

3 Marrakesh Medina

Neocolonial paradise of lifestyle migrants?

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Although Morocco is only separated from Europe by the narrow Strait of Gibraltar, most Europeans view the country as another world: an unknown realm from centuries past, a distant desert kingdom full of adventure and an oriental fairyland as glamorised in the 'Arabian Nights'. These appealing characterisations also apply to Marrakesh, the urban symbol of Morocco, and have reinforced its exotic image with the numerous media-presented narrations about Marrakesh. If one were to believe newspaper articles, travelogues and filmed reports, you would find the 'real and authentic orient in Marrakesh in particular and get caught up in the "whirlwind of events"' (Kirchhoff 1999: 28). We are now witnessing a process here that has been taking place over two decades and which would have been unfeasible in the early 1990s for the relevant academic community: Morocco has evolved into a destination for lifestyle migrants from all over the globe who travel to the old city of Marrakesh to buy overcrowded or neglected and/or vacant buildings and then transform them into magnificent residences based on orientalisising designs with extended rooftop terraces and swimming pools. The question is, however, why have foreigners bought more than 2,500 properties in Marrakesh's medina so far? What are they looking for? What type of lifestyle do they lead? And how does their migration affect the life of the local Moroccan population?

Lifestyle migration and lifestyle migrants

John Locke (1632–1704) is regarded as the first (pre)-modern thinker to define the basic 'right a man has to subsist and enjoy the conveniences of life' (Locke [1689] 2005: 44). For the philosopher that meant enjoying the pleasures of life as they occur and not making happiness and indulgence one's aim in life, and thus arranging day-to-day activities accordingly. Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) asserted the claim for the indisputable natural law that was later incorporated in the US Declaration of Independence as 'pursuit of happiness': 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness' (Stimson [1908]

2004: 76). Bliss or the pursuit of happiness refers to a balanced state of well-being at the end of life, a 'state where there are no longer any problems or wishes' (Farlex Inc. n.d.). In this age, the pursuit of happiness has become an aim in life (for instance, striving for good health and belongings) and does not imply a feeling of happiness at a given moment.

At the end of the twentieth century, when most people living in countries of the North considered their needs in terms of health and belongings as being satisfied for the most part, these intersubjectively tangible qualities no longer formed the focal point of the pursuit for happiness. Instead emphasis is placed more on subjectively intentional qualities like pleasure and sentiment and is accompanied by an increasing individualisation of people and differentiation of hedonistic lifestyles of opulence (see Beck 1983, 1986). Selfishness and emphasis on ascribing meaning to the here and now and an increasing loss of transcendental interpretation of meaning place self-portrayal, self-actualisation, satisfaction of basic individual needs and pleasure at the heart of post-modern pursuits. 'Happiness and pleasure' represent the desirable objective of almost every action. In addition to that, globalisation, (neo-)liberalisation and digitalisation at the end of the twentieth century are responsible for a blurring of spatial and temporal boundaries for the actions of people living primarily in industrial countries. The resulting framework conditions of everyday life have developed dramatically during the ensuing years especially with regard to the dimension of one's actions and have thus resulted in migration increasingly becoming a strategy for shaping and improving the quality of everyday life based on individual preferences. Currently, broad sections of population, especially those living in first-world countries, are always looking for a better and different life. In the past, this form of migration was only a privilege reserved for the wealthy and those who chose to escape for one reason or another. Besides migrating for economic or political reasons or to survive and have a safer or better way of life, people have also moved in search of a more satisfying and more pleasurable way of life.

The most important publications addressing lifestyle migration as a topic come from Benson and O'Reilly (2009a,b). As part of their research, the two authors focus on locations that promise the possibilities of a better way of life: '... lifestyle migration is the spatial mobility of relatively affluent individuals of all ages, moving either part-time or full-time to places that are meaningful because, for various reasons, they offer the potential of a better quality of life' (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a: 2). From the standpoint of migrants, relocating one's residence is like a project '... that encompasses diverse destinations, desires and dreams' (Benson and O'Reilly 2009b: 610). It is based on subjective analysis and evaluation of one's current living conditions in their home country: '... migration for these migrants is often an anti-modern, escapist, self-realization project, a search for the intangible "good life"' (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a: 1). Taking Benson and O'Reilly (2009a,b) into consideration and integrating ideas from Hoey (2005) led Torkington (2010: 102) to the following idea:

Whilst the lifestyle orientations and motivations of these migrants may differ, perhaps the one unifying factor of this group is their belief that a *change of residential place* will lead not simply to better opportunities in life, but rather to something which might be described as a better *lifestyle* and/or a more fulfilling *way of life*.

