

Exploring the Transformations of Masculinities and Displacement in the Middle East: A Deep Dive

In recent years, the Middle East has been plagued by numerous conflicts and political upheavals, resulting in massive displacements of people. These displacements have not only affected the lives of individuals and families, but have also brought about significant transformations in gender roles and identities, particularly masculinities.

This article aims to shed light on the complex relationship between masculinities and displacement in the Middle East, exploring the various factors that have influenced the shifting dynamics of gender in this region. From examining the experiences of displaced men to analyzing the challenges faced by women in these contexts, we delve into the multifaceted dimensions of this topic.

Understanding Masculinities in the Middle East

Traditionally, the Middle East has been deeply rooted in patriarchal structures that define masculinity in terms of power, dominance, and control. Men are expected to be the primary providers and protectors of their families, upholding societal norms and values. However, the circumstances brought about by displacement have disrupted these traditional notions of masculinity and created space for alternative expressions.

Masculinities and Displacement in the Middle East: Syrian Refugees in Egypt (Gender and Islam)

by Premilla Nadasen (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 3369 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 261 pages



The experience of displacement often forces men to face new challenges and assume different roles. As they navigate unfamiliar environments, they may encounter setbacks in their traditional roles as breadwinners, which can lead to feelings of emasculation and loss of identity. Furthermore, the exposure to different cultures and ideologies can challenge the preconceived notions of masculinity, promoting introspection and self-reflection.

The Impact on Men's Mental Health

The psychological toll of displacement on men cannot be understated. The loss of stability and the daily struggles associated with displacement can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and depression. Men may find themselves grappling with feelings of helplessness and frustration, as they are unable to fulfill societal expectations due to the challenging circumstances they are faced with.

Conversely, the breakdown of traditional norms can also provide an opportunity for men to explore different manifestations of masculinity and redefine their roles without the constraints of societal expectations. Some men may choose to challenge patriarchal norms and engage in caretaking and household

responsibilities, challenging traditional gender roles and contributing to the empowerment of women in these contexts.

Gender Dynamics and Women's Agency

While displacement can pose immense challenges for men, it also brings about significant changes in gender dynamics and women's agency. In many Middle Eastern societies, women have historically occupied subordinate positions, with limited decision-making power and opportunities for autonomy. However, the upheaval caused by displacement has created opportunities for women to step into new roles and assert their agency.

Women have become key players in community-building efforts, taking up roles as heads of households and actively participating in decision-making processes. The resilience and strength demonstrated by women in the face of adversity has challenged traditional gender norms and paved the way for increased gender equality in certain aspects of life.

Exploring Intersectionality and Vulnerabilities

It is important to acknowledge that the experience of displacement is not uniform, and certain groups face additional vulnerabilities. Intersectionality plays a crucial role in understanding the diverse experiences of different individuals. Men and women from marginalized communities, those with disabilities, sexual minorities, and ethnic or religious minorities may have distinct challenges and navigate displacement in unique ways.

Efforts to address displacement and its impact on masculinities must take into account these intersecting identities and vulnerabilities in order to promote inclusivity and facilitate holistic recovery.

: Towards a More Inclusive Future

The displacement experienced in the Middle East has unquestionably shaped the dynamics of masculinities in the region. The challenges and transformations that men face in these contexts have the potential to redefine gender roles and empower women. However, it is crucial to approach these discussions with sensitivity and respect, acknowledging the diverse experiences and vulnerabilities that individuals may face based on their identities.

By recognizing the intersections of masculinities, displacement, and other social factors, we can work towards more inclusive and equitable futures for all individuals affected by these challenges in the Middle East.



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Following the outbreak of the Syrian uprising in 2011, many Syrians fled to Egypt. This ethnographic study traces Syrian men's struggles in Cairo: their experiences in the Egyptian labour market and efforts to avoid unemployment; their ambitions to prove their 'groomability' in front of potential in-laws in order to get married; and their discontent with being assigned the label 'refugee'. The book reveals the strategies these men use to maintain their identity as the 'respectable Syrian

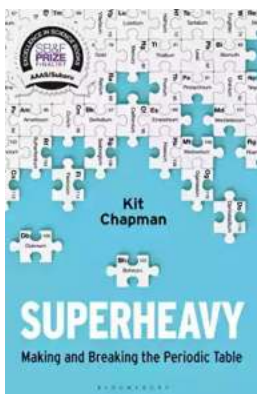
middle-class man' - including engaging in processes of 'Othering' and the creation of hierarchies – and Magdalena Suerbaum explains why this proved so much more difficult for them after Morsi was toppled in 2013.

Based on in-depth interviews, conversations and long-term participant observations, Suerbaum identifies Syrian men's emotional struggles as they undergo the experience of forced displacement and she highlights the adaptability and ultimate elasticity of constructed masculinities. The Syrians interviewed share their memories and their understandings of sectarianism and growing up in Syria, their interactions with the Egyptian and Syrian states, and their experiences during the Syrian uprising. The book takes an intersectional approach with close attention to the 'refugee' as a classed and gendered person.



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