



Urban Studies Seminar 2018–2019

Annual Theme:

The Urban Spatialities of Religion in the Middle East, Africa and South-East Asia

Monday, 14 January 2019, 5 pm

Forming Space and Collective/Religious Identities in post 1948 Haifa

Lecture by **Himmat Zoubi** (EUME Fellow 2018-19)

Since “the spatial turn” in the early 1990s and mainly following the English translation of Henri Lefebvre’s pioneering book “The Production of Space” (1974), space is no longer viewed as static or background, but as a site of struggle that shapes ideas, beliefs, principles and values. Modern socio-spatial theorists understand space as both dynamic and relational and as intertwined with lived experience. Likewise, the production and reproduction of the city are influenced by and inscribe themselves in the urban social relations.

“Haifa al Jadida” (New Haifa) was founded by Daher el-Omar, the governor of the Galilee/ al Jalil, at the end of the eighteenth century. Under the British Mandate that colonized Palestine between 1918 to 1948 “Haifa al Jadida” became the “Old City” of Haifa. During the Zionist occupation in 1948 and the evacuation of most of its Palestinian inhabitants in the course of the Nakba, “Haifa al Jadida” was destroyed almost completely, only to be transformed later into the “downtown” of the “mixed city” Haifa.

Himmat Zoubi’s talk demonstrates how these transformations inscribed themselves in the socio-religious relations of the city’s inhabitants with special focus on the post 1948 period. She argues that eliminating “Haifa al Jadida” caused not only a physical destruction to the two centuries old center of activity and communal life, but also imposed new social relations. She explores how spatial policies combined with colonial population management shattered the Arab-Palestinian urban collective identity and tried to re-produce religious-sectarian identities for the Palestinians who remained inside Israel.

Himmat Zoubi (هيمت زعيبي) is a Palestinian researcher and feminist activist. She wrote her dissertation on *Surveillance Discipline and Urban Indigenous People in Settler Colonial Society* at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Ben-Gurion University. She completed two Master’s degrees, one in Criminology and another in Gender Studies. Currently a EUME fellow, her present research focuses on Culture Spaces and “*The Right to the City*”: *Palestinians in Israel as a Case Study*. She received several awards and grants for her research, among them the Palestinian American Research Center (PARC) fellowship, the Scholarship for Outstanding Arab Doctoral Students - Council for Higher Education, and the Dean’s List Award for Academic Excellence (2017-2018).

Venue

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