In this chapter, we would like to further characterise the rather general definitions of lifestyle migration by focusing on the lifestyles that are pursued at the given locations. This chapter also aims to illustrate the extent in which the lifestyles are linked with the migration process, whereas Zapf *et al.* (1987: 14) have already made reference to the ‘mobile welfare society’ for shaping lifestyles. To present the lifestyles in greater detail, it would first be helpful to take a look at sociology as it is taught in Germany. Hradil (2005: 46) defines lifestyles as the attitudes, actions and practices adopted by persons in the overall context of everyday life, whereas Geißler (2002: 126) identifies ‘... recreation, leisure and consumerism as the main focus. In addition to that, reference is also made to family life, tastes and cultural interests and sometimes to work and politics, if only marginally at that.’

Migration in this context is frequently influenced by a way of life, where the lifestyles are often extremely hedonistic and egocentric as the described trends of the last 30 years bear testament. With that we are making ‘the more or less conscious self-portrayal (stylization) of a given individual in terms of taste and cultural interests’ (Geißler 2002: 126) the focal point of our study. According to the authors, it is possible to classify, from a pragmatic standpoint, lifestyles into the following four dimensions: (1) conscious physicalness, (2) differentiated and civilised satisfaction of basic needs, (3) tailored, direct physical residential environment and (4) selected social and media-based common life areas (Figure 3.1).

The described dimensions can be broken down in different categories, as is in part presented especially in so-called ‘lifestyle magazines’.¹ Physicalness is covered by ‘Fashion and Beauty’ and ‘Wellness and Fitness’. The basic primary needs can be described with the areas ‘Food and Drink’ and ‘Eroticism and Sex’. The tailored, direct physical residential environment can be defined

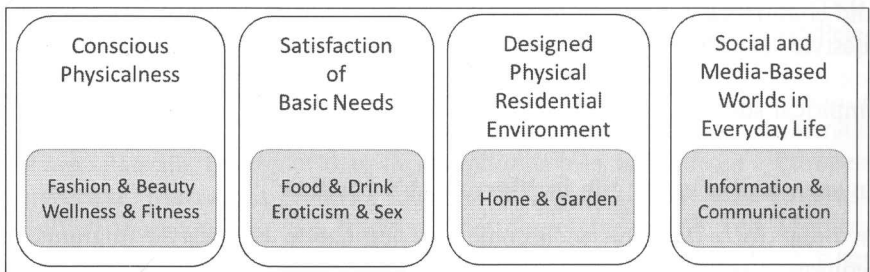


Figure 3.1 Dimensions and categories of lifestyles of lifestyle migrants

with 'Home and Garden', and the selected social and media-based society can be characterised with 'Information and Communication'.² The individual categories do not necessarily have to be experienced or consumed to a greater extent or in a more exotic manner. They can also be characterised by a reticence in consumption based on the idea of a simpler way of life at the newly adopted home (for an example, see Therrien this volume).

This chapter consequently treats lifestyle migration as a permanent change in place of residence or the selection of an additional temporary place of residence, where the main purpose is to find a 'better life' for the purpose of self-actualisation, self-portrayal and satisfaction of basic needs. Lifestyle migration frequently unfolds at a location where there are different economic prerequisites and other political conditions or where other social rules or different rules of social control apply that offer migrants as foreigners a legal and social interstice and open up additional potential for action. The lifestyles practised at such locations are marked by a purposeful change and subjective enhancement of the capacity to deliberately influence physicalness, to satisfy basic needs in a civilised manner and to individualise physical and social environments. All in all, lifestyle migrants tend to experience an increase in options for individual self-actualisation, since the socio-economical foundation usually remains embedded in the respective countries of origin.

Ultimately, lifestyle migration differs from other forms of migration in that the migrants choose to move from a relatively good life to an even better and more gratifying life. The objective of lifestyle migration is to create opportunities, to overstep or push boundaries in many different ways. That said, these boundaries are not only physical like the borders of a country but may also be symbolic, moral and/or legal boundaries. While lifestyle migration may be temporary or permanent, it always illustrates the difference between the (former) places of residence and highlights the advantages, the freedom and happiness that lifestyle migrants continuously enjoy by opting for a different or additional place of residence. Lifestyle migration always represents a migration to places that have aesthetic characteristics within the meaning of 'beautiful landscape' (see Lacoste 1990) or 'old cultural location' (see Cosgrove 1998) or cultural landmarks that are worth preserving like historic districts or neglected villages. Lifestyle migrants therefore pick specific landscapes, cities and countries that are able to provide the setting or platform for the intended lifestyle. The shaping of the locations by the lifestyle migrants who take possession of the location cannot be overlooked and easily forms the basis for empirical study.

