

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND THE POLITICS OF THE CHILD IN PALESTINE DURING THE INTIFADA PERIOD

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explain the emergence and changes in the representations of the Palestinian *child*, and the significance represented by this image considering both the transformation of Palestinian society and the international/transnational circumstances surrounding the Palestine-Israel conflict. After the beginning of the First Intifada (Palestinian popular uprising), the center of the Palestinian resistance movement shifted from the outside to the inside of Palestine. The resistance movement became part of people's everyday lives and Palestinian *children* also began to participate. This led to a rapid increase in representations of the Palestinian *child* in the mass media, and they had a great impact on the international community. I will define politics using the representations of *the child* as *the politics of the child* and analyze how this politics emerged, developed, and changed through the Intifada period (1987-present). The representations of the Palestinian *child* can be classified into three categories according to major images—*the hero*, *the victim*, and *the witness*. Since various actors such as NGOs, journalists, and the governments of many countries are involved in the politics of the child, these politics are developed both in national and international/transnational contexts. One of the most important changes in the political and social circumstances in and around Palestine was the beginning of the Second Intifada which involved increased militarization by both the Israeli and Palestinian sides. Within this context, representations of *the child* have leaned toward the mode of *the victim*, and the new mode of *the witness* has been strengthened as the testimonies of *children* have emerged. This tendency toward a strengthening of the mode of *the victim* has had a strong impact on international/transnational politics on the one hand, and has generated some important problems on the other.