

Political papers on the outcomes of the Jordanian parliamentary elections 2020

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Supervision

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**Youth Participation in the
Jordanian Parliamentary
Elections 2020**

Executive Summary

This paper addresses the main challenges and obstacles facing the youth in participating in the parliamentary elections, taking into consideration the outcomes of the parliamentary elections of the 19th Parliament held in November 2020. The paper also presents suggestions that decision-makers and stakeholders can take into consideration to mitigate the state of political apathy and dissatisfaction among the youth, and their deliberate abstention from participating in the parliamentary elections, both as candidates and as voters.

The importance of the paper stems from the fact that it sounds an early warning, which highlights the importance of youth participation in the elections, and its subsequent effect on the level of confidence and democratic development that Jordan could witness. The paper also presents a number of recommendations that were developed based on the obstacles and challenges the paper concluded. This would enable decision-makers to immediately start implementing these suggestions and options, particularly that we do not have the luxury of time to postpone the process of involving the youth in the parliamentary elections.

The results the paper show that Jordanian youth face numerous obstacles and challenges that prevent them from being involved in the election process, whether as candidates or as voters. These obstacles were divided into three main frameworks: Legal&Political, Economic, and Social.

The legal and political frameworks encompass a number of factors including the age of candidacy eligibility, which is a real challenge for youth. Another factor is the weakness of the political parties and youth participation in them. Additional factors include the resignation conditionality, the spread of the «corrupt money» phenomenon, the lack of the youth's confidence in the Lower House's performance, and the extent of the youth

programs› compatibility with the challenges facing the youth. The paper also offers a detailed explanation of each of these factors and their reasons, as well as the extent of their effect on the youth›s participation in the elections. The economic framework includes a number of factors, including the lack of job security, which affected the youth›s abilities to be involved in the electoral process, and the high rate of unemployment, which contributes to pushing the youth away from the elections, as well as the lack of financial independence on the part of the Jordanian youth and its effect on their electoral orientations, in addition to financial resources availability that supports youth participation in the elections. The social framework includes various dimensions, including the tribal and religious dimensions and familial influence on youth opinions, as well as the effects of those dimensions on youth participation in the parliamentary elections.

The paper offers a number of recommendations and alternatives, most importantly, amendments to the Jordanian Constitution, the Election Law, and the Political Parties Law, in a manner that ensures strengthening the youth participation and reimagining a real strategy that contributes to building programs that are compatible with the challenges facing the youth, and reinforcing the role played by the Independent Election Commission and the relevant agencies in mitigating the «corrupt money» phenomenon, controlling the process of spending on electoral campaigns, and mitigating the effect of religious and tribal dimensions on the youth›s opinions in their electoral participation.

Introduction

This paper aims at addressing the problems and obstacles related to youth participation in the parliamentary elections. It mainly relied in its methodology on the outcomes of the 2020 parliamentary elections observation process conducted by Rased comprehensively and objectively for the various stages of the election process. The results were derived from interviews conducted with all male and female candidates on a personal level, in addition to telephone conversations with candidates and some voters according to a random sample representing youth. More than 3000 male and female observers were distributed over voting centers and rooms. They filled out forms based on direct observations of the voting process. Based on these observations, it became evident to us that there was a problem manifest in the rates and types of youth participation in the 2020 parliamentary elections. This policy paper is also based on the results of a study conducted by Al-Hayat Center-Rased just before the 2020 19th parliamentary elections. It analyzed the youth's impressions regarding participation in the parliamentary elections.

What cannot be overlooked is that the Jordanian youth is facing a number of challenges and obstacles which limit its participation in the parliamentary elections, particularly if we take into consideration the outcomes of parliamentary elections of the 19th Parliament held in November 2020.⁽¹⁾ This paper identifies a number of challenges and obstacles that faced youth, and in the same context, it presents suggestions and recommendations that decision makers and stakeholders could benefit from to mitigate the state of political apathy and intentional abstention by youth from participating in the parliamentary elections as candidates and voters, and the growing dissatisfaction among the youth.

(1) Independent Election Commission: Parliamentary Elections 2020: <https://ibit.ly/cHXL>

The paper's importance stems from the fact that it presents practical alternatives and recommendations that could represent a motivating factor for the decision-makers to increase youth participation in the elections, which in turn would contribute to overcoming legal, economic, and social challenges facing the youth in their participation in the elections. Also, the importance of this paper becomes evident because it addresses youth participation in the elections and its effect on the popular participation level in the 2020 parliamentary elections as indicated by the low participation level of 29.9%. In other words, more than two-thirds of eligible voters did not vote in those elections. At the youth level, it is clear that youth voter numbers receded in the 19th Parliament compared to the 18th Parliament when youth participation reached 34% of eligible voters in the 1835- age group, dropping down to 30% in the 19th Parliament.

When comparing with the municipal elections of 2017, we find that youth participation rates were somewhat higher than the 2020 parliamentary elections.⁽²⁾ This was due to a number of factors including the lower age of candidacy eligibility in the municipal and decentralization elections, which is 25, compared to 30 in the parliamentary elections. Also, there was the factor of the lower cost of election campaigns in the municipal and decentralization elections compared to their high cost in the parliamentary elections. This explains youth enthusiasm to participate in municipal and decentralization elections compared to parliamentary elections. This paper will address questions related to the limitations which hinder youth participation in parliamentary elections in Jordan, and offers a number of alternatives and solutions the adoption of which will reinforce youth participation in parliamentary elections.

(2) RASED 2020 Elections Monitoring Report: <https://ibit.ly/opU3>

Background

Jordan is a model of hereditary monarchical parliamentary rule. The system is composed of three authorities, namely, the judicial, the executive, and the legislative authorities. The Legislative Authority is composed of the Senate and the Lower House. The 65 Senate members are appointed by the King directly. They are half the number of the Lower House according to article 63 of the Jordanian Constitution.⁽³⁾ The Lower House is composed of 130 members according to article 8 of the Election Law⁽⁴⁾ with a minimum of 15 seats allocated for women according to article 8-B of the Election Law⁽⁵⁾ and 12 seats allocated for minorities (nine seats for Christians, and three seats for Chechens and Circassians).⁽⁶⁾

Persons between 20 and 44 years of age make up 57% of the population in the voting age throughout the world. Nevertheless, they represent 26% only of world parliamentary representatives. Youth under 30 years old represent 9.1% of the world parliamentary representatives. There are no parliamentarians under than 30 years of age in more than 80% of world parliaments. While the youth most likely play central and motivating roles in democratic movements throughout the world, they participate less in voting and partisan activity compared to older representatives.⁽⁷⁾

The youth throughout the world tend to participate less in elections compared to older citizens. Hence, attracting youth to the ballot boxes requires installing specific measures and creating an enabling environment that enhances and motivates youth participation in political

(3) Article 63 of the Jordanian Constitution: "The Senate, including the Speaker, shall consist of not more than one-half of the number of the members of the Chamber of Deputies." <https://ibit.ly/1lJh>

(4) Elections Law No. 6 for the Year 2016 <https://ibit.ly/FXSQ>

(5) Law Number 6 for the Year 2016 to elect members of the Lower House, available on the link <t.ly/yKyz>

(6) Regulation number (75) for the year 2016, Electoral Districts Regulation, available on the link <t.ly/eUxr>

(7) Youth Political Participation. Available on the link: <t.ly/prWD>

life, which is a complicated and multidimensional challenge that requires dealing with using a number of tools that vary according to the objective and the context.

Looking at the 19th Parliament elections outcomes in 2020, it becomes clear that these elections are considered the lowest in terms of participation. This can be noticed after comparing the participation rate in the 19th parliamentary elections at 29% with those of the 18th elections at 36%. As for youth participation at candidacy or voting levels, it can be said that the rates increased but at a very low rate, with the number of candidates within the age group of 3040- in 2016 reaching 11%.⁽⁸⁾ The ratio of candidates within the same age groups in 2020 reached 13%.⁽⁹⁾ Despite efforts exerted to encourage youth to participate in the elections, we witnessed an increase of 2% only. Most of the young candidates were party members and were there as part of the party funding system.⁽¹⁰⁾

On another note, the average age of candidates for the last parliamentary elections was 51.5 years, with male average age being 52.6 and female average age 47.4 years. Youth in the age group 3039- years were 12.9%, including 10 women and 10 men only who were 30 years of age. This is considered an indication of the low political representation among youth in the parliamentary elections. This becomes clearer when comparing these ratios with other countries. For example, the 2018 parliamentary elections in Sweden were characterized by a high participation ratio on behalf of the youth between 18 and 24 years of age, at a rate of 84.9%. the participation rate of youth between 18 and 29 years of age in Germany in 2017 reached 76.2%.

(8) RASED report on Monitoring Parliamentary Elections 2016. <https://ibit.ly/ST9a>

(9) RASED report on Monitoring Parliamentary Elections 2016. <https://ibit.ly/ST9a>

(10) Political Party Funding System: <https://ibit.ly/K6hh>

Most research and studies related to Jordanian youth showed persistent decrease and poor participation in politics. Youth participation levels in politics as candidates or voters is still poor, with the dominant state of inactivity among youth for candidacy is similar to that related to voting. These results showed no real change although the government and civil society institutions seek to improve and reinforce youth political participation through numerous initiatives and efforts.

One of the developments that the Jordanian government sought was to reduce the legal age for candidacy in the municipal elections. The age has been reduced to 25 years instead of 30. However, the candidacy age in the parliamentary elections is 30 years and above. This in itself, in addition to other factors, represents a huge obstacle before youth participation in the parliamentary elections.

Although recent decades witnessed a number of projects and activities aimed at involving youth by official and civil society institutions, including projects and efforts implemented by Al-Hayat Center-Rased, which leads a coalition to monitor elections, during the last elections, awareness and advocacy campaigns, particularly for the youth, in various forms including trial elections, personal interviews, field visits, and social media campaigns that targeted more than 50,000 young people who participated in implementing these projects with over 3000 young people participating in implementing them, in addition to a number of initiatives and activities implemented by different institutions, many of these initiatives and activities are still effective to this date. However, there is an urgent need to develop the role of the youth and to reinforce their participation in the electoral process.

Challenges and Obstacles Facing Youth Participation in the Elections

Members of the age groups 1725- and 4036- represent the highest where voters were distributed with a total of ratios reaching 56%. These ratios show that the sweeping majority of voters in the 2020 parliamentary elections are young males.⁽¹¹⁾

Understanding and fully comprehending the obstacles and difficulties that limit wide scale participation by the Jordanian youth in the recent parliamentary elections is an important factor in the process to find alternatives and solutions to address the problem of low political participation among youth. Hence, we will address the main challenges facing Jordanian youth in parliamentary elections.

First: Legal and Political Framework

Candidacy Age

The increasing reluctance by youth to participate in politics and practice the right to vote is an issue of concern in particular and contributes to weakening democracy. Hence, it is necessary to reverse the direction and bring youth back to participate in the political and democratic process due to the positive effect on the political participation level and ability to represent all groups and segments of society in line with society's aspirations.

A legal framework (the Election Law) that is favorable for youth represents an important factor in the environment that enables political participation by youth, which in turn identifies the structural rules and conditions for participation. Among the main factors in this field are the minimum voting age and the minimum age for candidacy in elections.⁽¹²⁾ Article 70 of the Jordanian Constitution stipulates that a member of the Lower House "should have completed thirty calendar years of his age,"⁽¹³⁾ the constitution requires the age of 18 calendar years as a

(11) Final report of the outcomes of monitoring the Jordanian parliamentary elections 2020, available on the link t.ly/VByY

(12) Improving Youth Political Participation along the Electoral Cycle, Proper Practices Guide. Available on the link t.ly/7zCJ

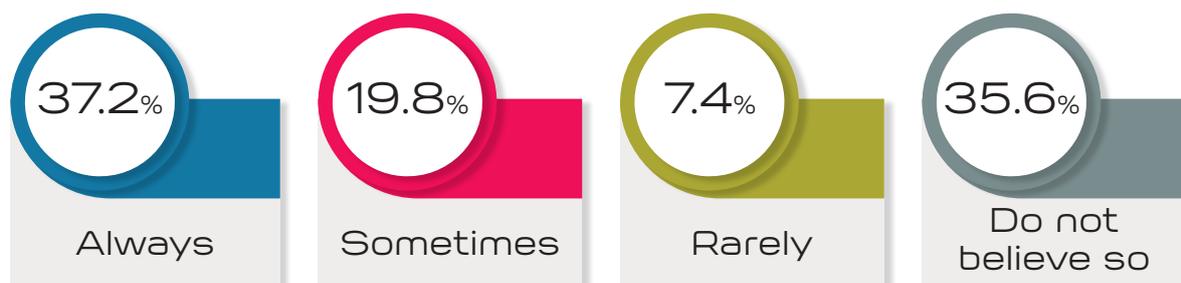
(13) Jordanian Constitution. Available on the link t.ly/FuWA

condition for voting. The Election Law number 6 for the year 2016 stipulated in its article (10-C) that anyone who wants to run as a candidate must have completed 30 calendar years on the election day.⁽¹⁴⁾

The age-group condition for candidacy in the parliamentary elections shows the large difference between it and the age eligibility for voting condition. It shows the presence of a large group of Jordanian youth who are not eligible for candidacy in the parliamentary elections between 18 and 30 years. This leads to widespread discrimination towards a large part of Jordanian youth in practicing the most important of their political rights.