In search of a better life in Marrakesh's Medina³

In order for a location to become the destination of lifestyle migrants, it requires a series of framework conditions, prerequisites and qualities that initiate, stimulate and stabilise the process. These factors are either already present or are created during the course of the migration process. The

empirically examined migration process to Marrakesh is plainly enabled by the cultural, economic and political globalisation as preconditions. For instance, UNESCO, the WTO and Morocco's king can be cited as representative protagonists. UNESCO designated the Medina of Marrakesh as a World Heritage site in 1985 and placed the city's central square (Djemaa el-Fna) on the List of 'Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity' in 2001. The WTO encourages the dynamisation of cross-border financial and freight services with the global measures of the Uruguay Round, which ended in 1994 with the Marrakesh Declaration. In addition, the Moroccan King Mohammed VI declared in 2001 that international tourism was the country's growth sector that deserved the most support and stated in 2010 that Morocco's tourist infrastructure will be further developed. The declared aim is to become one of the top 20 tourist destinations in the world with 20 million tourists by 2020 (Najjar 2011). Even the geographical location of Marrakesh makes the city very attractive. The landscape is characterised by the mountains surrounding the Haouz,⁴ first and foremost by the High Atlas with its long, frequently snow-covered peaks. Casablanca in the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the desert to the south are easy to reach within a couple of hours of driving. The ability to fly to almost every European capital in just a couple of hours also plays a key role in the process. In addition to that, there are the climatic conditions that are locally influenced by the Mediterranean and sub-Sahara (Escher and Petermann 2009).

The most important prerequisite for the lifestyle migration is the old city that is relatively well preserved as a monument. This can be attributed to a large extent to the politics of the French protectorate (1912–56), which constructed the new city (*ville nouvelle*) at a physical and functional distance from the old city (see Escher 2012). As a result of the migration from rural areas to cities at around mid-twentieth century, the old city became an overcrowded domicile for the rural and poor segments of population residing in buildings that are characterised by segmentation, obstruction and neglect (see Petermann 2012). The residential buildings in Marrakesh – especially the so-called *riads*, which are traditional Moroccan houses with interior courtyards with fountains and a garden split in four quadrants – are attractive and desirable buildings for migrants. The *riads* are regarded as a copy of paradise on earth, as is described in the Qur'an with two gardens and four rivers (of milk, water, honey and wine) and birds (see Leisten 1993, Escher and Petermann 2009). For lifestyle migrants, a *riad* is an earthly paradise that can be bought, an affordable house of oriental design that cannot be found in Europe. This 'small paradise' guarantees an entitled freedom and interstice between its walls. On top of that, this paradise is reasonable: from a European perspective, Marrakesh promises low cost of living and low staff costs as a result of the economic gap between countries of the North and Morocco. According to one European migrant, you find '... great value for money here and you get, you can live a life where, you know, people can clean and cook for you ...'. Consequently, the city appeals to members of Europe's middle

class. If, however, the resources fail to be sufficient, there is always the possibility of using the riad as a guesthouse and listing the rooms in the internet. Thus, buying the house can (seemingly) be seen as a way to finance the upkeep of the property at the same time.

The existence of the Western 'Marrakesh myth' is equally important for lifestyle migration (Escher and Petermann 2009). The myth was inspired by Western artists like Jacques Majorelle, the 'painter of Marrakesh', who came to the 'pearl of the south' in the 1920s and who created his famous Majorelle Garden here. The Hotel La Mamounia, which was built during the same period and has been remodelled numerous times, accommodates famous politicians, eccentric Hollywood actors and international jet set and thus links Marrakesh with unending luxury. Influenced by the beat generation of the 1940s, hippies travelled here with the 'Marrakesh Express' during the 1960s and 1970s and experienced their utopia beyond the constraints of Western societies. They spread word about the fairytale-like city of the Arabian Nights and some of them come back later on as lifestyle migrants.

Media like newspapers, books, feature films and documentaries play a significant role in the development process of lifestyle migration on various levels, for without them, the myth of Marrakesh would never have spread so fast nor so far in the Western world. The date 14 June 1998 represents a key moment, which broke all dams: the documentary entitled 'Villas in Morocco: Luxury at your fingertip' was broadcast at that time on French TV. The message was plausible and said that Europeans could easily buy oriental palaces for about FRF 150,000 in the medina of Marrakesh and Essaouira. That caused a stampede headed towards the medina of Marrakesh, which in turn was covered in many newspapers and magazines with headlines such as 'Marrakech: The rush towards the riads' (Scemama 2001), 'Ryad – the new must' (Khizrane 2000) or 'Building boom in Marrakesh. Real estate prices skyrocket, Investors scramble to get building permits' (Müller 2007: 4). Even the internet plays an important role in propagating the myth and the development of lifestyle migration. For instance, there was an explosion in the number of websites operated by real estate agents, property developers, guesthouse operators and many other service providers that continuously talk up this so-called paradise on earth.

