

MESF Seminar - The Weaponization of Religious Myths: An Ethnography Shi'ite Gendered Narratives

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Women's roles and status vary greatly in non-state actors and extremist groups. The discussion surrounding whether women play supportive roles rather than active militant roles is still highly debateable. This research is primarily focused on the weaponization of some religious myths in order to dictate certain gendered narratives to fit specific gender roles- evidently for women to act as co-stars alongside their male counterparts. A key female religious figure in Shi'ism, Zainab, an ideological epicentre that focuses on resistance, persistence, and grief, who became a central role for the religious mobilisation of women in Hizbullah, is the focus of this study. Using ethnographic observation of Ashoura sermons and semi-structured interviews with Lebanese Shi'ite women, the study investigates how the story of Zainab has been successfully weaponized by groups like Hizbullah to cast strategic gender roles. Ultimately, the study will shed light on the relationship between religious stories and their social context as key mobilising factors.

Date: Monday, August 28 2023

Time: 13:30 15:00

Location: Burwood Corporate Centre (BCC)

Zoom (optional): Meeting ID: 831 6678 5725 (please email for password)

Please RSVP directly to shahram.akbarzadeh@deakin.edu.au if attending in person.

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