Ideally, Houses of Representatives, being the representative authority in governance, should include all categories. The high age for candidacy involves ignoring the developmental challenges for a large part of society and ignoring its points of view, it leads the youth more towards abstaining from participating in the elections. Hence, the close eligibility for candidacy and voting ages is not only important for youth political participation but is a crucial factor in the representation and legislative nature of the Lower House. This particularly applies to countries which include large numbers of youth such as Jordan where youth form a large ratio of the population. One can deduce that the candidacy age mitigates their enthusiasm towards elections. According to the results of a study on voter tendencies published after the 2020 parliamentary elections 2020, it was evident that 57% of youth believe that restricting candidacy age to 30 years and above mitigates their enthusiasm towards the elections.

The influence of limiting candidacy age on youth participation in the elections



(14) RASED Final Report on Monitoring the Parliamentary Elections 2020 <https://ibit.ly/g0S5>

In the same context, it is necessary to compare between the number of youth who ran for the 2020 parliamentary elections, which was 217 male and female candidates,⁽¹⁵⁾ compared to candidates in the municipal and decentralization elections of 2017, reaching 1110 male and female candidates.⁽¹⁶⁾ This was due to the fact that the Municipalities and Decentralization Law allowed those who reached 25 calendar years of age to run for elections.^{(17) (18)} this is an important indicator and evidence that reducing the candidacy age plays a pivotal role in reinforcing youth desires to participate in the elections as candidates.

Weak Political Parties

It can be asserted here that the weakness of political parties is linked to and affected by the power of the tribes, meaning that the success opportunities for youth candidates who do not belong to a large tribe will be miniscule. Results of the last elections revealed the difficulties faced by political parties. Does it make sense that out of 47 candidates, only four parties win, represented by 12 parliamentarians?⁽¹⁹⁾ since this was along the same lines as what happened in the 2016 elections with 34 members from 11 parties winning seats in the parliament, one can assert that the weakness was structural.⁽²⁰⁾

Additionally, the Jordanian youth joining political parties represents an important yardstick of their participation in political life despite the negative perspective among them towards these parties and joining them as a result of the weak actual role of these parties and the absence

(15) RASED statement on the average age of candidates for municipal and decentralization elections: <https://ibit.ly/5Vqc>

(16) Rased's statement about the average age of male and female candidates in the municipal and decentralization elections: <https://ibit.ly/5Vqc>

(17) Municipalities Law for the year 2015 <https://ibit.ly/kmjV>

(18) Decentralization Law for the year 2015 <https://ibit.ly/gyiM>

(19) RASED statement on the composition of the 19th Council of representatives <https://ibit.ly/hOSg>

(20) Al-Anadol Agency: "Retreat of Jordan's Parties in the Parliament: Popular Conviction or Political Desire?" <https://is.gd/SG0vIY>

of a clear influence by Jordanian political parties in Jordanian political life. In addition, many Jordanian political parties are essentially personal parties rather than parties of the masses. There is also another challenge manifest in Jordanian youth worried that their future would be compromised when joining a political part.⁽²¹⁾ Although there are no legal restrictions preventing youth from joining parties, official dealings, particularly security dealings, adds a kind of insecurity when joining parties, particularly that official universities request students who receive military-children scholarships to sign a pledge not to join political parties. This in itself is a real obstruction and a systematic directive for students not to join parties. Furthermore, some youth are penalized because some of their family members have partisan tendencies. Such students are harassed when applying for security clearance, which influences their participation in the electoral process.

Mandatory Resignation for Candidacy

Based on the Jordanian Election Law, anyone running for the parliamentary elections is required to submit his/her resignation at least 60 days before the elections. The period varies for municipal elections which require the candidate to resign his/her job at least 10 days before. This law intends to prevent the exploitation of positions for achieving electoral gains, in addition to preventing any negligence in performing the position duties during the campaigns. The Jordanian Election Law stipulates that a candidate for the parliamentary elections should not be on a contract with the government or any public institution, or a company owned or controlled by the government, or any official institution. This reinforces the principle of neutrality and avoids conflict of interests.⁽²²⁾

(21) Jordan Journal of Social Sciences, University of Jordan. Yusuf Al-Khataybeh. Available on the link: t.ly/QH1zpdf

(22) Muslih, S. (2017). "Voting and Candidacy as a Political Right of the Civil Servant: Comparative Study." Middle East University (MEU). <https://is.gd/yGqcah> page 12.

The debate here lies in the fact that the resignation requirement aims at fighting corruption and abusing authority, but it represents a deterring obstacle before political participation due to the risk of losing the job for a risky undertaking, resulting in limited candidacy and reduced competition and the desire of candidates who have long experience and who do not wish to take the risk and lose their jobs in addition to losing the elections.⁽²³⁾ This condition poses a more brutal challenge for women since the opportunities available for women to work in the public sector exceed those available in the private sector which is notorious for low representation of women and the presence of a large gap between the salaries of men and those of women.⁽²⁴⁾ What adds to the situation is the economic conditions accompanying the Coronavirus pandemic which deepened the structural weakness and increased social inequality and fragility.⁽²⁵⁾

«Corrupt Money»

The use of «corrupt money» and the spread of buying votes phenomenon are considered a serious challenge to the principle of fair election. Some candidates practice the profession of trade by buying votes, either against cash or a commodity in order to gain votes in his favor. The 2020 elections witnessed, or rather was influenced by, to a large extent, the use of corrupt money and bribes.⁽²⁶⁾ Fifty-one cases of buying votes were registered, and 42 cases were referred to the Public Prosecutor.⁽²⁷⁾ The Independent Election Commission's spokesman Jihad Al-Momani stated that the elections were under risk as a result of bribery and buying votes openly.⁽²⁸⁾

(23) Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2018). Political Participation of Women in Jordan: Obstacles and Opportunities and Gender Sensitivity in Select Political Institutions. <https://is.gd/jZVyyr> page 38.

(24) World Bank (2020), Women in Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. Report number aus0001349, <https://is.gd/ozigHr> page 10.

(25) World Bank (2021): <https://is.gd/iYngsU>

(26) RASED paper (2020): Main results of Monitoring the Parliamentary Elections 2020, page 7.

(27) Ibid.

(28) Al-Arabi Al-Ushu'ie (Weekly Arabi) 2020. "Jordanian Elections were Tainted with Rumors and Dark Money. Observers Do not Expect Large Changes in the Formation of the Upcoming Jordanian Parliament." <https://is.gd/SdzXLI>

According to a report by the National Center for Human Rights on the 2020 parliamentary elections violations were registered of the Elections Law and the executive instructions issued according to it, including influencing voter intentions through the spread of the corrupt political money phenomenon.⁽²⁹⁾

Here, one cannot blame the candidates only, for voters had a role, but the reasons for their participation in these crimes are numerous, including thinking that parliaments are useless and that votes are not counted anyway. Hence, the idea of receiving money for their votes is considered more useful according to them. Yusuf (26 years), sold his vote for JD50 during the 19th Parliament elections, which was his first participation in an election. He explained: "None of them is different. I am a university graduate for three years now and am still unemployed. This JD50 is the best thing I received from these elections."⁽³⁰⁾ It must also be noted that the weakness of parties and the electoral system are among the reasons which encourage candidates to buy votes. There is no doubt that the lack of effective mechanisms to address and reduce such practices led to their spread and to exacerbating the situation.⁽³¹⁾

One of the results of buying votes is their direct negative effect in conducting democratic and transparent elections. Someone who sold his vote cannot demand the person to whom he sold his vote to provide any services or reforms. Here, this phenomenon may become accepted and common in society.⁽³²⁾ This would encourage those who lack the experience and qualifications to become decision-makers.⁽³³⁾

(29) National Human Rights Center report on the parliamentary elections 2020. Available on the link [t.ly/5QmF](https://www.nhrcc.gov.jo/en/5QmF)

(30) 7ibr, on the votes' "market" in the last parliamentary elections: Buyers and Sellers. <https://is.gd/41aMQH>

(31) Muhammad Al-Husseini (2014). Policy Paper. "Social Effect of the Jordanian Electoral System. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung <https://is.gd/OqVuLI>, page 11

(32) Blattman C. et. al. (2016), "Reducing the Incidence of Vote-Buying in Uganda, Innovation for Poverty Actions (2016). <https://is.gd/8mfuia>

(33) Muhammad Al-Husseini (2014). Policy Paper. "Social Effect of the Jordanian Electoral System. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung <https://is.gd/OqVuLI>, page 10 https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/53797/ssoar-elecstud-2014-bank_et_al-Parliamentary_elections_in_Jordan_January.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-elecstud-2014-bank_et_al-Parliamentary_elections_in_Jordan_January.pdf

It should be stressed that the weakness in fighting this phenomenon contributed for citizens in general and youth in particular losing their confidence in the electoral process and the level of their feeling with electoral justice, especially that some of those practicing this phenomenon can be described as rich and have money they can spare for buying votes. This affects the fair opportunities granted to voters and the freedom level of the electoral process. The highest levels of pressure, blackmail, and vote-directing are practiced. We can give the examples of some practices that emerged on the election day, with documented videos appearing of vote buying. As we mentioned above, 42 cases were referred to the Public Prosecutor, but we never saw clear and transparent court decisions, noting that all in cases that were referred for prosecution, the Independent Election Commission submitted evidence and proof. Some cases were never prosecuted, and this contributed to reducing citizen confidence in penalizing perpetrators and reducing this phenomenon which reflects negatively on youth participation in the electoral process.

Lack of Confidence in the Lower House

One of the important issues that reduce youth participation in the parliamentary elections is that Jordanians in general have no confidence in consecutive parliaments or other semi-governmental institutions. Elections in Jordan have nothing to do with ideological programs or agendas, but are connected to opportunities and influence when a parliament seat is won. Hence, it is possible to say according to some citizens' opinions that the Jordanian parliament is ineffective and is present for services only.⁽³⁴⁾

One of the reasons for the lack of confidence is the violations that took place in previous elections, particularly prior to 2013 when there were no voting manuals and the permanent ink system used by the Independent Election Commission recently to avoid voting more

(34) https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/53797/ssoar-elecstud-2014-bank_et_al-Parliamentary_elections_in_Jordan_January.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-elecstud-2014-bank_et_al-Parliamentary_elections_in_Jordan_January.pdf

than once by the same person, in an attempt to preserve the elections' transparency.⁽³⁵⁾ False promises to improve the situation can also be considered one of the reasons that influence the confidence of Jordanians. Most politicians offer false promises to improve the economic conditions, empower women and youth, and reduce unemployment rates, but they fail to actually deliver on their promises.⁽³⁶⁾

There is no doubt whatsoever that the Jordanians' confidence represents a challenge for political participation which includes holding successful elections with a high participation level. In order to ensure suitable and widespread representation that includes women, minorities, and youth, citizens must perceive the elections at its best, without any corruption, fraud, or practices that reduce its compatibility with international standards that govern the electoral process. This can be inferred from the fact that 59% of Jordanians have no or little confidence in the 19th Parliament performance. Furthermore, 80% of Jordanians do not follow or rarely follow the Lower House's news.⁽³⁷⁾

Programs' Poor Ability to Address Challenges

Jordanian youth suffer from scarce representation in state institutions although there are programs run by non-governmental agencies specialized for encouraging youth political involvement. However, youth continue to be very far from actual participation in this field.⁽³⁸⁾

The factors that reinforce this suffering include the lack of employment opportunities, and fear from political participation resulting from norms and traditions in society, in addition to poor coordination, group commitment, and joint understanding between teachers, students, and

(35) https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/2016_ifes_jordan_parliamentary_elections_faqs.pdf.

(36) <https://thearabweekly.com/despite-candidates-promises-jordan-public-disinterested-vote>

(37) Jordanian Indicator Survey Series, Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan <https://ibit.ly/zB7N>

(38) OECD (2018), "Youth Engagement and Empowerment in Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia. Middle East and North Africa. OECD Governance Program. <https://is.gd/B003xn> page 25.

government agencies.⁽³⁹⁾ The lack of interest and participation of youth in political and civil life has become clearer, in addition to an accumulation of frustration and cynicism towards political procedures and politicians over the years, which had a negative effect on their political participation.

The education received by youth at schools and universities affects their upbringing. Education plays a basic role regarding dealing with ethical, civil, social, and political issues. Education also plays an important role when discussing issues related to controversial matters and motivating critical thought, or even encouraging youth to raise the ceiling of their interests and political knowledge.⁽⁴⁰⁾ In Jordan, however, educational curricula lack specialized programs for capacity building. This represents another challenge for youth political participation.⁽⁴¹⁾

The government and donors have failed to plan for what comes after the civil education process, such as creating programs that attend to the real building of youth capacities. We see youth centers in cities outside the capital lacking capacities and the necessary materials.⁽⁴²⁾ Here, it is possible to adopt one of the solutions followed regionally and direct them towards implementing programs that encourage youth participation effectively internally. In Tunisia, the program “Supporting Democratic Elections” was implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) with the aim of increasing youth awareness regarding the electoral process through innovative tools such as songs, games, and other creative campaigns. The program proved to be a success with youth participation rates in the elections reaching over 76%.⁽⁴³⁾ The Turkish “Youth in the Parliament Now” campaign started in 2006 with

(39) Ibid, page 26.

