the 1960s were gentrified. From the 1990s Baka was already considered a prestigious neighbourhood.

While the gentrification process of Baka was initially dominated by native-Israelis, it always included immigrants from Western countries. As early as the 1980s, these immigrants constituted 30% of the neighbourhood's gentrifiers (Cohen 1985). The 1967 war, and particularly the occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, sparked the imagination of Western Diaspora Jews and caused them to identify with Israel and adopt a Zionist worldview. Those who immigrated to Israel then were mostly young, single, educated and not particularly wealthy. They shared a strong Jewish identity and came from secular, traditional, non-Orthodox or Orthodox backgrounds (Avruch 1981; Dashefsky and Lazewitz 1983: 266). While at first the main attraction to Baka was its housing options, Western immigrants are currently drawn to Baka because of its reputation as a good and central neighbourhood with large communities of both Anglos and French. The neighbourhood synagogues established by Western immigrants are another point of attraction, as are the schools, good services, heterogeneous population and community atmosphere.

The high demand for residence in Baka caused an increase in housing prices. At the same time, the profile of Western immigration to Israel changed and now includes mainly religious Orthodox people

and a higher percent of families and retirees. Many wealthy religious families who can afford Baka's prices end up there. The dominance of this population from the late 1990s onward caused a shift in Baka's gentrification process – from gentrification to super-gentrification (Lees 2000), when the upper class pushes out the middle class preceding it.

While the gentrification of Baka started from below, it was supported by government policy to sell the abandoned properties to tenants, thus creating a niche for gentrification to develop. Moreover, while gentrification is seemingly a free market process, in reality it is not open for all. Rather, it is available only to hegemonic and affluent populations. The State's support for Western immigration encourages these immigrants to acquire properties in Israel through various tax benefits. The fact that they have stronger foreign currencies further facilitates their ability to purchase prime real estate in Israel. The market, on its part, quickly identifies demands and offers responses.

The long gentrification process, combined all along with lifestyle migration, introduced several aspects of change in Baka that need to be looked at as a whole. The various changes – in real estate, religiosity, consumption, education and civic participation – developed along the lines of the gentrification process but were also mechanisms in the deepening and expansion of this process.

## The housing market

Israel is currently experiencing a deep housing crisis, reflected in lack of housing units and ever-rising prices. Jerusalem's unique characteristics make its housing market even more problematic: political issues, lack of available land, long processes of acquiring building permits and social divisions in the city that create high demands for particular neighbourhoods by particular communities. Thus, properties in Jerusalem are among the fastest in the country to sell and prices keep climbing despite being one of the poorest cities in Israel.

During the 1990s, there was a growing interest from wealthy Western Jews in real estate in Jerusalem. This interest further intensified after 2003, when the Second Intifada was suppressed. Local realtors and architects realised which way the wind was blowing and started to build, plan and sell to these homebuyers. They knew what would sell best: Palestinian style architecture, either original or replicated in style. The interiors, however, were designed to accommodate the lifestyle needs of a modern – usually religious – Jewish family.

The trend of 'authenticity' combined with high-end modern comforts is demonstrated in the words of an architect who mainly works with wealthy Anglo clients both in Baka and outside it:

In recent years, since the end of the Intifada and the global economic boom, Diaspora Jews are looking for a grip in Jerusalem, which holds religious and cultural significance for them. Many of them are professionals who made a lot of money abroad and see their future, especially after retirement, in Israel. They want to build additions or new buildings that maintain the old 'Jerusalem style', because for them it is exotic, authentic and very different from what they have there. The architectural language of arches, traditionally carved Jerusalem stone, thin metal profiles and vaults, symbolises Jerusalem to them. Inside, they want all the modern conveniences, and they have the money for it. They want smart homes, underfloor heating, climate control systems, large electric accessories like refrigerators and ovens, in standards to which they are accustomed to from the United States, and dining rooms where they can host thirty people for a Shabbat meal.

