

Gender and the Politics of Nation Building: Reconstructing Somali Women's History

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Presented by: Sahan Literary Forum & Carleton University's Institute of African Studies.



The post civil war Somali story has been dominated by approaches that present essentialized and stereotypical notions of Somali culture and gender relations, and erase women's lived experiences and agency. Combining theoretical analysis with women's personal narratives and situating the discussion within the broader framework of Muslim women and processes of nation building, Dr. Hamdi Mohamed challenges the colonial paradigms that present Somali women as passive victims. She reconstructs Somali women's experiences and expressions of resistance during 1970s and 1980s, a period of profound social and economic transformations. She also presents Somali women's long tradition of negotiating social space and of exercising influence.

Hamdi Mohamed is a social historian with a multidisciplinary skills and experiences in issues of Africa and African Diaspora. Her PhD dissertation used archival sources and personal narratives to reconstruct Somali women's history. Her research and publications focus on gender, forced migration, public policies, and Somali experiences in Canada.

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