



The Politics of Suffering: Syria's Palestinian Refugee Camps (Public Cultures of the Middle East and North Africa)

By Nell Gabiam

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The Politics of Suffering examines the confluence of international aid, humanitarian relief, and economic development within the space of the Palestinian refugee camp. Nell Gabiam describes the interactions between UNRWA, the United Nations agency charged with providing assistance to Palestinians since the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, and residents of three camps in Syria. Over time, UNRWA's management of the camps reveals a shift from an emphasis on humanitarian aid to promotion of self-sufficiency and integration of refugees within their host society. Gabiam's analysis captures two forces in tension within the camps: politics of suffering that serves to keep alive the discourse around the Palestinian right of return; and politics of citizenship expressed through development projects that seek to close the divide between the camp and the city. Gabiam offers compelling insights into the plight of Palestinians before and during the Syrian war, which has led to devastation in the camps and massive displacement of their populations.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Nell Gabiam's *The Politics of Suffering* is a deep anthropological engagement with the politics of citizenship and the practices of othering as it relates to the Palestinian refugee camps in Syria. In a time of a major refugee crisis world-wide, this book is a must read for anyone interested in understanding the shape of the needed global humanitarian response to these increasingly normalized conditions." ?Nezar AlSayyad, Professor of Architecture, Planning, and Urban History, University of California, Berkeley

About the Author

Nell Gabiam is Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Political Science at Iowa State University.

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