



# The Real Estate Foothold in the Holy Land: Transnational Gentrification in Jerusalem

**Monday 15 April 1pm – 2pm**

## Speaker

**Dr Hila Zaban**

University of Warwick, UK

## Location

**Larry Saha Room**

Haydon-Allen Building #22, Room 2175,  
University Avenue, ANU

This lecture is free and open to the  
public

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Gentrification theory blames the widening and transnationalisation of the phenomenon on the global commodification of housing and the emergence of a 'planetary rent gap'. This presentation draws on fieldwork in the UK and Israel and argues that while transnational gentrification is economically driven, in the sense of an unequal global division of labour, we need to reinstate the cultural context into the core of gentrification theory and pay more attention to what motivates people to purchase homes in particular foreign locations. I argue that these motivations can be emotional, and adopt the concept of the 'real estate as foothold' – a way of holding onto an emotionally laden space through the acquisition of property. Tying together gentrification and lifestyle migration literatures and

using the case study of British Jews with second-homes in Israel, I explore such motivations and connect them with Israel's political and economic quest to attract diaspora Jews. Israel's neoliberalisation made it a second-home destination for wealthy Jews, part of the second-homes trend, who favour Israel due to emotional, national and religious ties. I focus on the case of Jerusalem, the Israeli city most affected by the phenomenon, to explore the intersecting outcomes of top-down policies and bottom-up lifestyle demands on the upscaling of the inner-city and the displacement of Israeli residents. Residents' displacement results in their replacement in cheaper areas, often beyond the 'Green Line' in the Occupied Territories, a problematic outcome to any peace negotiations, but one that follows the agenda of municipal and state-level policymakers.

**Dr Hila Zaban** is an urban sociologist and anthropologist and a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the Sociology Department at the University of Warwick, UK. Her research interests are the links between mobilities (immigration and tourism) and urban transformation. She is looking at how people's lifestyle mobilities affect cities and communities. Hila's PhD dissertation was an ethnographic work in a Jerusalem neighbourhood undergoing gentrification processes combined with privileged migration of Jews from Western countries and the physical and cultural effects of these processes. Hila's current project looks at the urban effects of British Jews' transnational practices on Israeli cities, focusing on the issue of second home ownership and transnational gentrification – when gentrification forces are external, not local. Hila is also working on displacement in urban renewal projects in the Israeli city Beersheba. She has published her work in top journals in the fields of urban studies and immigration studies.

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