(40) Baret, M. “Young People’s Civic and Political Engagement and Global Citizenship,” <https://is.gd/LPcFC6>

(41) Milton-Edwards, B. (2018). *Marginalized Youth: Toward an Inclusive Jordan*. Brookings Institute. <https://is.gd/ARZQtr>

(42) https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/201806//June-2018_Beverly-Jordan_English-Web.pdf page 5

(43) UNDP (2015). “Reinforcing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle: Youth Political Participation.” <https://is.gd/vh7pr6> page 53

the purpose of reducing the legal age for candidacy in the national elections proved to be successful in that it actually reduced the legal age for running, from 30 to 25 years.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The core issue is to consider youth a basic engine of change and they should be involved in political life.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Second: The Economic Framework

The economic challenge represents one of the main obstacles that hinder Jordanian youth participation in the parliamentary elections where candidacy and voting are concerned, particularly that the electoral campaigns' ceiling which was identified through instructions⁽⁴⁶⁾ by the Independent Election Commission provides a wide space for candidates with economic influence to hold campaigns that are more effective of those by youth, known for being economically weak compared to older candidates. The economic framework involves other obstacles including:

1. Lack of relative job security and the receding benefits received by Jordanian youth from the private sector. This is considered a main reason why young candidates are unable to compete with older candidates with economic influence, particularly if we talk about an income level that can be described as poor. A young candidate cannot conduct an effective electoral campaign in the same way a wealthy person can.
2. High unemployment rates among Jordanian youth.⁽⁴⁷⁾ This could direct youth tendencies towards searching for a job and staying away from participating in the electoral process to ensure their ability to secure a better future that could achieve their aspirations. Hence, political participation in general becomes a low priority for youth.

(44) Jostin, S. (2011). "Youth Playing New Roles in the Turkish Elections." New York Times <https://is.gd/cxKxol>

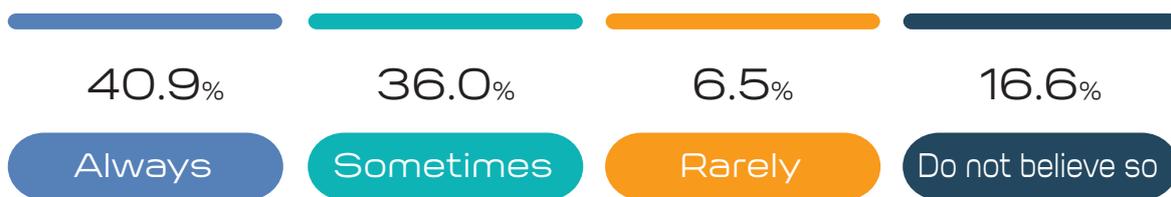
(45) UNDP (2015). "Reinforcing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle: Youth Political Participation." <https://is.gd/vh7pr6> page 8.

(46) Executive instructions on rules of election campaigns: <https://ibit.ly/1oLM>

(47) RAND International: Youth in Jordan: Moving from Education to Employment. <https://tinyurl.com/y9y5e2ot>

3. Lack of youth financial independence from their families and their financial affiliation with their families, which affects their voting behavior and their freedom to vote, or supporting candidates they believe are closer to representing them better. The results of the study carried out by Rased on youth tendencies showed that 40.9% of youth see in their financial independence a freedom for their voting behavior. This shows the major role played by the spending level during the electoral campaign stage which was not fully controlled during the last elections. The attached chart shows the extent to which youth financial independence affects their voting behavior in the elections.

The influence of the financial independence of youth on their voting behavior in the elections



The lack of financial resources necessary for youth to participate in the parliamentary elections results in their inability to bear the burdens and financial costs of managing the electoral campaigns. Furthermore, youth do not have anyone to support them financially or to sponsor their campaigns. For example, some parties sponsored campaigns by youth but were not effective enough. Hence, the absence of financial resources affects youth participation in the electoral process.

Third: Social Framework

Tribal Dimension

It is important to refer to the role played by the tribes when talking about the challenges facing youth. Tribal influence is reinforced by the fact that the Jordanian society is conservative and is founded on paternal social relations, kinship, tribalism, and religious and ethnic groups.⁽⁴⁸⁾ This results, particularly with the absence of political parties and civil institutions over the years, the empowerment of the role of civil institutions represented by the tribes, politically, economically, and culturally in Jordanian societies. Here lies the importance of the role of tribalism, particularly that candidates run individually but rely basically on their tribes. Some candidates who belong to political parties even do not make their party affiliations public when they run out of concern that they may not receive their tribe's support.

One of the traditions and phenomena among many tribes throughout the Kingdom is to perform internal elections prior to the official elections (tribal meetings) to select one candidate to represent them in the parliamentary elections. Many candidates, during the period preceding the elections, take numerous measures and exert efforts to gain votes in the parliamentary elections, increasing their public appearances, reinforce their relations with individuals, and spread their agendas and programs if they existed), in addition to participating in various societal activities.

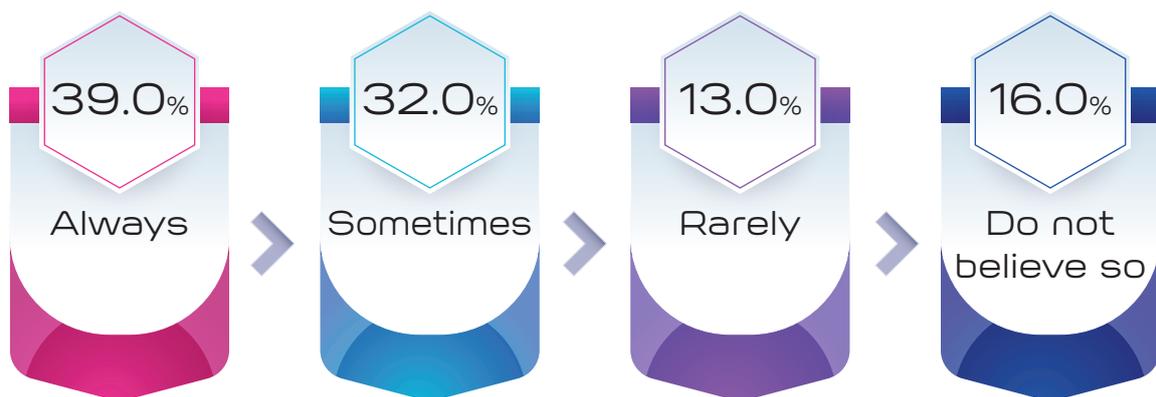
Electoral campaigns in Jordan vary from one location to another depending on the voter's culture, conditions, and social and economic circumstances. There is consensus, however, on the limitations of electoral campaigns in affecting the behavior and selection of individuals when voting. Most likely, the winning candidate is a prominent member of the tribe or an influential person with financial influence, or someone with previous experience in leadership roles in politics or the army, or a person from a family with strong influence such as the son

(48) Alazzam, A. (2008). Political Participation in Jordan: The Impact of Party and Tribal Loyalties since 1989. Doctoral Thesis. Durham University. <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/2183> page 45.

or relative of a tribal leader (Shaikh). This poses a real challenge for youth in their political participation, particularly due to the parliament containing individual members and not members of a strong political party or group.

As part of RASED's study on youth tendencies, results show the extent of the influence of tribal affiliation on youth participation in the 2020 parliamentary elections. 39% of the respondents to the study saw that tribal affiliation always has a negative effect on youth in the parliamentary elections. 13% believed that rarely did the tribal affiliation influence Jordanian youth negatively in the 2020 parliamentary elections.

The influence of tribal affiliation on youth during elections



Religious Dimension

The religious factor and its reflection on the intellectual and political formation of Jordanian youth, and the extent to which they respond to the concept of participating in political life as a whole, and its effect on voting behavior in the parliamentary elections, has a large effect. It contributes to identifying the extent to which youth participate in the elections and how their voting behavior is directed. In most cases, the voting behavior of youth who have religious ideological orientations is towards older people particularly that candidates of these ideologies have a long arm. This requires them to be older, and this affects the opportunities for youth to win seats in the parliament.

According to RASED's study, youth may be attracted in some cases towards candidates who raise religious slogans, making other candidates feel a sense of inequality. Sometimes, some youth may refrain from voting due to some religious beliefs that the candidates do not represent their religious ideologies as the following chart shows:

The influence of the usage of religious slogans for candidates' lists to bring youth votes



The family Dimension

Many youths are subject to the directives and opinions of their fathers at the elections. This is derived from the tribal dimension we mentioned earlier. It affects the independence of the opinions and orientations of some youth, particularly if the youth's opinion is not compatible with that of his father, which reflects on whether the youth participates or not, particularly that, as we saw, 33.5% of Jordanian youth follow their father's opinion when voting, as the following chart shows:

Parents influence on youth when voting in the elections



Recommendations

Based on previous studies and observations of the 19th parliamentary elections held in 2020, Al-Hayat Center-Rased presents the following recommendations to the relevant authorities who are decision-makers and to government agencies to address the issue of poor political participation by youth.

Please treat the following recommendations as tools that relevant authorities can use to ensure youth empowerment and reinforcement through active participation in societal initiatives and political life. They should not be perceived as solutions that can be used to solve various problems.

1. The legal candidacy age for the parliamentary elections should be reduced to ensure that the largest possible number of youth participation. The legal candidacy age for the parliamentary elections, as was mentioned previously, is considered non-representative of Jordanian youth. Hence, the government and the legislative authorities should amend article 70 of the Jordanian Constitution to reduce the legal candidacy age to 25 instead of 30, noting that if this amendment were to take place, it cannot be considered a full representation because it would not include the age group 18-24. However, it is a strong and large step towards ensuring a more comprehensive representation of youth compared to the present situation.
2. The current Political Parties Law must be amended to ensure the participation of youth and women in leadership positions in parties.
3. Youth must be encouraged to participate politically and in civil areas in school and university curricula. Although education levels among the youth in Jordan is high, school and university curricula do not support civil engagement and participation. This is where the role of the Ministry of Education lies in adopting a suitable methodology to be taught in schools and universities to establish a foundation and initiatives that promote civil participation, critical analysis, and political awareness.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Various ministries and civil society institutions are also required to work hand-in-hand and to support teachers to promote the concept of civil engagement among youth starting from an early age⁽⁵⁰⁾ as well as training and awareness

(49) RASED: Jordanian Youth Orientations towards Participation in the Next Elections (2020).

(50) OECD: Youth Engagement and Empowerment in Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia, Middle East and North Africa – OECD Governance Program. <https://is.gd/B003xn> page 13

- activities such as those in Madaba in 2017 in pilot elections in which 23 young men and women participated in a successful endeavor. This result can be utilized to develop this idea.⁽⁵¹⁾
4. The process of managing the elections should be developed to ensure a higher level of transparency, monitoring, and equity. This would increase youth confidence in the electoral process through avoiding cases of using dark money and buying votes. The Election Law must be developed according to the aspirations of the youth. Monitoring elections must be reinforced to ensure its integrity and reinforce youth confidence.⁽⁵²⁾ This can be implemented through using clear deterrent means for anyone who commits such a crime, in addition to reinforcing the monitoring system to observe electoral violations and ensure that they are documented properly to be presented to the legal authorities.
 5. Reinforce and develop party work in universities. There should be a political will that provides Jordanian youth with the opportunities to engage in political parties without subsequent restrictions. Party work must be developed inside the universities to be forums that can be utilized reliably to build young political leaderships.
 6. Cancel the resignation condition for potential candidates. Cancelling the resignation condition contributes to increasing the rate of youth participation particularly if we take into consideration the fear among youth of losing their jobs, and work at finding real alternatives to reduce the exploitation of the position or job.
 7. Create a political will to reduce the phenomenon of buying votes, and establish controls and mechanisms that control corrupt money, which contributes to reinforcing youth opportunities for reaching the parliament and helps reinforce youth opportunities in the electoral process.
 8. Programs are to be compatible with the challenges. Youth programs and the educational system must be reviewed so that they contribute to building youth capacities regarding the electoral process and their interest must be reinforced in political work. Programs implemented should be compatible with the challenges and capable of reducing them to a large extent.

(51) Ibid. page 27.

(52) Ibid

Challenge of Jordanian Women Reaching Parliament

Executive Summary

On the road to reaching the parliament, Jordanian women face many challenges and obstacles that limit their effective participation in the Jordanian political life in general, in addition to the process of women's political empowerment during her participation in various elections. This paper highlights the history of women's participation in the various parliamentary councils, in terms of the number of seats obtained by Jordanian women and the quota system through which seats were allocated to women in the parliament. The paper presents the challenges and obstacles that obstruct women's political participation in the elections, starting with the legal and political framework and including the social framework, which is represented by the cultural nature of the Jordanian society. The paper also views the economic framework, which is related to the Jordanian woman's financial independence and its effect on women's participation in the elections and obtaining seats in the parliament.