In addition, a legal security that is guaranteed by an official entry in the land registry (*titre foncier*) is important for migrants. Foreigners are more or less entitled to freely buy, sell or rent real estate in Moroccan cities. This provided the framework that allowed an international real estate market to establish itself at the end of the 1990s. At that time there were primarily bi-national real estate agencies like Marrakech–Médina, which was an enterprise founded by a Belgian architect and his Moroccan partner.

Under the conditions described, the adopted location must allow lifestyle migrants to have a 'better life', i.e. a positive subjective attitude towards life and happiness as well as the positive experience of the categories addressed in the first section with regard to physicalness, physical and social environments

as well as gratification of basic needs. Based on the perception of the migrants, this is mainly granted in the four different subjective spheres: colonial sphere, Arabian Nights sphere, comfortable sphere of life and local social sphere.⁵ They consist of tangible and intangible aspects (Figure 3.2).

The colonial sphere is reminiscent of past times: there is still ‘... a bit of a colonial atmosphere. It’s the sort of the thing I love about Morocco. There is still that sort of gracious colonial atmosphere.’ The neocolonial⁶ activities of no less than lifestyle migrants have surfaced in the colonial sphere, which are evident in the master–servant relation to the Moroccan population and especially towards service personnel (Escher and Petermann 2000, Petermann 2001). The staff are often financially dependent on the migrant and hardly in the position to negotiate their pay (Petermann 2001). What is striking, however, are neocolonial aspects, especially in the way of daily management of the service staff, which is often limited to a ‘... colonial kind of “hey man, go, get me my cup of tea and wipe my table”’. For instance, as one female migrant puts it: ‘Well, regarding their domestic staff, they are in one or another way acting in a colonial style for sure.’ Reports especially about French migrants also show that they have ‘... some kind of neocolonial mentality. I think that’s very striking. Not everybody, but all of the people who buy riads. These are people arriving with the idea of living here like a pasha, like a king.’ As a form of cultural dominance can be interpreted the fact that only very few migrants are willing to learn the local language, but they communicate in the language of the former protectorate with their employees and neighbours (see Torkington in this volume).

Closely tied with the availability of service personnel is also the presence of male and female adult and child prostitutes. A European reported on the

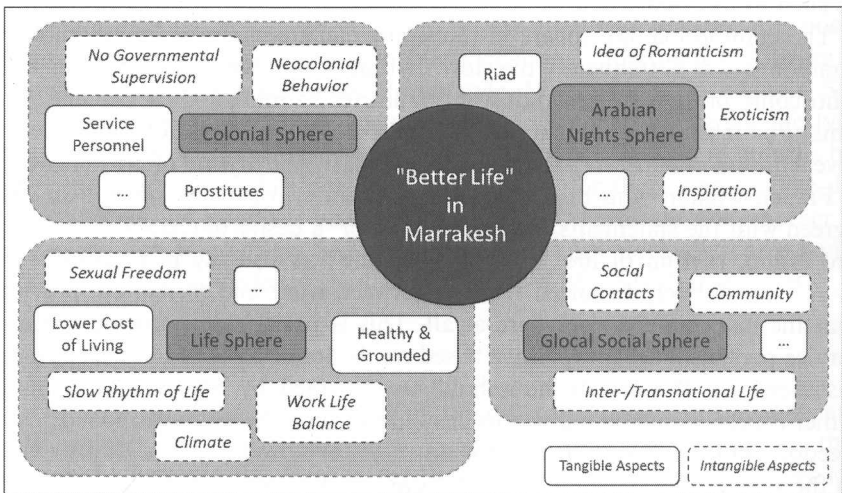


Figure 3.2 'Better life' in Marrakesh

situation as follows: ‘There are even kids here; people are coming because of the kids. Sometimes when you walk down the streets at night, there are children at the age of ten or twelve offering you sex.’ Or as another migrant summarised:

Marrakesh is a huge brothel. Especially (homo)sexual and pedophile services are always in demand: ... it’s like paradise for Europeans. There are a lot of ‘easy’ cute little Arabs. A lot of French homosexuals come here. There are a lot. If you go to a dinner party, 20 to 30 per cent are gay. That’s disproportionate.

Even many newspapers and magazines focus on Marrakesh’s role as tourist destination for homosexuals (Anon. 2008). Here it is possible to experience almost every fantasy, since the migrants are able to act within the four walls of their houses where they are isolated from the outside world and are thus out of reach of the police or authorities. This liberty and/or release from any individual and social constraints was summarised by one interviewee as follows: ‘... once you’re in your house, you’re in your own little kingdom’.

The Arabian Nights sphere is characterised predominantly by the exoticism, magic and the idea of romanticism that can be felt in Marrakesh. ‘When you walk for the first few times – and still today – through the world of this fairytale Medina, it really seems to me like *The Arabian Nights*: Everything’s sparkling and glittering and smelling and there are surprises everywhere. You think “now this is happening” and then something completely different appears.’ Even the houses of migrants, regardless of whether they are private houses, guesthouses, restaurants or hammam or spa, are primarily designed to reflect the style of the Arabian Nights and are advertised as such in the media.