The imagining of an 'authentic' Jerusalem is problematic. How authentic is a former Palestinian neighbourhood without its previous inhabitants? What is authentic about a one level house transformed into a three-floor totally renovated building, or the architectural duplication of Palestinian styled homes? Such authenticity, it seems, is only superficial. While the preservation of the outdoor stone mouldings is required, the inside of the house can be utterly changed: the floor is dug, staircases are added, ceilings

are removed and interior walls are torn-down. It seems paradoxical that to be truly at home in the Land of Israel, the interior of the home has to resemble Paris/New York/London as much as possible. There is an inherent contradiction between being drawn to the idealised place which then must be remade in the image of a home left behind.

'Authenticity' and the issue of preservation therefore clearly have their limits. In her thesis about the Yemin Moshe neighbourhood of Jerusalem, Tamar Zandberg (2008) touched upon similar questions and showed how preservation can be used as a discursive tool for what is actually the transformation of a place into a gentrified luxury neighbourhood. Ashworth and Tunbridge (2000) also ask what is authentic in houses and monuments that are so thoroughly restored, re-built, relocated, added to or utterly changed inside.

The demand to raise building standards (and hence, their costs) results in the creation of two real estate markets: one for Israelis and one for Western immigrants and foreigners. In inner-city neighbourhoods, such as Baka, where there are both high demand and high land value, new buildings and additions to old buildings are designed at the latter population. The steep rise in real estate prices slowly excludes the less fortunate population, usually everyone who earns their living in shekels rather than foreign currencies, Israeli-born or veteran immigrants alike. The issue of where those who are pushed out go is also worth mentioning. People usually move to less central neighbourhoods where housing is cheaper and where new housing units are found, or to the suburbs. In Jerusalem this trend bears political ramifications, as many of the peripheral neighbourhoods are built on annexed Palestinian lands, while many of Jerusalem's suburbs are in the Occupied Territories.

The fact that the inner-city real estate market, is designated and marketed to Western Jewish homebuyers is a constant cause for complaints and struggles by residents who wish to preserve the heterogeneous character of the neighbourhood. At a public assembly of neighbourhood residents in March 2010, the crowd of 120 people was heavily dominated by Israeli gentrifiers and veteran Anglo-immigrants. The attending residents clearly stated that they wished the neighbourhood's population to remain heterogeneous, with many young families. They wanted affordable housing and resented the building of luxury apartments and the phenomenon of 'ghost homes', triggered by lifestyle migration. At the same time, they also opposed the construction of buildings higher than three or four-floors. The solution the planners proposed was to keep the historic parts of the neighbourhood low-built while building higher on the outskirts, mainly on top or instead of the housing developments of the 1960s. This scheme is expected to enhance gentrification and super-gentrification. The regeneration schemes would remove low and mid-range apartments from the housing market, to be replaced by better quality and more expensive units, while more luxury apartments would be built on top of historic buildings. This is likely to encourage low and middle class residents to leave, while more affluent newcomers, particularly Western immigrants, are likely to move in. These processes are also expected to further homogenise Baka's population both socio-economically and ethnically.

## The religious sphere

Housing preferences and gentrification can also be influenced by religion, as argued by James Bielo (2011), who wrote about how young evangelicals' return to the city contributed to the gentrification processes. Baka is a fine example. The real estate ads in the French-speakers weekly *Le P'tit Hebdo* often state 'Proche Emouna'. *Emouna Chelema Biryushalaim* (True belief in Jerusalem) is the first and largest Francophone religious community to be built in Baka. It was established in the mid-1990s by French Jews of North African origin. As Orthodox Jews do not drive on Shabbat, living in close proximity to their synagogue is important, and therefore impacts the surrounding housing market.

The French community of Baka is mainly formed around synagogues. There are two large synagogues established by French immigrants, three small ones and several others where the French community is



dominant. These are all Sephardic synagogues, as the majority of French immigrants originate in North Africa. The French synagogues function as community centres, where people meet, demonstrate their social and/or economic status through religious piety and activism and participate in cultural and religious events. Another arena for cultural life is private homes, where lectures, classes, concerts or book clubs are conducted. The French immigrants are mainly interested in the communal life offered by their religious communities, and rarely participate in activities organised by the Baka Community Centre.