Despite the presence of many limitations and obstacles that limit the Jordanian woman's access to the parliament, the paper presents a number of alternatives and solutions, which, if adopted, will help strengthen women's participation in the elections and, in turn, ensure access to the parliament. One of the most important of these solutions is the development of the electoral system in a manner that would ensure genuine access for women to the parliament, in addition to supporting and strengthening women's financial independence, fighting electronic bullying, and working on developing and building the Jordanian women's capacities to provide a suitable environment that enables the Jordanian women from achieving genuine political empowerment.

Introduction

This paper falls within the framework of finding appropriate solutions to the challenges and difficulties related to the Jordanian women's access to the parliament. It seeks to analyze the obstructions that limit the Jordanian women's ability to reach the parliament. The paper adopts a methodology based on desk research, focused on the set of studies issued by Al-Hayat Center-Rased. The paper reviews many of the challenges and obstacles that limit women's participation in the parliamentary elections and obtaining seats in the parliament, particularly if we take into consideration the outcomes of the various parliamentary elections and the percentages of women's seats achieved in them.

The paper is important because it provides alternatives and recommendations that, if adopted by the official agencies, the decision-makers, and the relevant parties, could be used to strengthen the opportunities of women's representation in the parliament, which, in turn, would contribute to overcoming the legal, economic, and social challenges that women face in their participation in the elections.

The paper will address a group of questions related to the limitations that obstruct the Jordanian women's access to the parliament and the alternatives and solutions that strengthen women's participation in the parliamentary elections.

Background

Jordanian women remained outside the circle of actual participation in political life throughout the life of the Emirate. Women did not take part in political life during this stage and consequently were deprived of their political rights for several decades. There were many demands and calls for alleviating women's exclusion from politics. The mid-1950s saw important attempts to change the election law to allow women to engage in politics. At the time, an important transformation took place when the parliament decided to grant women who completed their elementary education the right to vote but not to be nominated. However, after dissolving the parliament and the dismissal of the government of Suleiman Al-Nabulsi, all these decisions made by that parliament were cancelled, including the decision to grant women the right to vote.

Following several calls and demands, women obtained the right to run for and be elected for the Lower House for the first time in 1974 pursuant to the Election Law number 8 of 1974 amending the Election Law number 24 of 1960. Article 2 of the Law stipulated the following: «The term (Jordanian) stated in paragraph (A) of Article (2) of the original law shall be amended by deleting the word (male) therein and replacing it with (male or female).»

After the issuance of this law, the first participation by women in official representative councils was in 1978 in what was called the Consultative National Council at the time. It was a council that was formed by appointment in the years (1978-1984) to fill the constitutional gap that was created when parliamentary life was frozen. The Council went through three terms of two years each but it had no authority to make legislation and it was not entitled to interrogate the government, only to question it. At that time, the King appointed three women to a total of 60 seats: In'am Al-Mufti, Widad Bulos, and Na'ela Al-Rashdan.

As for the actual transformation in political and parliamentary life, it took place with the 1989 elections, when women took part for the first time as a voter and a candidate but it did not get any seat in the 1989 Lower House. In 1993, one candidate won a seat in the Lower House, Toujan Faisal. This was the first time in the history of the country that a woman wins a seat in the parliament. In 1997, no women won any seats, and in 2003, the Election Law of 2001 was amended by a temporary law that introduced a quota system for women. After that, six seats out of a total of 110 seats were allocated for women through the division of electoral districts and these seats for each district.⁽⁵³⁾

The quota system strengthened women's participation in political life. The number of women in the 15th Parliament was seven after MP Falak Al-Jamrani won a seat outside of the quota system. As for the 16th Parliament, there were 12 women, and 18 women in the 17th Parliament, with three of those winning competitively while 15 seats were quota seats out of the total 150 seats.

In the Election Law number 6 of 2016, which was held for the 18th Parliament, Paragraph A of Article 9 of the Law stipulated that «nominations to fill the parliamentary seats of the electoral district are done by means of the open relative list» where the list includes a number of candidates that is not less than three and not more than the seats allocated for the electoral

(53) Article (3/A) of the regulation on electoral districts division and allocated seats for each and its amendments number 42 of 2001 stipulated that «six seats shall be added to the total number of Lower House seats allocated to the electoral districts shown in Article (2) of the original regulation to be dedicated to female candidates in various electoral districts in the Kingdom who won those seats according to the provisions of paragraph (C) of Article 45 of the Lower House Election Law number (34) of 2001.» Article (45) of the Election Law number 34 of 2001 said that stipulated that after completing the sorting of the votes and announcing the final results of the elections in all the electoral districts and presenting them to the minister by the elections central committees according to the provisions of Article 44 of this law, the minister refers to the special committee the minutes of these results to be reviewed and checked for the number of votes received by the female candidates that did not win any of the parliamentary seats in the allocated electoral districts. The special committee will then determine the names of the female winners of the additional seats allocated to the women on the basis of the percentage of the number of votes received by each female candidate out of the total number of voters in the district where she was nominated. By comparing these percentages, the winning female candidate will be the one that receives the highest percentage in all the districts regardless of whether she was Muslim, Christian, Circassian, or Chechen, or from the closed electoral Bedouin districts.

district. The second item of Paragraph D of the same article said that the female candidates for seats allocated to the women must run within lists. As such, the women won 20 seats out of 130 seats, whereby 15 women got their seats through the quota and five women got their seats competitively, giving women in the 18th Parliament 15.3% of the total members.

The elections of the 19th Parliament were also held pursuant to the Election Law number 6 of 2016. Women got 15 seats in line with the quota system stipulated in the law. When comparing the results of the 2016 parliament, we find that no women got any seats competitively, giving women an 11.5% of the total number of seats in 19th Parliament.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Women's quota⁽⁵⁵⁾: The quota system was designed to support to some extent women's participation in the elections. The quota is a Latin term meaning a share. Historically, it was related to what is known as «positive discrimination» and it was first launched in the United States of America to describe the policy of compensating the disenfranchised Black minority in the 1960s, whereby educational institutions were committed to allocated a certain percentage of seats for Black students. The quota is described internationally as special temporary measures aimed at expediting the achievement of actual equity between men and women. These measures must be stopped once the objectives of equity in opportunity and treatment have been achieved.⁽⁵⁶⁾

(54) RASED Final Report on Monitoring the Parliamentary Elections 2020, <https://ibit.ly/g055>

(55) Election Law and the Quota: JafraNews website, no date available, through link: <http://www.jfranews.com.jo/article.php?id=24692>] last visited 13 April 2020

(56) See for example Article 4 of the CEDAW agreement.

The following is a review of the quota system in Jordan:

14th parliamentary elections: Quota system for female candidates was first introduced.

Election Law number 34 of 2001, amended in 2003, a quota for women was done, giving six seats out of the total of 110 seats, or 5.5%.

The 16th Parliament elections in 2010: The election law maintained the one-man one-vote system and increased the total number of seats from 110 to 120, and the quota seats for women was increased from six to 12.

The quota seats for women was increased from 12 to 15 seats in line with the Election Law number 25 of 2012 and its amending law number 28 of 2012. Also, 27 seats for national lists and 108 for local districts were introduced, raising the total number of parliamentary seats to 150.

The 18th parliamentary elections: Election Law number 6 of 2016 lowered the number of parliamentary seats to 130, of which 15 seats were allocated to the women quota.

The following table details women's participation in the parliamentary elections:

Year	Number of Female Candidates	Number of Female Winners	Parliament	Percentage of Women Representation
1974	Jordan women granted right to vote and be nominated		10	
1984	Women participated in complementary elections as voters due to no women candidates		11	
1993	3 of 534 candidates	180/ seats	12	1.25%
1993	12th Parliament elections in 1993: first Jordanian woman enters Lower House			
1997	17 of 561 candidates	080/ seats	13	0%
2003	54 of 819 candidates	6 women quota 6110/ seats	14	5.45%
2007	199 of 885 candidates	6 women quota 1 competitive 7110/ seats	15	6.36%
2010	134 of 763 candidates	12 women quota 1 competitive 13120/ seats	16	10.8%
2013	208 of 1528 candidates	15 women quota 3 competitive 18150/ seats	17	12%
2016	257 of 1252 candidates	15 women quota 5 competitive 20130/ seats	18	15.3%
2020	360 of 1674 candidates	15 women quota	19	11.5%

Challenges Facing Jordanian Women in Reaching the Parliament

Jordanian women constitute approximately 51% of Jordanian society. Through their work and tasks, Jordanian women have contributed to the development of various vital areas in Jordanian society. They have been involved in various sectors and played various roles, including in political life. Jordanian women have succeeded in proving themselves in the various categories and forms of the political scene, whether through elected councils at the local level, such as municipalities and governorate councils, or at the level of councils elected at the national level, such as the Lower House. Women have also proven their presence and ability to reach leadership positions in the executive and judiciary authorities.

Women represented 53% of the total number of voters for the elections of the 19th Jordanian Lower House in 2020, amounting to 4,647,835 with 2,447,379 women.⁽⁵⁷⁾ The percentage of women voters reached 46% of the total number of voters amounting to 1,387,711 and 638,081 women.⁽⁵⁸⁾ In the 2016 parliamentary elections, the percentage of women was 53% of the total number of 413,0145 voters, with 218,8578 women. The percentage of women voters was 48% of the total number of voters amounting to 149,2400, with 716,716 women. In the 2013 parliamentary elections, the percentage of women was 51% of the total number of voters which amounted to 227,2182 and 1178864 women. The percentage of women voters was 49% of the total number of voters, which amounted to 128,8043 and 630,501 women.

Despite all the successes that women have achieved at various levels, they still face many challenges and obstacles that prevent them from reaching decision-making positions in greater proportions, especially electoral positions. Jordanian women can be merited for proving their ability to get out of the quota challenge and reach the Lower House in particular without the quota allocation. This started in 1993 with the arrival of one woman without a quota and ended with the 18th Parliament when they won five seats by competition.

(57) The Independent Election Commission, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/y7v5cytv>

(58) Ibid.

The presence of women in leadership positions, such as being members of the Jordanian parliament, may help them detect many challenges. This could happen through their candidacy for parliamentary elections, their work in parliament, their presence in permanent office positions or within permanent committees or parliamentary coalitions. They could also detect issues when communicating with electoral bases in general. They also experience these challenges themselves in their capacity as Members of Parliament. Following are the challenges that women face on the way to parliament:

One: Legal and political challenges:

Political awareness

This challenge appears in Jordanian women's need for more political awareness through joint action among various societal and official organizations. Naturally, enhancing women's contribution falls within the responsibility of the state, government and legislative authority. Additionally, a role is played by parties, trade union organizations, professional bodies, civil society organizations, and all the democratic forces that believe in the necessity of upgrading the roles of women. These entities believe in expanding the scope of women's contribution to political life in its general and comprehensive senses.⁽⁵⁹⁾ The issue of women's political empowerment and enhancing their effective participation in political work is still noticeably deficient and has not gained much attention on the agendas of political parties or government institutions around the world. This is due to the prevailing social reality and the consolidation of the inferior view of women. The participation of women in political life appears as a national necessity since they represent half of the society. They take on life tasks with men, and their political participation is one of the most important manifestations of democracy.⁽⁶⁰⁾ The

(59) Muhammad Al-Miqdad, *Women and Political Participation in Jordan*, available at: <http://repository.aabu.edu.jo/jspui/handle/123456789538/>

(60) Ala' Al-Rawashdeh, *Obstacles Limiting Jordanian Women's Participation in Political Life*, available at: <https://journals.ju.edu.jo/DirasatHum/article/viewFile/74686862/>

absence of the political participation of Jordanian women is not only due to legal obstacles,⁽⁶¹⁾ but is also due to structural and cultural obstacles that prevent equality between men and women. Jordanian women have a low level of awareness of the importance of participating in elections.

The quota system

The quota system poses a challenge because it determines the number of seats allocated for the women's quota by the election law, which divides these by governorates. It would have been more appropriate to distribute quota seats at the level of electoral districts, which would greatly contribute to enhancing the presence of women in the Lower House. The weak participation of women in political parties leads to their weak engagement in political work in general and hinders the formulation of ideas that benefit them if they should wish to participate in parliamentary elections.

The ability to form lists

Jordanian women face another challenge in the process of forming the existing electoral list. A study conducted by Al-Hayat Center-Rased on the experience of women candidates for the 2020 parliamentary elections shows that 30% of them took the initiative to form lists. The percentage of those who did not take the initiative to form lists reached 70%.⁽⁶²⁾ These percentages show that women do not have a real role in forming the candidate electoral list. Traditionally, the list is formed by men and then a search for a woman is conducted to be added to the list. On the other hand, women who have a mass and large presence in their communities find it difficult to form a list because the male candidates fear that women candidates might win the seat by competition, and this leaves men out of the competition.

