

Postcolonial Europe and its Construction of Female Citizens in Jordan

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Abstract

This paper looks at development interventions funded or implemented by European actors in Jordan that aim to enhance women's political participation and empower them as citizen. These projects mostly aim at integrating women into the political system (e.g. by supporting female members of political parties) or at strengthening their involvement in civil society organisations. By looking at the female citizen who emerges in the development discourses of these interventions as well as the development structures that condition her appearance, it is argued that it is actually postcolonial Europe that reveals itself through its development interventions in Jordan. Both its geopolitical interests in the region and its self-image are preserved through the figure of the empowered female Jordanian citizen. She is supposed consolidate the status quo insofar as it lets Europe simultaneously uphold its identity as a promoter and exporter of supposedly quintessential European democratic and liberal values, ensure that the change it actually achieves does not interfere with its foreign policy strategies, and maintain its inward-looking gaze that is inattentive to a postcolonial analysis of its role in the region.

Keywords: Europe – Postcoloniality – international development – citizenship – Jordan