Baka's French immigrants and their synagogues are usually traditionally Orthodox. It is a religiously conservative community and is usually quite right wing in its political views. I base this generalisation on my informants' comments, as well as from the events and lessons taking place at French synagogues and other venues, their Rabbis' statements and the French-speaking media. Yet, in Baka there is a smaller group which present an exception to this rule. They are usually more veteran immigrants, often (although not always) Ashkenazi French who are more liberal in both their religious and political views, more active on the neighbourhood level and can more often be found in the Anglo synagogues. This reflects some changes in the immigration from France to Israel. The first to arrive, in the late 1960s and 1970s, were Ashkenazi (the North African French were at that point still only settling in France) and were often not very religious, but these French Jews are now less keen on immigrating to Israel, and particularly to Jerusalem. The North African Jews became increasingly religious in France and their links with Israel intensified. Their Jewish appearance and lifestyle and their vicinity to North African Muslim immigrants have perhaps also made them more vulnerable to anti-Semitic attacks. For these reasons, this is currently the dominant profile of the French Jews immigrating to Israel.

The English-speaking migrants in Baka, usually American or British, are quite different. In their case there are also differences between earlier and later waves of immigration, as mentioned. While the immigrants of the 1960s and 1970s held liberal values, and often came from the non-Orthodox streams of Judaism, newcomers are usually Orthodox (although modern-Orthodox) and less leftist in their political views. Jews from non-Orthodox streams rarely immigrate to Israel today and even less so to Jerusalem, due to their growing ideological distance from Israel (Cohen and Kelman 2010).

The profiles of Western immigrants are closely related to Baka's gentrification process. The pioneer immigrants who settled in the neighbourhood and took part in its early stage gentrification were young English-speaking liberal college graduates, familiar with gentrification from their home cities. They established religious communities which were considered progressive in Israel's 1980s religious arena. One such community was *Yedidya*, a Modern-Orthodox community, highly egalitarian for its time, and another was *Kol HaNeshama*, a Reform community. In fact, the Americans introduced Israel to a liberal, pluralistic form of Judaism. Reform and Conservative Judaism only started in Israel following American immigration (Tabory and Lazerwitz 1983), as did Modern-Orthodoxy (Sheleg 2000) and religious feminism (El-Or 2002: 294–6). These communities were also unique for being religious communities and not merely houses of prayer. They aimed to become community centres with multiple functions. While this is the common model of synagogues in Europe and America, where Jews are a religious and ethnic minority, it is not the case for Israel, where people belong to larger communities.

During the 1990s Baka became a prestigious neighbourhood and super-gentrification started at full force. While the housing prices in Baka certainly determined who lived there, it was also linked with general trends in American and British Jewish immigration to Israel. While *Yedidya* is still a major source of attraction for new immigrants in Baka, the changing profile of immigrants calls for adjustments – often opposed by those who established the religious congregation – such as involving less politics in services and other activities and halting advancements in gender egalitarianism. Many Anglo newcomers are more attracted to Baka's traditional Orthodox Ashkenazi synagogues, where Anglos have become dominant. *Yedidya*, *Kol HaNeshama* and other religious communities in Baka's geographical vicinity have greatly influenced the religious arena in this part of Jerusalem, both in their Western models of religious community, as well as their feminist values. While both these communities



are well-established, there are now many newer and more experimental communities that have been influenced by them.

## The commercial sphere

The commercial sphere is one of the hallmarks of gentrification. It is the most visible sign of it occurring alongside changes in the housing market (Glass 1964; Zukin 2010). Developments in the commercial sphere of a gentrified neighbourhood reflect fairly accurately the current stage of the process at any given moment.

Baka is built around a High Street where commerce has existed since the neighbourhood's establishment. The gentrification process clearly introduced many commercial changes. While essential businesses like grocery stores, butcher shops or green grocers continued to exist, new businesses opened with offers other than daily necessities – gift shops and patisseries, for example. Later on – cafés, dry cleaners, ironing services, delicatessens, designer clothes and chic hairstylists opened. Veteran businesses constantly updated themselves to respond to clients' needs. The impact of Baka's Western lifestyle migrants on the commercial sphere was very apparent.