(61) Hussein Al-Othman, Obstacles in the Way of Jordanian Women's Political Participation, available at: <https://women.jo/~women/sites/default/files/SystemAssets/75c8f393-b63f-4f879-c27-ea3e29bd9cc6>, doc

(62) Rased, The Gendered Experience of Women Candidates for the 19th Parliament, available at <t.ly/l6a3>

Previous practices of women parliamentarians

Previously, there were some negative practices by some women parliamentarians: These included their poor performance and the fact that they did not adopt women's issues. These are challenging to any woman who wants to run for parliamentary elections, and this leaves a negative impression of women and constitutes an unfair legacy for them. These practices also lead to weakening the support of women in their candidacy and reduces their chances at success in the elections. A study conducted by Al-Hayat Center-Rased on the attitudes of Jordanian women towards the 2020 parliamentary elections showed that 71.2% of women believe that the good performance of women parliamentarians contributes to enhancing votes for women candidates.⁽⁶³⁾

Two: Social and cultural challenges

Patriarchal societies

The most prominent social and cultural obstacles are due to patriarchal norms that dictate certain perceptions about women's participation in the political, economic and social arenas. Patriarchal societies that are dominant in the Arab region usually attach less value to the contribution of women to public life than they do to men's work. This clearly affects the political participation of women in general. Consequently, their interest in political issues and in elections decreases,⁽⁶⁴⁾ which leads to the reluctance of women in most cases to positively participate in political and electoral life and to be satisfied with their traditional roles.⁽⁶⁵⁾ This leads to anchoring the patriarchal trend and the belief that men are better able to make general political decisions than women. It also promotes male political spaces at the expense of the political space available to women.

(63) Rased, A Study of Jordanian Women's Attitudes towards the Upcoming Parliamentary Elections in 2020, available at t.ly/xlzi

(64) The United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Political Representation of Women in the Arab Region, available at: [file:/// C: / Users / Lenovo / Downloads / women-political-representation-arab-region-arabic, pdf](file:///C:/Users/Lenovo/Downloads/women-political-representation-arab-region-arabic.pdf)

(65) Fatima Boudirham, Women's Political Participation and Empowerment, available at: [http:// dspace, univ-msila, dz: 8080 / xmlui / handle / 12345678911987/? show = full](http://dspace.univ-msila.dz:8080/xmlui/handle/12345678911987/?show=full)

Stereotyping women

The stereotypical image of women is that they are unable to fulfill their responsibilities regarding political decisions, in managing public affairs or in participating in political and legislative decision-making processes. According to this stereotype, these roles do not correspond with the roles already entrenched in the minds of people, which are limited to raising children and managing household affairs. Men from the same family do not accept that women can participate in public life in general and in political life and elections in particular. For example, some husbands do not accept that their wives participate in the elections, whether by running or voting.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Religious interpretations

The influence of religion appears in the intellectual and political perception of women and the extent of their response to the idea of participating in political life as a whole. It also impacts their voting behavior in the elections. Furthermore, some religious interpretations consider the woman's voice to be a source of shame and that women should not leave the house. Therefore, they are not allowed to participate in the political life of the community.

Tribal consensus

Some practices promote gender discrimination in society and even within some political entities and arenas through the emergence of the phenomenon of tribal consensus. This is a practice conducted during elections to choose a single candidate who represents the clan in parliamentary elections. This practice holds despite the emphasis on the need for the candidate to have an electoral program upon which the person runs. It has been observed that women are not involved in the process of selecting a "consensus" or a "clan" candidate. This limits the ability of women to choose their representatives. Additionally, women are not even invited to the selection meeting.

(66) Rased, A Qualitative Study on How Women Members of Municipalities View the Challenges Facing Jordanian Women in Jordanian society, available at: [<http://www.hayatcenter.org/uploads/201820180107132351/01/ar.pdf>] last visited 15 May 2020

Three: Economic challenges

Financial independence and women's financial ability

Many studies show that women progressed in the field of education and declined in the political field and in decision-making due to their economic dependence on men. This is also due to their weak participation in the Jordanian labor market. Therefore, Jordanian women cannot bear the financial burdens of the candidacy process. Electoral campaigns are costly and need funds even if the woman candidate works and has a reasonable income. Women cannot risk their jobs for parliamentary candidacy because this is not a guaranteed position.⁽⁶⁷⁾ The lack of financial dependence from their families and their financial dependence on their own families and husbands affect women's voting behavior. This can be overcome through the economic empowerment of women, reducing the wage gap between genders and increasing job opportunities for women in a way that achieves equality.⁽⁶⁸⁾ This is in addition to limiting the phenomenon of buying votes and the use of corrupt money, that is money used to buy votes and to influence the electoral process in a dishonest way. This use of money has a clear negative effect on the course of the electoral process and its outcomes.

The financial dependence of women is a pivotal factor in limiting their involvement in public work and political life. The financial capability of women is far less than men's, which leads to limiting women's candidacy for parliamentary elections because they are unable to match what men spend over election campaigns. According to a study conducted by Al-Hayat Center-Rased, 74.1% of women see that their financial independence would liberate their voting behavior⁽⁶⁹⁾ and economic reliance on men.

(67) Ala' Al-Rawashdeh, Obstacles Limiting Jordanian Women's Participation in Political Life, available at: <https://journals.ju.edu.jo/DirasatHum/article/viewFile/74686862/>

(68) Huwayda Adli, The Political Participation of Women, Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, available at: https://www.fes-egypt.org/fileadmin/user_upload/images/Political_women_final_for_Web_252018-3-.pdf

(69) Rased, A Study of Jordanian Women's Attitudes towards the Upcoming Parliamentary Elections in 2020, available at t.ly/xlzi

The impact of the economic situation on women

Women are affected by the decline in the economic situation in any country in which they live and this directly affects their participation in the electoral process. Women's priorities change radically when they do not have an economic position that is supportive and motivating to participate in the electoral process. This in itself constitutes a challenge in the ability of women to compete against men in the electoral process.

Economic solidarity

The electoral process does not show economic solidarity with women as it does with men. The members of the tribe or people from the region show solidarity with male candidates, but the level of solidarity is lower if the candidate is a woman. This limits women's opportunities to compete and spend money over election campaigns. It also reduces their chances of reaching parliament and elected councils.

Four: Media challenges and access to the community

Dealing with the media

Women clearly fail to make use of the media and its role in raising awareness through social media sites despite the widespread use of social media platforms by them. These media can encourage and motivate Jordanian women to participate in parliamentary elections; therefore, they must be used to encourage women to play a political role and participate in the elections by voting and running for elections. Social networking sites have an important and essential role in transmitting information, presenting profiles and forming trends of political orientation.⁽⁷⁰⁾ They also play an essential role in the process of forming political concepts and are a great source that provide Jordanian women with different political experiences through which public opinion is formed. They also contribute to the process of persuading women to abandon the

(70) The Role of Social Media in Shaping Political Awareness, Al-Manar Magazine, Al al-Bayt University, Sayel Sarhan, available at: <http://repository.aabu.edu.jo/jspui/handle/123456789119/>

negativity that has become a distinctive feature of the majority of women in Jordanian society. Women's lack of experience in dealing with the media limits their access to society. On the other hand, men have more experience due to their involvement in public work. Additionally, traditional media play a role in stereotyping women, and this limits the media's interaction with women and constitutes a major challenge to the integration of women in political work.

Cyberbullying directed towards women

A crucial challenge faces Jordanian women in the form of cyberbullying through the use of social media; women suffer from cyberbullying when using social media sites due to offensive comments or sarcastic phrases directed at them. In Jordan, it is not possible to discuss such topics or to admit them easily. Since election campaigns are carried out via social media, women candidates were exposed to a significant extent of cyberbullying.⁽⁷¹⁾

A study prepared by Al-Hayat Center-Rased shows that 42.1% of the women active in political and public work have been subjected to cyberbullying, and 60.4% of women feel victimized by cyberbullying targeted at them on social media.⁽⁷²⁾ This affects women's participation in the electoral process negatively and weakens the quality of participation, whether by election or candidacy.

(71) (SIGI) (2020), "An Eye on Women": A Program for Monitoring the 2020 Elections from a Gendered Perspective, <https://www.sigi-jordan.org/?p=8791>

(72) Results of a Study on Cyberbullying Directed at Women, Hayat Center, Rased: <https://ibit.ly/As7V>

Recommendations for enhancing women's opportunities in parliamentary elections

Those following women's participation in political life in general and in the elections in particular believe that recommendations must be made at various levels. We believe that civic efforts must be strengthened and enhanced to support the participation of Jordanian women in political life. Following are recommendations that can benefit the decision maker and the concerned entities:

One: Recommendations related to the procedures for women's participation in elections

1. Observing elections from the perspective of gender must be enhanced, especially that the Jordanian civil experience in observing elections in general is a model at the regional level. However, conducting this process from the perspective of gender must be developed according to qualitative and quantitative scientific methodologies that pinpoint challenges and difficulties facing women in particular. Suggestions that are consistent with the Jordanian reality should be made.
2. It is imperative that election campaigns be monitored from the perspective of gender and that gaps between women and men candidates be measured through the disbursement mechanism, the amount of money flowing to them and how these funds are spent. The monitoring process must include clear indicators about women's ability to spend during election campaigns. The sources of their funding must be detailed in order to reveal the gaps between the funding of men and women candidates. This is in addition to other indicators related to the electoral campaigns.
3. During the electoral process, it is necessary to monitor the behavior of women candidates and their ability to reach voters to elicit whether there are equal opportunities for media access and direct access to voters. Moreover, it is important to note if fairness between men and women candidates is achieved. This must be done through devising forms

with questions that can be answered through direct observations and through inquiries directed to the candidates themselves.

4. It is necessary to monitor the quality of women candidates and their ability to interact politically with the public. It would help to know whether they benefited from any training on developing skills related to the electoral process.
5. The electoral programs submitted by men and women candidates should be observed through the perspective of gender. The extent to which these programs and data support gender issues in general should be assessed. An analysis of the extent of support provided in these programs to women's issues and their political participation in particular should be conducted as well.
6. Specialized and qualitative studies on the issue of political violence against women should be conducted to determine the outcomes and results. Proposals and recommendations that help to limit political violence against women should also be made.
7. Qualitative indicators that monitor and observe women's participation in all electoral stages should be developed, and detailed results during each electoral stage should be presented. Recommendations and suggestions should be set in order to enhance women's participation in various stages.
8. Confronting the cyberbullying that women are subjected to on social media by educating female candidates and elected officials on the legally available means for this purpose.
9. Implementing and preparing qualitative studies on electoral violence against women, especially during the electoral campaign stage.
10. Preparing evaluation reports on the national human rights plan and implementing an approach with the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) that is approved by the government regarding women's political participation.
11. Developing a permanent electronic platform for receiving women's opinions on a permanent basis and providing them with advice and guidance on a continuous basis.

Two: Recommendations to stimulate women's participation in elections

1. Raising women's awareness through workshops and courses based on the needs and priorities of women.
2. Raising the capabilities of women through international and local knowledge and cultural exchange programs
3. Conducting periodic interviews with women candidates for parliament and former women members to enhance the ability of future women candidates to work in parliament and gain experience from their peers
4. Developing participatory work between parliament and civil society organizations based primarily on programs targeting Jordanian women
5. Activating the role of civil society organizations in supporting women and developing programs for political empowerment through training courses and workshops, and following up on the outputs of training workshops
6. Enhancing the media's interest in women candidates for parliament by building channels of communication between these women and the media
7. Motivating the media to prepare and present targeted programs directed at society to address the stereotypical image of women and to gain the support of communities in supporting women
8. Including men in training workshops directed at women in order to change the patriarchal culture ingrained in them and to enhance their confidence in women's roles
9. Designing long-term programs for women in such a way that would contribute to raising their capabilities in and knowledge of political work in general and of elections in particular, in addition to implementing simulated procedures inside parliament
10. Implementing training programs for Jordanian women who intend to run for elections on the following: the internal system of the Lower House, the constitution and on the roles assigned to these in addition to training sessions on using oversight tools

11. Increasing the funding of women in politics and those who belong to parties, especially those running for elections
12. Building the capacities of civil society organizations, especially those concerned with women and to involve them as local and international observers who have an active role in monitoring the elections
13. Designing accountability mechanisms to track the work of parliament from the perspective of gender

Three: Recommendations on raising awareness and capacity-building:

1. Raising the awareness of the community, the relevant authorities and stakeholders in order to focus on the role of women as candidates just like the men candidates
2. Work should be done to change the stereotypical image prevalent in society about the concept of the “quota candidate” because this discriminates against women
3. Developing strategies and formulating clear policies in order to achieve genuine political and economic empowerment of women.
4. Organizing workshops and awareness campaigns for women in different parts of the kingdom to educate them about the importance of their political participation
5. Work should be done to reduce the negative impact of tribal norms and traditions affecting women’s participation in political life
6. Enhancing women’s ability to make decisions related to their independent political participation by supporting the financial independence of women candidates. This has a significant impact in making independent political decisions.
7. Raising awareness in society about the importance of involving women more in public work and in political participation in order to enable them to attain decision-making positions
8. Continuing to implement capacity building programs to enhance women’s capabilities in leadership skills and in public work to boost their political participation

9. Implementing capacity building programs for newly-joining women parliamentarians on the internal system of parliament and parliamentary work, how to enact laws and legislation and oversight mechanisms available to parliament
10. Building dialogue with clan leaders in order to urge the adoption of a greater role for women and not to discriminate against them in the tribal elections that are held before the parliamentary elections to choose the clan candidate
11. Establishing a line to receive the complaints of women candidates and women in the Lower House about any cyberbullying they may experience. These complaints would be documented, and the competent and concerned authorities will be consulted to solve and address them.
12. Implementing special training sessions for women on communication and dealing with the media. Sessions will be dedicated to building women's capabilities in dealing with the camera, how to dress for it and how to announce news in addition to sessions on the art of public speaking.
13. Developing the educational system so that it explicitly states the importance of political work and the involvement of women in it.
14. Conducting sessions for Members of Parliament on the media and mechanisms for dealing with social media as well as building women's capacity to use social media platforms for advocacy/ mobilization and community access

Four: Recommendations on the electoral law and the quota law:

1. The election law and the women's quota system need a comprehensive revision to achieve a fair representation of women in Jordanian society and to achieve sustainable development. This is in addition to the adoption of a quota seat for each electoral district instead of a seat for each governorate.
2. In the event that the quota system is not developed, it can be replaced by the gender sequencing system or what is known as the "zipper list method" at the level of local and

national lists. This mechanism stipulates that local and national lists running for elections include women candidates: There should be no sequence/ series with two consecutive members of the same sex on the list. This means that if candidate No. (1) on the list is male, then candidate No. (2) should be female. Then, candidate No. (3) would be male while candidate No. (4) would be female and so on. By following this system and after increasing the number of seats allocated to the general electoral district, an adequate minimum level of female representation in the Jordanian house of representatives would be ensured.