The comfortable life sphere in the sunny climate comprises many different components. It is frequently the slow rhythm of life that attracts the migrants who come primarily from industrial countries to rethink their perception of time. For instance, one migrant described the situation as follows: ‘I fell in love with this country And I love particularly the rhythm of life here.’ Even a French woman who migrated to permanently live in the medina in 2006 agreed with the statements. She came here for ‘a desire to change life, change profession, rhythm of life ... or “way of life” as you say in English’. Here there is a relatively balanced relation between work and recreation, provided that the migrants do work here at all. This is possible in particular because service personnel are inexpensive based on the lower costs of living, and many tasks even in the private household are assumed by Moroccan personnel. Other aspects contributing to this easy life include the aforementioned sexual freedom and the feeling that one is down-to-earth and living healthily thanks to the slower rhythm of life and the local agricultural products.

The glocal social sphere of the migrants is anchored locally within the community of foreigners and linked globally or transnationally through the

internet and mobility (Arnold 2010). The entire world meets here in Marrakesh. Even if only temporarily, people from all over the globe gather here: 'I love Marrakesh because it's so international. ... people constantly come through here. And so that amuses me.' Social contact with Moroccans is maintained only in very exceptional cases (see When lifestyle migrants meet locals).

Idealised lifestyles of migrants in Marrakesh

Lifestyle migrants generally want to leave behind their old life and daily routine (at least temporarily) by moving. They settle in Marrakesh's medina in order to shape their everyday life and fulfil themselves as individuals in a way that they could not have done or only to a limited extent at another location. They relocate their place of residence to realise a certain lifestyle, an existence that is better than would have been possible in their old way of life. They want to redefine or reinvent themselves and change their place. They want to act out their talents and needs as much as possible without the constraints of rules and morals. The vast majority of lifestyle migrants living in Marrakesh are circular migrants. In other words, they spend periods of various durations in the home country time and again. Most lifestyle migrants avoid Marrakesh especially during the very hot summer months from June to August.

To form the ideal types,⁷ it is necessary to examine various elements of the hedonistic lifestyles already addressed in the theoretical section. In this case, the dominating motive for migration and subsequently determining how to lead one's life serves as analytical guidance and definitive for the lifestyle.⁸ The elements 'Home and Garden', 'Eroticism and Sex' and 'Information and Communication' play an even greater role as catalysts than the categories 'Food and Drink', 'Wellness and Fitness' and 'Fashion and Beauty', which can be addressed at any location. Based on the empirical analysis, it is possible to distinguish analytically seven lifestyles among the foreigners living in Marrakesh: Riad style, Self style, Homo style, Mobile style, Social style, Setting style and Posing style. The last two styles do not really designate lifestyles of migrants who have changed their place of residence for several months but rather those of very mobile persons who only stay for short periods. The different lifestyles of migrants interlock, overlap and permeate one another in the forms of their everyday life. The order of the list normally corresponds with the descending order of the length of stay in Marrakesh in a given year.

Riad style

This lifestyle is characteristic for many migrants in Marrakesh's medina and is determined by the combination of elements 'Home and Garden' as they can only be found in this form in the 'Red City'. The created, direct physical environment forms the focal point of this lifestyle; here everyday life revolves around one's own riad. The purchase of the house, the finishing and/or

renovation not only cost money but also demand in particular time and energy. As of that point in time, the preservation and the interior design of the riad with its frequently oriental design elements play the most important role in the life of Riad-style migrants. Owing to the high maintenance costs and the additional charges for water, electricity and upkeep, almost two-thirds of the lifestyle migrants decide in favour of opening a guesthouse. Their lifestyle is always closely linked with the operation of the house: sunset years, recreation, hotel business and gastronomy merge together smoothly. The elements 'Food and Drink' and 'Wellness and Fitness' also play an active part: more and more guesthouse operators integrate restaurants and wellness centres in their buildings or open them up in new premises. Even during private time, much of their life revolves around meals and physical well-being. For instance, Riad-style migrants regularly meet with like-minded people to eat together. The lifestyle elements 'Information and Communication' are influenced to a considerably extent by these get-togethers, and in the event of guesthouse operators by their communication with customers. The canvassing of potential clients and communication with friends back in their home country takes place for the most part via the internet. The necessary functional and communicative connection to Morocco's everyday world in Marrakesh is frequently implemented by the wage-dependent service personnel who prepare the meals, take care of the garden and watch the riad.