This impact partially results from immigrants' initiatives. Such is the case for a variety of businesses and services designed to meet a need arising in the community: telecommunication services, English/French speaking kindergartens or service providers who are members of the community and therefore appear reliable and easy to communicate with. Their advertisements reveal these perceptions and define their marketing strategies (such is the case for 'the British plumber' or 'the American handyman').

The impact of Western lifestyle migration on the commercial sphere are also driven by the demand of local market forces. One business whose target population is Western (female and religious) immigrants – is a women-only gym and spa. It offers personal trainers, training in Hebrew and English and a multi-lingual staff. Other cases are an online delivery service servicing the wealthy Anglo community; realtors and asset management personnel who specialise in Anglo/French clientele; foreign language bookstores; cafés and restaurants aimed at Western immigrants' tastes; and a variety of imported products sold in local grocery stores and supermarkets. Many products are imported to Israel by immigrants, but once there, also appeal to local crowds and influence consumerist norms and preferences.

Both types of changes, those initiated by immigrants and those generated in response to them, profoundly influence space and the social and cultural trends that take place in Baka. The fact that people can sustain much of their former lifestyle post-immigration – be it sipping their cappuccino in a Parisian style café or finding their favourite brand of cereals in the local supermarket – enables immigrants to gain a sense of belonging and attachment to place. Yet, they remain within their 'bubbles', distanced from native-Israeli society. As a male interviewee who emigrated from New Hampshire in 1996 told me:

Baka is one of the sole neighbourhoods where Americans can have a quality of life they are comfortable with. Some people come here with a serious job, with money, with high standards, with openness to the world. Baka might be the most Western, open and global neighbourhood in the country. They can live in Israel, be Israeli and raise their family in an Israeli environment but at the same time go on with their American life.

How exactly are Americans living in a transnational enclave 'open to the world'? It seems that they are actually trying to make the 'world', in this case Israel, more American or more French, in the case of the French community whose enclave patterns are similar. However, the manner in which Baka culturally adjusts to Western immigrants' needs has more to it than the immigrants themselves. Israeli society as a whole is undergoing fast processes of globalisation and Americanisation. In a place heavily dominated by Western populations, such processes are even more striking and accelerated.

Edward Relph argues that the desire to belong to a place and participate in its traditions can fuel attempts at systematic exclusion of all those who are believed not to belong (Relph 1997: 208). The issue of exclusion raises the question whose neighbourhood is it? Many businesses in Baka identify their target customers. They modify themselves to the status and tastes of consumers and to the potential profit inherent in the place. The attempt to attract potential customers reflects how businesses perceive the neighbourhood's population and identify its people and their lifestyles. Not only do businesses reflect which population they identify as the most profitable, but by doing so, they also contribute to the identification of that population as the owners of the physical space. It both reflects the current composition of the neighbourhood's population and shapes future social composition. When Western immigrants recognise Baka as a place that caters to their needs, it increases their belonging. The local native-Israelis, on their part often express their feeling of being 'under conquest' by Western immigrants and resent them for pushing them out, economically and culturally. When these Israelis sense that a business attracts too many Anglos or French, they may feel out of place there and be put off by it. When *Kalo*, the most veteran café in Baka recently closed for refurbishments, I heard local Israelis telling the owner – 'Don't make it too American'.

## CONCLUSION

In this article I aimed to show the relationship between the Israeli State's encouragement of the immigration of Jewish populations and the impact such immigration has on place, in this case the Baka neighbourhood and the city of Jerusalem as a whole. By doing so I aimed to bring together two substantial fields of research: lifestyle migration and gentrification.

Baka is a case-study for a neighbourhood undergoing long processes of gentrification combined with high-status immigration of Western Jews. In fact, lifestyle migration can be considered in this case a form of gentrification. By looking at different material and cultural aspects of life in Baka – the housing market, the religious sphere and the commercial sphere – I aimed to demonstrate the impact of lifestyle migration.