3. Developing the Political Parties Law to and the development of political party structures to ensure the genuine empowerment of Jordanian women at the level of Jordanian political parties and their leaders.
4. Ensuring the mainstreaming of the perspective of gender in all party policies

Five: Recommendations on economic empowerment:

1. Supporting women's economic empowerment through establishing business incubators, encouraging investment and supporting small projects to create job and employment opportunities for women
2. Providing financial support and enhancing the financial independence of women to ensure more participation in the elections and to enhance their ability to finance their electoral campaigns
3. Enhancing women's economic projects to enable them to attain financial independence

The Participation of Political Parties in the Jordanian Parliamentary Elections, 2020

Who Bears the Responsibility: Citizens or the Parties?

Executive Summary

Jordanian political parties face many factors that limit their active participation in Jordanian political life, in general. These also limit the political representation process through participation in the various elections, in particular. This paper provides an overview of the history of the establishment of Jordanian political parties and the laws governing their work. It also provides an overview of election laws on the basis of which parliamentary elections were held. The paper uncovers a set of challenges that hinder the participation of political parties in elections, starting with the legislative framework regulating the work of Jordanian parties as well as the constitutional texts related to political parties, the nature of the Jordanian electoral system and its impact on party work, and the effect of using corrupt money on the ability of the parties to secure seats in parliament.

The paper discusses the set of legislations and the status of practices that limit the participation of Jordanian political parties and their connection to parliament and the elected councils. It also tackles the content of the king's Discussion Papers and their role in promoting the process of democratic transformation through the development of Jordanian political parties on a methodical basis. Additionally, the paper addresses the nature of political parties and their impact on party work in terms of the principle of the devolution of power, transparency, disclosure and the true representation of youth and women within the structure of these parties. It also touches on the social and tribal frameworks and the quality of awareness programs aimed at encouraging young people to join political parties while ensuring the right to freedom of opinion, expression and assembly.

Despite the many limitations and obstacles that limit the participation of Jordanian political parties in elections, the paper proposes a set of recommendations and solutions. If adopted, these would contribute to enforcing the work of political parties and would enhance their

participation in the various elections. The most important of these recommendations is the development of the electoral system in order to promote democratic development and electoral reform. This would be achieved by setting up an alternative electoral system that meets the requirements of political development for the various components of the local political scene. It would also divide the kingdom into local electoral districts that are bigger in range than their current status and would strengthen the independence of the Independent Election Commission.

The paper recommends that the legislation governing party work should be developed by basing this on stakeholder consultations and by reaching a consensus formula. This would ensure the stability of legislation without modifying it within a short period of time. The paper also emphasizes the dire need to develop the Political Parties Law to ensure the effectiveness of party work. Moreover, the paper stresses the need to amend the constitution to include an explicit provision to ensure that the parties attain power. Lastly, legislation should be set to criminalize those who hold parties and people affiliated with them accountable.

Introduction

One of the biggest challenges and obstacles facing Jordanian political parties is their inability to attract a sufficient audience of Jordanian citizens in general and Jordanian voters in particular. This hinders the ability of parties to reach an adequate number of seats in parliament and other elected councils such as municipalities and governorate councils.

Throughout various stages in Jordan's history, the sets of legislation regulating the work of political parties were amended. It has been noted that the level of party work in Jordan varied over different periods of time: In the fifties of the last century, these parties were active and managed to attract a voting audience and to obtain parliamentary seats. The following period state was not as successful, however: This started in the nineties especially and stretched to the current period of the era of the Jordanian. Since then, political parties have been living in a crisis that keeps developing despite the several amendments that have been made to the legislative system that regulates its work. These were not sufficient to contribute to developing the ability of these parties to attract the electorate as required. Therefore, their ability to secure seats in parliament and elected councils was also impacted negatively.

This paper answers a set of questions regarding the effectiveness of party work and the reasons associated with this problem. In addition, it addresses the challenges and obstacles facing the work of political parties in Jordan and how their work can develop in such a way to turn them into parties with attractive ideologies. This should make them effective and capable of taking the lead in the Jordanian political scene in general and in elections in particular.

This paper adopts a research methodology based on the results of the observations made by Rased of the 2013, 2016, and 2020 parliamentary elections. It is also based on the results of the study of the orientations of Jordanian parties conducted by Rased during the stage

of running for the last parliamentary elections in 2020. Direct interviews with different stakeholders were held, especially with party members and through telephone calls with a random sample representing the electorate. The paper based its content on the results of the monitoring process, which included 3000 observers who were distributed over polling centers and voting rooms. They filled out forms through the direct observation of the course of the electoral process.

Background

Political parties started their work in Jordan before the declaration of the establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan in 1921 and after the end of World War I. Some Jordanians joined the Syrian Independence Party, and when the Emirate of Transjordan was established, a branch of this party was established in Jordan. Some of its members participated in the first Jordanian government headed by Rashid Tle'i'e in 1921.⁽⁷³⁾ In 1927, the first Jordanian party known as the Jordanian Democratic People's Party was established: This was the first Jordanian party that called for the election of a house of representatives and the formation of a government that would be responsible towards it. Then, other political parties and movements appeared. These include the Muslim Brothers' movement in 1943; the Jordanian Arab Party or the National Front; the Jordanian People's Party; the Jordanian Communist Party; the Liberation Party; the Arab Nationalist Movement; and the National Socialist Party. This party formed what was then called the national government in 1956. The first Political Parties Law for the Jordanian state was issued in 1956,⁽⁷⁴⁾ but this did not last long, as the Lower House was dissolved in 1957, and partisan and political activity ceased. Party work was banned for various reasons, and martial law⁽⁷⁵⁾ in the country was declared until 1989.

When a new Political Parties Law was passed in 1992, political life was restored, and the political parties returned to work openly in the Jordanian arena. At the time, there were around twenty Jordanian parties, classified over four currents: The nationalist parties were made up of four parties while the religious parties included two in addition to the Muslim Brotherhood. Additionally, the left-wing parties covered five parties, including parties that extended to those

(73) History of Political Parties, Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs

(74) Dirasat Journal: Human and Social Sciences, Volume 39, Issue 2, 2012, available at <https://journals.ju.edu.jo/DirasatHum/article/viewFile/32442812/>

(75) Martial law means issuing laws when the civil authority in the state is exceptionally subject to the military authority. This is enforced when the country faces aggression or when the civil administration fails to conduct the government's business

operating in the Palestinian arena, and finally, the centrist parties covered nine parties.⁽⁷⁶⁾ These parties participated in the 1993 elections despite the controversy surrounding the election law known as the law of “the single vote,” that is one vote per voter. This is considered a tool to limit the role of political forces, including the parties. The Islamic Action Front won and secured 16 seats, and the number of representatives representing the remaining parties reached 29 at a percentage of 36.25% of the members of parliament.⁽⁷⁷⁾

In 2012, a new Political Parties Law was approved while also a new elections law was approved by the Lower House. Fourteen Jordanian political parties participated in the elections that took place in 2013. Four parties boycotted those elections, and seven parties won 10 out of 27 seats designated for the national list through 11 national lists. This was equivalent to 18% of the total number of national lists through 204 male and female candidates.⁽⁷⁸⁾

According to a local study,⁽⁷⁹⁾ the parties won 20 parliamentary seats during the 2013 parliamentary elections. After deducting the national district seats from the total number of members of the Lower House, this rate was 16.2% of the total number of district seats. Comparing the percentage of seats obtained by the parties of the two districts revealed that the capacity of the parties almost doubled in the general district; the percentage of party representative seats in this district reached 33.3% while party seats across the local districts reached 16.2%.

(76) Muhammad Masalha, *The Political Party Experience in Jordan: A Comparative and Analytical Study*, Wael Publishing House, Amman, 1999

(77) Muhammad Masalha, *The Political Party Experience in Jordan: A Comparative and Analytical Study*, Wael Publishing House, Amman, 1999

(78) *The Impact of the Election Law on the Participation of Jordanian Parties in the 2013 Parliamentary Elections*, Dr. Saleh Khawaldeh

(79) *The Impact of the Electoral District System on the Participation of Political Parties in the 2013 Parliamentary Elections*, Dr. Osama Tleilan

It is worth noting that the 2016 parliamentary elections witnessed the participation of all political parties and currents, as the number of participating parties was 39. This accounted for 78% of the total number of parties.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Eleven parties declared their desire to participate through elections only. Eleven parties reaped 38 out of 253 parliamentary seats for party candidates.⁽⁸¹⁾

The momentum of partisan competition between electoral districts varied widely, with the third district in Irbid registering the highest party presence through candidates at 41% of the total number of candidates for that district. The fifth district in Amman also registered the highest in the number of party candidates in the kingdom. According to the secretaries-general of the parties, there were 27 party candidates who were distributed over 8 electoral lists, and no party candidates were present in the central Bedouin district.

41 political parties out of 48 licensed parties ran in the 2020 parliamentary elections. 6 parties participated without candidates while one party boycotted the elections. The number of party candidates reached 397, that is 24% of the original total number of candidates. The parties won 12 parliamentary seats out of a total of 130 seats in parliament.⁽⁸²⁾

(80) Up to the period of running for the 2016 parliamentary elections, the number of political parties licensed by the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs reached 50

(81) Hayat Center Report, On the Results of the 2016 Parliamentary Elections

(82) Hayat Center, Rased Report On the 2020 Parliamentary Elections, available at t.ly/jKWT

The Root of the Problem in Partisan Participation in Elections

Controversy arises continuously about the origin of the problem regarding the ability of political parties to attract the electorate as well as on their ability to reach parliament and other elected councils. In this discussion, some people hold the political parties responsible using different reasonings. Others hold Jordanian citizens responsible and consider them unresponsive, tribal in mentality and lacking in belief in party work. This controversy has not been resolved, and people interpret it based on their interests and wishes.

The problem has direct and indirect factors. These were revealed through in-depth research, the experience of the Rased team that monitored the elections from 2007 to 2020, and through the preparation and publication of many reports that formed the basic material for the development of this paper. Some of these problems were given great weight while some were ignored and were not given enough importance or sufficient discussion, dialogue or research. Perhaps the most important of these factors are the following:

One: The legal and constitutional framework regulating the work of political parties

The legislative framework is the most important factor that can stimulate the work of political parties in any country. In Jordan, this framework has been unstable and underwent many changes some of which were considered a restriction on the work of parties. One researcher considers that "limiting the minimum number of founders is a flagrant violation of the constitution, international conventions and charters. It aims to restrict the right of citizens to organize themselves into parties, regardless of their number. It also aims to place obstacles in order to reduce the number of working parties. This violates the rights of citizens in choosing ideas or parties they find the most trustworthy and that are best able to represent their

aspirations, goals and ambitions when the choices are plenty.”⁽⁸³⁾ Concerning party financing systems, the Secretary-General of the National Constitutional Party states that instructions are set in such a way that would not support party participation in the elections. He says that the amount of financial support is not enough for a single candidate to run in the elections and finance his electoral campaign, let alone when a party participates with a number of candidates. This amount does not constitute any real contribution to party election campaigns.⁽⁸⁴⁾ It is clear from the aforementioned that we are still in a state of constant debate over the causes of the decline in party work. This brings us back to square one in solving the problem, which is a legal or executive problem or one that has a different origin.