Self style

Self-actualisation plays a key role in the everyday routine of these migrants. They are frequently artists and producers of culture such as authors, graphic artists, photographers, craftsmen and film makers who have migrated to Marrakesh by following the footsteps of painters and poets of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Even self-appointed 'architects' are able to act out and realise their creative ideas in building and designing structures for foreign customers in Marrakesh. They are inspired by the Red City with its lighting and vibrant life on the streets. In 'Home and Garden' they find the requisite peace and quiet in order to be able to live out their creativity. Their everyday life revolves primarily around themselves, their products and their marketing. Insofar as 'Information and Communication' is concerned, the Self-style migrant is rarely integrated locally in the general populace of the foreign community. Instead these migrants maintain intensive contact with their customers as well as with artists and intellectuals who are present locally and globally. This lifestyle group is characterised more than any other by friendly contact with the Moroccan community.

Homo style

'Eroticism and Sex' are primary factors motivating male homosexual migrants in particular to move their place of residence to Marrakesh, since

Morocco is regarded as an open, friendly country, even though homosexuality is actually prohibited by law there. Owing to social rules in Morocco's gender-segregated society, Homo-style migrants frequently view cultural practices like individuals of the same sex holding hands in public as pleasant and liberating. They enjoy in particular the individual freedoms and sexual offerings that exist within the 'Home and Garden' group. With regard to 'Information and Communication', this lifestyle is often characterised by integration locally into a large gay community and online. The categories 'Food and Drink', 'Wellness and Fitness' and 'Fashion and Beauty' play a significant role in self-portrayal. Looking for physical gratification and new contacts has a major part in this lifestyle.

Social style

The search for social integration draws many migrants to Marrakesh, especially older people who are retired. They enjoy the attention, the feeling of recognition and respect that they get from the Moroccans in Marrakesh. The elements 'Information and Communication' are especially characteristic for the Social-style group. Many active retirees very much appreciate that the people of Marrakesh make time for tea and chatting. They are frequently able to offer the experience and skills that they have acquired during their careers and are thus valued because of that. Especially the extensive group of French elderly people is looked after and taken care of by different (in part state) organisations. In Marrakesh they are also frequently able to afford a standard of life with service personnel in 'Home and Garden', something denied to them in their home country. This lifestyle involves social recognition and the desired respect for one's age and skills.

Setting style

Marrakesh is construed as the counterpart to Europe's working world and as an exotic backdrop for a better life. This lifestyle is enjoyed primarily by the European middle class, which strives to go back in time and space. In Marrakesh the Setting-style migrant finds a better climate and cultural aspects that have been lost. 'Home and Garden' are for this group a secondary residence, where they tend to stay for shorter periods than the migrants of the previously addressed lifestyles. 'Information and Communication' here is realised with other Europeans who have common interests and speak the same language during 'Food and Drink' or 'Wellness and Fitness'. Digital media allow the migrants to integrate in Europe's communication landscape. This lifestyle is well informed about world events; actual events in Morocco usually interest this group only if they directly concern the migrants. In the Setting style, everything revolves around the permanent change between the conventional, known place of residence and work and the exotic location for relaxing.

Mobile style

This lifestyle is marked by even shorter and less frequent stays. Mobile-style migrants may be described as permanent repeat visitors, who are similar to cosmopolitans due to the technical travel options and potential communication capabilities. Marrakesh is a location, among other places in the world, where one can easily live out one's own lifestyle. 'Home and Garden' are handed over to an administrator, and 'Information and Communication' with friends and acquaintances in the world play a greater role as a catalyst for mobility than 'Eroticism and Sex', 'Food and Drink', 'Wellness and Fitness' and 'Fashion and Beauty'. Marrakesh is a location among many others that the Mobile-style migrant knows well, where one seeks closeness to other lifestyle migrants and Moroccan 'Europaphiles'. The lifestyle is characterised by the permanent change of place of residence and thus associated with a transnational network.

Posing style

Even if the Posing-style migrants do have 'Home and Garden' in the medina or real estate in the *ville nouvelle* or in the palm oasis, they usually come to Marrakesh for a short period of time. While 'Fashion and Beauty' and 'Wellness and Fitness' are paramount, 'Eroticism and Sex' cannot be omitted from this lifestyle. For the most part this group involves jet-setters, for whom Marrakesh is a 'must' like many other locations in the world so long as they are popular in their community. If the persons do not possess a riad, they stay primarily at the most expensive hotels in the city. Marrakesh is 'le dernier cri' for European and US 'high society' and a 'dirty weekend' in the pearl of the south always provides a good change. 'Information and Communication' are essential aspects of this lifestyle, since their presence would otherwise pass unnoticed. In this regard, it is very important for the self-portrayal of these visitors to Marrakesh that they are always mentioned in the 'yellow press' of various countries.

