

November, 5th 2008
6.00 PM

Seminar

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Ethnocracy and Religious Radicalism: Colonizing Abraham's Cities

What are the links between 'technocratic' regime, urban colonialism and religious radicalism? Focusing on urban Israel/Palestine and using a neo-Gramscian perspective, Oren Yiftachel highlights the generation of religious mobilization from 'above' and 'below' and the limits of hegemony in situations of 'creeping apartheid'. Yiftachel demonstrates the need to breathe material, spatial and political life into the dynamics of regime and identity construction, and explores these dynamics in three ancient cities built on the footsteps of Abraham – the mythical father of both Jews and Muslims – Hebron, Jerusalem and Beer Sheva. It is shown that the state's 'ethnocratic' colonial policies are the main (albeit not sole) cause of religious radicalism, in tension with competing forces of (neo)liberalization and bureaucratic governmentality. More specifically, the changing intensity of religious radicalism is linked to the relative depth of colonial relations, with notable differences between the three cities.

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