The Jordanian constitution adopted representative democracy that outweighed the rest of the authorities. In discussing the amendments required to develop legislation to enhance party work, the party issue was mentioned in the Jordanian constitution in Article (16) in the text stating that Jordanians have the right to form associations and political parties.⁽⁸⁵⁾ Under the constitution, people exercise their will as an actual authority only through parliament. Therefore, partisanship cannot play a role if pluralism in the country is to be adopted unless it exists in parliament. This means that partisanship is a mediating mechanism between the people and parliament in the electoral process.⁽⁸⁶⁾ This is why we see that the Political Parties Law is based upon the election law. There is nothing in the text of the constitution clearly related to the role of political parties in forming the government, which in itself constitutes a direct limitation of the participation of political parties in the elections. This is also set against the background that parties will not have a role guaranteed by the constitution and the law in the process of their involvement in forming the government when this is the natural and

(83) Dr. Fawzi Ali Al-Samhour, A Reading of the Party Bill: <https://ibit.ly/7ZP2>

(84) Press Material on Party Financing by the government: <https://ibit.ly/fe56>

(85) The Jordanian Constitution, available at: t.ly/ca1S

(86) The Jerusalem Center for Political Studies, Ahmad Al-Shunnaq, Secretary-General of the National Constitutional Party, available at: t.ly/2VuW

existential goal of political parties. The constitutions of countries that have systems similar to the Jordanian system of government, such as the Kingdom of Morocco, provide a useful comparison. Article (47) of the constitution of the Kingdom of Morocco states, “The king appoints the head of government from the political party that was ahead of the elections of the members of the Lower House and on the basis of election results.”⁽⁸⁷⁾ Article (89) of the Tunisian constitution also states, “The president of the republic assigns the candidate of the party or the electoral coalition that secures the largest number of seats in the Assembly of the Representatives of the People, to form the government within a month, to be renewed once.”⁽⁸⁸⁾ We find the success of the Moroccan and Tunisian experiences alike in the process of strengthening and enhancing the political participation of parties within the constitutional framework of the state by forming governments through political parties within their parliaments.

The legislative framework of the election law is favorable to political parties. It is a central factor in forming an environment that enables political parties to participate in elections through which the rules and structural conditions for participation are determined. The existence of an appropriate legal framework is a motivating and reinforcing factor for the work of political parties in any country. In Jordan, the legislative framework governing the electoral process witnessed more than one change. The factor that affected partisan work the most negatively was the adoption of the single vote system since 1993, which directly contributed to the growth of branching and regional identities at the expense of the national political identity. One of the challenges facing party work is the narrowing of electoral districts according to election laws, which contributed to directing votes towards the candidates who have tribal or regional bases. On the other hand, the chances of the candidates on a party basis were reduced when compared to the remaining candidates.

(87) The Moroccan Constitution, available at t.ly/s28V

(88) The Tunisian Constitution, available at t.ly/oRZ6

In discussing the electoral system and its impact on the party work, the Jordanian experience of 2013 cannot be overlooked. In this election, national lists were adopted, and these contributed directly to increasing party members' access to the parliament. The results of the 17th parliamentary elections⁽⁸⁹⁾ showed that the top five lists obtained a number of votes out of which four were formed on the basis of partisanship. This can show that if Jordanian voters are given the opportunity to elect candidates at the national level as opposed to candidates at the local level, they can contribute to electing more party members to parliament.

It is not possible to talk about the course of the electoral process and its impact on party work or the ability of the parties to reach power without talking about the phenomenon of corrupt money, buying votes and the negative impact that comes from using corrupt money on party candidates. This is especially relevant as it weakens the chances of party members to obtain seats in parliament and increases the chances of those who use corrupt money. Therefore, it is imperative to find real deterring means that can limit this phenomenon because of its negative repercussions on the outcomes of the electoral process in general and on the chances of party members in particular.

Two: Legislation and the status of practices

On 25 April 1957, martial law was declared in Jordan following a series of events in the kingdom. Party activity was suspended until 1989, after which aspects of democratic and parliamentary life returned. In 1992, the Political Parties Law was issued after many decades of the cessation of partisan life. Accordingly, a number of parties were established and some of these still exist even today. These were based on the ideas and ideologies that prevailed in the past.⁽⁹⁰⁾ It can be inferred that legalized political party life has been absent from Jordanians' lives for more than 32 years, and this created a legacy and general impressions that made people fearful of partisan action and engagement.

(89) Final report on the Outcomes of the 2013 Parliamentary Elections: <https://ibit.ly/D8yo>

(90) A History of Political Parties, Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs: <https://ibit.ly/EH02>

This stage produced negative societal perceptions and behaviors towards political parties, and with the passage of time, these became norms and traditions. Many fathers prevented their children from joining parties and from registering in them despite the existence of a law approved by the king that allows the formation and joining of political parties. Nevertheless, we still see a move away from integration into party work. This is due to the legacy resulting from the period of martial law and anti-democratic practices towards party members and the restrictions that were practiced. Indeed, some practices still exist until today, especially in relation to getting a job and the need to obtain security clearances. These accounts and practices are present and cannot be denied or even condoned if we want to reach a democratic Jordan that supports party work. Moreover, some young people are now being held accountable for the attitudes of their parents and second-degree relatives. Those interested can ask the local communities about these practices.

Despite these illegal practices, the king of Jordan spoke repeatedly about enforcing partisan life. In a meeting with students from the University of Jordan on 1 February 2018, the king stressed the need to activate the role of parties in all sectors, not only politically.⁽⁹¹⁾ Forming and structuring parties was the topic of discussion in the king's meeting with editors-in-chief, writers, journalists and media figures on 1 October 2018. Two or three parties representing the right and the left would be formed.⁽⁹²⁾ This is captured in a royal directive about the need to pay attention to activating political parties and curbing practices directed against them, so that they would be a main pillar of political work in Jordan and one that allows and encourages the Jordanian citizen to get be politically engaged.

(91) The King's Meeting with Students from the University of Jordan, TV report, <https://ibit.ly/dYBp>

(92) The King's Meeting with Writers, Journalists and Media Professionals, <https://ibit.ly/61VY>

In the second Discussion Paper⁽⁹³⁾ by the king, he says, “What determines the timeframe for this democratization process is our success in developing political parties on a methodical basis that attracts the majority of citizens’ votes. These parties should have leaders who are qualified and able to assume the responsibility of government.” In the same paper, the king says that the first requirement for a successful democratic transition is the need for the emergence of effective national parties capable of expressing the interests, priorities and concerns of local communities within applicable national programs. It is noticeable here that the king presented the existence of effective parties as the first step towards democratic transformation, which means that we need to activate and develop party work.

Three: The structure of the parties

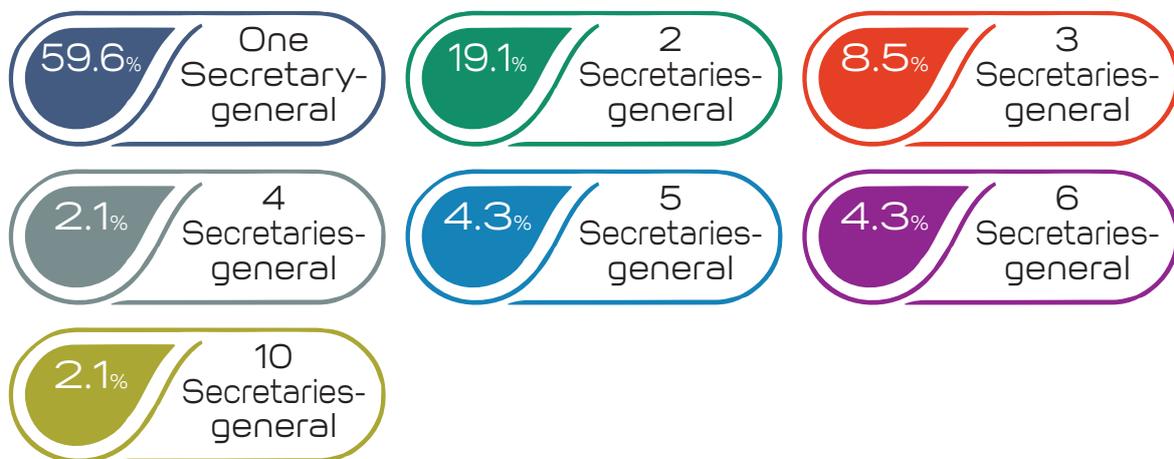
The rudimentary principles of party work require the existence of an ideological consensus among the members of the party. At a minimum, there should be common points that bring the members of a party together. Then, the party presents its programs that simulate national and societal aspirations alike. The party must have positions that align with national priorities and should convey the opinion of the citizen, especially since the organizational framework of the party lends greater legitimacy to political action and makes the party’s voice louder than individuals’ voices. This cannot be achieved if the parties do not exercise what they ask the state to do. Some of the demands that can be discussed include the following:

- **The devolution of power:** The demand for the devolution of power is one of the priorities of all Jordanian political parties, and this, in fact, is the essence of political and democratic work, which must be at the top of the priorities of party work. At the same time, it is important that political parties present a model that can be adopted in the devolution of power for the state and society alike. However, most parties do not adopt such practices. A study conducted in 2019 shows that 59.6% of Jordanian political parties were led by

(93) The Second Discussion Paper issued on 16 January 2013, available at <https://ibit.ly/Z0Tw>

one secretary-general, including one who remained in power for 26 years. The results of the same study show that the leadership of 19.1% of political parties was occupied by two secretaries-general. 8.5% of the parties was led by 3 secretaries-general; 2.1% by 4 secretaries-general, 4.3% by 5 secretaries-general, 4.3% by 6 secretaries-general, and 2.1% of the total number of parties were led by 10 secretaries-general.⁽⁹⁴⁾

Power devolution (Secretaries-general in Jordanian political parties)



- **Transparency and disclosure:** All political parties and forces call for transparency at all administrative and financial levels. However, in reality, we find that most political parties do not present their budgets, work results, or even their decisions in a transparent or clear manner. Some parties do not even have a website on which this information is presented. In truth, we find that this practice could be a reason why the youth and citizens do not gravitate towards parties.
- **Representation of women and youth:** We all demand the enhancement of the representation of women and youth in political work and to occupy high positions, as this has positive repercussions in harmonizing aspirations with decisions. Therefore,

(94) NIMD Methodological Study on the Devolution of Power for the Secretary-General's position: <https://ibit.ly/03YM>

political parties must increase the rates of representation of women and youth in them and should rather have them represented in executive positions. It is not acceptable for the percentage of women's representation in four Jordanian parties to be less than 5% of the total membership of the party, as a study issued in 2017 reveals.⁽⁹⁵⁾ Similarly, Jordanian parties lack the presence of young people, and most are satisfied with building partisan youth teams that do not have a real role in the decision-making process at the party level.

Four: The Jordanian identity of political parties

Some political parties in Jordan faced various accusations about their agendas and about the extent to which this is consistent with national priorities as well as the extent of the loyalty of these parties to the Jordanian state. These charges are based on the names of the parties and the partnerships that some of these have with other parties outside Jordan. These accusations affected the ability of some parties to attract more members and a voting electorate. At times, this generated fear of voting for these parties or interacting with them among the electorate, although they are licensed according to Jordanian laws and are subject to them. The previous experience of the martial law period that the Jordanian state adopted from 1957 to 1989 and the perceptions and practices that prevailed in that period left this impact. This is especially the case due to the security sanctions and prosecutions that some members of these parties were subjected to. This made it difficult for the Jordanian public to reconnect with the parties and reconsider their convictions to join them or to be assured that interacting with these parties would not subject them to security prosecutions or accountability by official or semi-official entities.

At an earlier stage in the last century, some political parties with a national reach and leftist ideology attracted the public and members. The proof to this is that the National Socialist Party

(95) A Study by the Jerusalem Center: <https://ibit.ly/Zfxj>

formed its government with an alliance that included the Socialist Baath Party and the National Front. However, after the end of the martial law phase and the legalization of political party work, people were repulsed by some of these parties that had an external intellectual extension connected to some parties in other countries. This greatly contributed to weakening the ability of the parties to attract the public and thus weakened their ability to reach parliament.

Five: The social and tribal framework

Many different societies see that tribalism is a challenge in the face of partisan work, especially that it depends on blood ties that exist in many societies. This challenge in fact exists, but it was not anchored in the face of parties in Jordan before the adoption of the electoral system of the single vote, which contributed greatly to the development of a narrow sub-identity at the expense of the national identity and thus at the expense of the political identity that may contain real ties between individuals and societies. To this day, the Jordanian society still lives under the shadow of the legacy left by the adoption of a single vote system; generations of voters prefer sub-identities at the expense of the national identity. However, it is not logical to hold the clans responsible for these practices, especially since they are a social system that cannot be ignored. The tangible impact of this can be mitigated by amending electoral laws and regulations that give the citizen the freedom to choose candidates from outside the social and regional framework. This has proven to be effective when the national list system was adopted: There was a difference in the voting behavior in areas that could be dominated by tribes, and the voting behavior of the children was not centered on the clan's candidate. The results of the analyses carried out by the Rased team show that a list headed by a woman obtained 3% of the votes from a district that had no blood ties to it. The cultural background of the district does not match with this candidate's profile, but people voted for that list.⁽⁹⁶⁾ This leads us to the importance of expanding the geographical area covered by electoral districts, due to the importance and implications for the voting behavior of the Jordanian citizen. The decision-maker must work to amend the election law and develop a law that contributes to

(96) The 2013 Election Monitoring Report by Rased: <https://ibit.ly/ayrP>

dissolving the sub-identity and to privilege a national identity. Although most laws do not explicitly stipulate the activation of tribalism at the expense of partisanship, practices and determinants have shown otherwise.

