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### Security and Empowerment? : Jordanian Women's Political Participation and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

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# SECURITY AND EMPOWERMENT?: JORDANIAN WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND THE WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY AGENDA

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This thesis analyzes the transformative potential of civil society discourse on women's empowerment and political participation in Jordan. It asks how different civil society organizations approach empowerment and political participation in the context of the increasing securitization across the Middle East and the increasing significance of the refugee population in Jordan, after more than seven years of the Syrian conflict that have impacted Jordan's politics, economy, and society. Through a critical discourse analysis of 10 organizations, using semi-structured interviews with representatives from those organizations and primary sources from their websites, this thesis argues that the international and national civil society organizations in Jordan working to promote women's political participation are fragmented in their approaches, and that they empower women, through a transformative process of change, with varying degrees of success. Traditional methods of women's formal political empowerment through campaign training continue to demonstrate that empowerment is instrumentalized for democratization purposes, but other approaches to empowerment consider the transformation of Jordanian society in a broader sense. In addition, the introduction of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security to Jordanian civil society through the redrafting of a National Action Plan for its implementation beginning in 2015 has resulted in a shift in discourse on women's political participation. Organizations operating within its framework are focusing more on women's participation in conflict resolution, in the security sector, and as refugees. Despite the transformative potential found in the theoretical implementation of the UNSCR 1325, discourse around the National Action Plan's development often revealed a silo effect, creating distinctions between pursuing gender equality through women's political participation and the Women, Peace and Security field.