When lifestyle migrants meet locals

The mass sale of residential houses to foreigners, the way of life led by the lifestyle migrants and the presence of tourists in the guesthouses impact the existing residential buildings and the local population there in a variety of ways, as described above. For instance, residential buildings are renovated and then used in part in a different manner. The local real estate sector, job market and conditions in neighbourhoods have changed. Although, according to statements made by local population, many locals recognise advantages in the change processes unfolding in the old town, disadvantages are also cited almost in the same breath and conflicts do appear.⁹ Parallels are frequently drawn to an apparent non-violent neocolonialisation of the country,

emphasising one's own positive personal experience with the new arrivals from abroad and presented as opinion of the other, mainly older, generation.

As was already mentioned, many Moroccans have been directly affected by the move of lifestyle migrants to Marrakesh due to the changes on the local real estate market. While, from the viewpoint of the interviewees, buying a house was once a quick, verbal and thus unbureaucratic process that was based on trust, now tedious, bureaucratic processes are in part standard due to the legal security required by foreigners and thus involve higher costs today. The foreigners want to have a government-guaranteed land registration process (*titre foncier*) for security's sake and therefore surveying of the property and multiple administrative acts have become necessary. The traditional real estate agent (*simsar*) has been replaced by domestic and international realtors. Owing to the high profit margins, inexperienced locals are trying their hand as realtors in the hope of better earnings opportunities. Almost every piece of real estate in the medina is for sale now.

The demand on the part of comparably financially strong foreign lifestyle migrants for riads has led to a tremendous price increase on the real estate market. Many Moroccan building owners have in the hope of obtaining a high return on sales now decided to sell their properties to foreigners for profit and thus leave the medina as a place of residence or terminate existing tenancies. This has resulted in a lack or greatly reduced supply of affordable 'Rhan' tenancy agreements in the medina.¹⁰ Many tenants in the medina are consequently forced to look for a building in residential areas outside of the medina, where Rhan tenancy agreements are still possible (see Bastos in this volume, who speaks according to Harvey of 'accumulation by dispossession'). Moroccan real estate owners in the medina profit considerably by selling residential buildings. The losers are the Moroccan tenants. Affordable rental prices can no longer be found in the medina and in the surrounding urban area.

The direct contact between the Moroccan populace and the incoming foreigners occurs mainly in the form of work and/or business relations that are based primarily on purpose. Get-togethers between neighbours are rather rare.¹¹ Many lifestyle migrants are employers, e.g. of workers in restaurants, private residences and guesthouses, direct or indirect employers in the renovation of a riad and/or customers of souvenir vendors, artisans, tour guides or real estate agents. While those working independently on behalf of a foreign migrant are satisfied with the negotiated pay, employees frequently complain about inadequate pay and poor work conditions (e.g. having to serve guests at 40°C on a roof terrace). Local low-skilled unemployed persons strive relatively often to develop friendly relations with foreigners, since they hope to find opportunities for work and earning money through the networks of foreigners. According to the Moroccans interviewed, the friendships do not really become close as a result of existing language barriers and different cultural perceptions. Migrants are frequently of the opinion that close relationships with Moroccans are impossible: 'You can't be friend-friend really. Having friends or deep relationships with Moroccans is impossible in my

opinion.’ This was also confirmed by a migrant woman from Belgium: ‘The only thing that (Moroccans) are interested in is how they can make money easily without doing anything’. She further added: ‘Friendship with Europeans does not exist between Moroccans ... because there is always a conflict and financial interest in the back of the head of the person.’ This circumstance is attributed to cultural differences and different attitudes (e.g. language, concept of time, gregariousness, propensity to talk). Many migrants seem to feel an underlying lack of acceptance or even rejection on part of the Moroccan people. In light of this, the majority of non-commercial contact between foreigners and the local population remains very distant. The Moroccans interviewed note that the often claimed hospitality and generosity of the foreigners tends to disappear with the long stay in Morocco or as a result of Moroccan spouses and that they become ‘unfriendly, egoistical or just bad’. In addition to that, there are conflicts triggered by the lifestyles of foreigners who live in Morocco without family or who are homosexual or paedophilic.¹² The use of roof terraces by men and women as extended leisure areas for breakfast, eating and sunbathing is considered annoying, since such uses conflict with the traditional use of roof terraces as area reserved for women.

In turn, many lifestyle migrants have adapted their everyday behaviour outside of their residences in the medina and their contact with local neighbours over the course of the past 10 years to the generally applicable rules and regulations of the Moroccan community in the medina.

Marrakesh, paradise for lifestyle migrants on earth?