By addressing high-status 'Aliya' from Western countries as lifestyle migration, I attempted to argue that such immigration to Israel should be seen outside the ideological framework and in the context of current trends in migration practices and studies. I also argued that this case-study can contribute to the scholastic understanding regarding who lifestyle migrants are. The role of imagination in mobilising people to immigrate is another important issue addressed here. Western Diaspora Jews imagine Israel as their homeland and Jerusalem as the holy capital of this homeland. They are searching for a Jewish lifestyle, community life and a sense of belonging to larger collective entities.

Yet, once in Israel, migrants wish to continue their lives as before, among their compatriots. They try to preserve much of their former lifestyles in terms of religious, social, living arrangements and consumerist practices. The power of class habits and class practices can therefore not be underrated. By maintaining a familiar lifestyle for themselves, these migrants often effect changes in the lifestyles of others.

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## POVZETEK

### UČINKI ŽIVLJENJSKO-STILSKIH MIGRACIJ JUDOV IZ ZAHODNIH DRŽAV NA JERUZALEM

Hila ZABAN

Življenjsko-stilske migracije so navadno proučevali v podeželskih ali obalnih turističnih destinacijah, manj pa v mestih. Pričujoča študija raziskuje priseljevanje Judov iz zahodnih držav v glavno izraelsko mesto Jeruzalem. Te imigrante po lastni izbiri, ki imajo po večini visok družbenoekonomski status, za migracijo motivirata ideologija in vera. V svojih očeh – pa tudi v očeh drugih – z imigracijo v Izrael »prihajajo domov«. Verjamejo, da lahko v Izraelu živijo judovski življenjski slog in doživijo občutek pripadnosti večji kolektivni entiteti. Teh imigrantov so ob njihovem »pripodu domov« razveseli tudi izraelska država.

Iz tega, da je visoko cenjena *aliya* (splošno uporabljani izraz za opisovanje judovske imigracije v Izrael, ki dobesedno pomeni 'vzpeti se') iz zahodnih držav opisana kot življenjsko-stilska migracija, izhaja, da bi bilo treba imigracijo v Izrael razumeti zunaj ideološkega okvira in v kontekstu trenutnih trendov v migrantskih praksah in raziskavah. Avtorica študije je prepričana, da lahko z njo prispeva k akademskemu razumevanju življenjsko-stilskih migrantov. V prispevku obravnava še eno pomembno vprašanje, to je vlogo predstav pri mobilizaciji ljudi, da imigrirajo. Judje iz zahodne diaspore si predstavljajo, da je Izrael njihova domovina, Jeruzalem pa njena sveta prestolnica. Članek se osredotoča na sosesko Baka v Jeruzalemu, kjer živijo velike skupnosti angleško in francosko govorečih imigrantov. V Izraelu si migranti želijo živeti, tako kot prej, med sodržavljeni. Glede verskih, družbenih, bivalnih in potrošniških praks si v glavnem želijo ohraniti svoj prejšnji življenjski slog, zato se ne sme podcenjevati moči razrednih navad in praks. Z ohranjanjem svojega znanega življenjskega sloga pa pogosto spreminjajo življenjski slog drugih.

Pričujoča študija primera pomaga razumeti učinke življenjsko-stilskih migracij na kraj naselitve, še zlasti na gentrifikacijo, in širi razumevanje življenjsko-stilskih migrantov, njihovih motivacij in načina življenja v izbranih destinacijah. Natančneje, članek se ukvarja z učinki, ki jih ima migracija na sosesko Baka in se osredotoča na različne materialne in kulturne vidike tamkajšnjega življenja – na trg nepremičnin ter versko in komercialno sfero. Prikazuje razmerje med spodbudo izraelske države judovskim prebivalcem, naj imigrirajo, in učinki teh migracij na kraj priseljevanja. Tako poveže dve obsežni raziskovalni področji: življenjsko-stilske migracije in gentrifikacijo.