Lifestyle migrants from all over the world come to Marrakesh because they are able to fulfil, based on a subjective point of view, their search for a more satisfying and more pleasurable way of life in an individually shaped paradise. The geographic location, the old city with its neglected residential buildings, the myth of the exotic that is idealised by the mass media and the government-guaranteed legal security for real estate investments have contributed in making Morocco a top destination for lifestyle migrants. Residential buildings purchased in the medina and thus the direct physical environment are shaped with an ‘oriental, exotic and idyllic touch’. For the migrants, even the intersecting social and media-based worlds of everyday life are (apparently) subject to unrestricted individualisation. The process is facilitated and encouraged by the country’s colonial history, since the transformation that the state and society have experienced (European language, everyday practices and acceptance by the host community) ensure recognition and acceptance of the foreign migrants. The migrants live in a world between communities and cultures. They have settled down, isolated from the everyday life of the medina’s local population in colonial, comfortable and global spheres based on the tales of the ‘Arabian Nights’.

Providing the necessary living and prepared stage for helping the lifestyle migrants realise their desired ways of life, the local population and the old

city of Marrakesh have undergone significant change and detriment. The structural and infrastructural transformation of the medina is usually regarded as positive, just like the creation of a new job market in the building, trade and service sectors. On the other hand, it is not possible, however, to ignore a displacement of poorer sections of the medina's population with the disappearance of inexpensive living quarters. In addition, a master-servant relationship has evolved between the lifestyle migrants and the Moroccan population, resulting in considerable interaction problems affecting aspects of daily life. The sexual exploitation especially of Morocco's youth should not go unmentioned either. Hence, the question remains to what extent these 'shadows of paradise' cloud the spheres of the lifestyle migrants in Marrakesh's medina?

Notes

- 1 Many of Germany's tabloid newspapers like *Bunte*, *Bild*, *Gala*, *Stern*, etc., contain a section entitled 'Lifestyle', where relevant information is provided to assist readers in shaping their lifestyles. Reference to everyday usage of the term in the German language can be seen on a wide variety of internet pages (see, for example, Digital Institut n.d.).
- 2 It is evident that the various analytical categories, which have been addressed and focus on 'habits, cultural practices and symbolic significance' (Postel 2005: 2), are accessible partially or to a varying degree empirically speaking (for instance public statements about sexual preferences and practices).
- 3 The empirical research of the German Research Foundation (DFG) funded research project "Gentrification in the Medina of Marrakech" was conducted in the years 1999, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012 also by interviews with student teams. More than 150 interviews in French, English, German, Italian, and Spanish with foreign migrants were carried out, recorded and analysed. Additionally, during all campaigns the property of all foreign migrants was recorded cartographically and entered into a geographical information system (GIS) (see e.g. Escher and Petermann 2009). In addition, the two authors were several times every year in the field for interviews and observations of key persons, migrants and residents).
- 4 Haouz is the traditional designation of the region around Marrakesh (cf. Pascon 1977). Nowadays, El Haouz stands for an administrative province to the south of Marrakesh.
- 5 The spheres correspond in many parts with the previously mentioned 'Marrakesh myth'. Additional spheres could exist. They do tend to overlap within everyday life.
- 6 Neocolonialism is more broadly understood as the continuation of mostly economic and technological dependence from politically independent countries with the Western industrialised countries (colonialism without colonies) and in a narrow sense as the continuation of direct political, economic and military presence by the old colonial power (Elsenhans 1985: 599, see Petermann 2001). In the present case, it is not so much about dependence and dominance by the state rather than on the individual-private level.
- 7 In this regard, they are ideal types of lifestyles that cannot be found in the clearness of the described characteristics locally. According to Weber ([1904] 1995) and Gerhardt (2001), the prevailing social reality is modelled and overdrawn such that the difference of the various styles is clear. The lifestyles are presented on the basis of empirical data, where not all aspects could be addressed and the aspects covered may be ascribed greater significance than in actuality.

- 8 Motives for migration are frequently distinguishing for the described phenomenon such as the concepts 'retirement migration' (Gustafson 2001), 'tourism entrepreneurship' (Lardiés 1999) or 'residential tourism' (McWatters 2009) make clear.
- 9 The information is based on observations made as part of a research project (1999–2012) and an empirical study from 2003, during which 32 locals were interviewed qualitatively in Arabic with regard to the relationship that the Moroccan population has to the transformation process and foreigners.
- 10 A 'Rhan' tenancy agreement is based on a loan transaction between the tenant and the landlord with a written loan agreement, where the tenant lends the landlord a larger sum of money for the duration of a year and receives in return a reduced rent.
- 11 Informal and accidental contact between the Moroccan people and foreign migrants is also complicated by Moroccan authorities. If locals have a non-professional relationship with a foreigner, they must obtain an authorisation issued by the local police authorities in order to interact with the foreigners.
- 12 A coalition called 'Touche pas à mon enfant' was founded in July of 2004 in response to this dictate, among other factors. Its objectives include promoting the rights of children and protecting them against sexual abuse and sexual exploitation (Tanmia 2012).

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