Six: The money dilemma in elections and politics

Political parties, like other forces of Jordanian society, are affected by money in their work, whether by financing their regular or electoral activities. They also face a challenge in terms of lack of resources and the lack of support for political parties, although the Political Parties Law allowed for this with certain controls. This dilemma exists in most Jordanian political parties with the exception of the Islamic Action Front Party. Most of the parties depend on government support for their funding, and this is due to the lack of the conviction of local funders on all levels such as businessmen and institutions that parties can reach parliament. This, in turn, impacts their ability to influence government decisions and policies that affect them.

In this discussion, it is not possible to overlook the use of corrupt money in the vote-buying processes that would affect the fairness of the electoral process and direct voters towards candidates who employ this practice. The recent 2020 elections witnessed the widespread practice of vote-buying processes that affected the outcome of the electoral process and certainly affected the chances of candidates of political parties. 42 cases were referred to the Public Prosecutor, and most of these were not resolved. This led to weakening the ability to limit this practice. Hence, the decision-maker must possess a political will in parallel with executive procedures to limit this phenomenon.

Seven: The quality of awareness programs

Most of the awareness and motivational programs target youth groups to motivate them to engage in party work and in political participation in general. However, most of these programs do not focus on the obstacles that stand in the way of young people to engaging in party work. These obstacles cannot be glossed over by only encouraging the youth without

finding a real solution to the various legal, political, security, employment and other obstacles. These programs should be directed towards decision-makers to gain their support in reducing the obstacles that exist for young people and others who have the desire to engage in partisan work. Different means of pressure must be exercised by these programs on decision-makers to motivate and convince them of the positive impact that can be obtained by increasing the integration of different groups into party work.

Eight: The limitations on freedom of opinion, expression, and assembly

The challenges facing political parties in attracting the electorate cannot be separated from the challenges facing freedom of opinion, expression, and assembly in Jordan, especially in recent years in which the level of freedoms has noticeably decreased. Jordan has also retreated on the Index of Freedom in the World for the year 2020 and was classified as a non-free country when it was classified as partly free in the previous year. This would affect the quality and effectiveness of party work in Jordan. In its 2019 report, the National Center for Human Rights also mentioned that Jordan “witnessed the arrest and trial of a number of people in 2019 for expressing an opinion on social media sites or due to their participation in sit-ins and protests, or through other means of expression. Arresting people for expressing their views is an indicator of the violation of this right and the attempt to restrict this practice.”⁽⁹⁷⁾ It is evident from the above that the human rights situation in general and the freedom of opinion, expression and assembly greatly impact the effectiveness of political parties. If these practices remain in place, they would certainly lead to a state of fear that would arise among members of society from joining parties and practicing political work. This, in turn, would have a negative impact on the level and rate of participation in elections.

(97) The 16th Annual Report on the Human Rights Situation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for 2019: <https://ibit.ly/6x6n>

Recommendations

This study is consistent with the results of other studies regarding some of the challenges and problems facing the work of political parties in Jordan. Some recommendations may have also been mentioned in other studies, but the most important element is how to deal with the recommendations and take into account the reasons that led to this reality. The following recommendations can be suggested and could contribute to activating the work of political parties in Jordan:

First: Developing the electoral system

Based on the aforementioned, it is evident that there is an urgent need to develop the electoral system in Jordan in order to promote democratic development and electoral reform by developing an alternative electoral system that meets the needs of political development for the various components of the local political scene. This should also limit electoral violations and crimes by developing the concept of the social role of the Lower House and the development of the voting behavior of Jordanians. International standards have not obligated states to choose a specific electoral system; however, these criteria have indicated that basic elements and guarantees must be in place to achieve equality in the right to vote and to enhance democratic implementation. The following recommendations are suggested based on the examination of the electoral systems followed around the world and after assessing their repercussions on the political and human rights aspects. National interest and the harmonization of these recommendations with the Jordanian national context were taken into account in the process.

- The proposed electoral system is a mixed system that combines two basic parts, each of which is an electoral system that has the ability to strengthen the electoral system and fairness in representation. This would be achieved by developing the voting behavior of the elector and granting political parties and organizations a higher ability to compete at the local and national levels.

1. The first one is the closed proportional representation party list system through closed lists systems but at the local electoral district level. The geographical coverage of electoral districts must be expanded to make these larger. The number of seats given to electoral districts should be increased to align with the insurance of electoral fairness in the seats given to each electoral district. This will be based on a set of international standards in order to enhance the impact of this reform system on both the political environment and the electoral culture. Such a system would be able to provide a bigger opportunity that enables political organizations with development programs to reach the electorate around the kingdom. It would also build the election on a programmatic basis that develops the voting behavior of the Jordanian elector while repeating the experience in the future. This would anchor democratic implementation in a more effective way.
2. This system was chosen for local electoral districts after examining all electoral systems around the world and after studying their impact on the course of democratic development and electoral reform. The system nullifies the effect of voting for individual candidates as is the case of the open list system. It also enhances building political alliances and the ability of organizations and parties to compete more effectively since it increases fair representation. Moreover, it is a system that takes into account the local political and social environment, preserves the right of independent candidates to run in their districts and limits the phenomenon of buying votes that is currently prevalent in Jordan.
3. The system of the proportional representation party list for the general electoral district through the closed list system would constitute no less than a third of the seats allocated to the Lower House.
4. Electoral districts: The kingdom should be divided into local electoral districts that are wider than they currently are. The narrow electoral district leads to the provision of more space for personal interaction between the voter and the

candidate, thus creating a greater opportunity for the phenomenon of buying votes, and this hinders the development of voting behavior. Therefore, each electoral district must be represented by at least 6 parliamentary seats. In order to redraw the boundaries of electoral districts, a clear formula that takes into account population and electoral density must be drawn up. Additional factors to be accounted for include the area and geographical distance from the capital and the extent of developmental needs, so as to ensure a higher degree of fair representation.

Second: Ensuring the stability of legislation

It is imperative to work on developing legislation that governs party work based on stakeholder consultations in order to reach a consensus formula and to ensure the stability of legislation without amendments in a short period of time.

Third: Amending the Political Parties Law

There seems to be an urgent necessity to develop the Political Parties Law in a way that guarantees the curbing of any provisions that limit the effectiveness of party work. Parties should be given sufficient space to spread and expand the process of attracting voters in line with national frameworks while also preserving their independence.

Fourth: Amending the constitution

The constitution should include an explicit text to ensure that parties gain power according to a formula to be agreed upon with the parties, legislators, and national political forces.

Fifth: Punishing those who punish people who are affiliated with political parties

Legislation must be set to criminalize those who hold accountable party affiliates based on their intellectual and ideological orientations, whether these are individuals or institutions. This should also ensure fairness in dealing with party affiliates.

Sixth: Developing internal party systems

Parties must work to develop their internal systems in line with the requirements of the phase and to enhance the attraction of the electorate to them while also taking gender into account in their basic structure.

Seventh: Shifting towards programmatic parties

It is necessary for the Jordanian political parties to present programs in various national sectors in line with the aspirations and priorities of the Jordanian citizen. This would contribute to changing the stereotypical image of the parties.

**The Impact of Money on
the Outcomes of the 2020
Parliamentary Elections**

Executive Summary

This paper deals with the issue of the effect of money on the outcome of the electoral process and its impact on the results of parliamentary elections. It also tackles issues related to financing and regulating electoral campaigns in light of the executive instructions issued by the Independent Election Commission on parliamentary elections. The paper sheds light directly on the impact of the use of money and how it is spent. It focuses on how this affected the electoral outcomes, limited electoral fairness, and affected the freedom of voters to choose their candidates in the Jordanian parliamentary elections.

The importance of the paper stems from its adoption of the results of monitoring the elections by Rased in 2013, 2016 and 2020. It is also significant because it focuses on the importance of limiting the negative effects of using money on the course of the electoral process to ensure the integrity and fairness of parliamentary elections. The paper provides an analysis of the factors associated with the use of money in parliamentary elections, such as legal factors regarding caps set for electoral campaigns. It also addresses issues like the economic factors such as the decline in the standard of living and the low levels of income. Additionally, there is a discussion of the factor of attracting voters, the level of participation and the role of money in all this. The paper reviews the decline in the level of citizens' confidence in the political process, in its outputs and in community leaders. This is evident in the continuous calls to dissolve parliament and change governments.

The paper presents a set of recommendations and alternatives, the most important of which is the development of legal legislation that includes setting times and specific timelines in order to consider all issues related to buying votes and to decide on these cases. These recommendations also suggest the establishment of a judicial body to be affiliated with the Independent Election Commission to examine cases related to electoral crimes during the stages of the electoral process as a matter of urgency. Moreover, this entity would enhance the mechanisms for controlling electoral campaign spending, increase legal penalties for those who exceed the specified spending cap, and lend an urgent character to deciding on cases of corrupt money.

Introduction

This paper deals with the impact of using money in parliamentary elections. Despite the pledges made by the Independent Election Commission to limit the phenomenon of the use of corrupt money in the 2020 parliamentary elections, the role and impact of money on the course and outcome of the elections in Jordan shows clearly. This is evident especially in the discussion of two main tracks in this issue: One track is related to financing and controlling electoral campaigns, and this was stipulated in executive instructions prepared by the Independent Election Commission. Despite applying these instructions in 2016, 2017 and 2020, they still need to be developed and modified to be consistent with the requirements of aligning elections with international standards.

The process of monitoring the elections was conducted by the Rased team with 3000 observers. This process revealed that the application of the instructions was not at the required level, and there were violations during the electoral campaign period. No comprehensive report was submitted on the sources of financing electoral campaigns or on the spending mechanisms adopted by electoral lists. The auditors' reports were not disclosed, and it was not clear if these reports were consistent with what was stated in the instructions. This paper mainly sheds light on the impact of money and expenditures on the outcomes of the Jordanian parliamentary elections.

The other path that this paper will address is related to buying votes, or corrupt money and paying candidates to form electoral lists. The paper discusses how this affected the election outcomes and limited the anchoring of electoral fairness while it also undermined the voters' freedom to choose their candidates. It also tackles the effect of setting spending limits by the Independent Election Commission within its executive instructions.⁽⁹⁸⁾ This shows a huge

(98) Executive Instructions on Election Campaign Regulations: <https://ibit.ly/qWmN>

discrepancy in spending on election campaigns among lists and candidates. There is no doubt that the ability to monitor the spending process was not at the required level, and this mainly contributed to affecting the ability of candidates to reach their constituents and therefore impacted the outcome of the elections.

Using money in the 2013, 2016, and 2020 parliamentary elections was characterized by many negative features through illegal methods and mechanisms, including buying votes. This was no longer the only way to use money and has become more prevalent in every parliamentary election that takes place. It has surpassed this by providing in-kind assistance or by providing services to voters in order to control the voting trends of the electorate. It was noticed that the use of corrupt money is prevalent even in the primaries held by some tribes and regions to present a candidate who represents the clan in parliamentary elections.

This paper will adopt the results of monitoring the elections conducted by Rased in 2013, 2016, and 2020. This was conducted by adopting qualitative and quantitative research methodologies within different frameworks. The questions that will be addressed in this paper include: How has money affected the outcome of the parliamentary electoral process? How have these practices affected the values of society and extended to the various electoral and even the behavioral processes of some individuals?

Background

Money is one of the main components in any elections; electoral campaigns are based on financial capability, whether the candidates run within parties or as individuals. It is not possible to proceed with electoral campaigns without money. It is necessary to differentiate between legal money that is used in the right way and within the controls and limitations set by legislative frameworks and corrupt money that is a violation of any electoral process in which it is used.

At the level of the Jordanian state, the legislation governing the elections witnessed developments over different stages of time. Some of these were related to controlling the spending process and mechanisms, and some were related to combating the spread of the phenomenon of corrupt money and buying votes in different ways.

The reality is that using corrupt money in the Jordanian parliamentary elections, 2020 was not a new phenomenon in parliamentary elections. It emerged from the elections of the 14th Parliament held in 2003, and it accelerated rapidly during the parliamentary elections that followed. This forced the Jordanian legislator to create a legal text within the election law; accordingly, Article (59) stipulates penalties related to vote buying processes.⁽⁹⁹⁾ Despite this legal text, there was no real combat against this phenomenon. The 2013 parliamentary elections took place, and four candidates were imprisoned. At the time, the court did not agree to grant them bail to run for elections. Two of the candidates won seats while the other two did not win seats in the 17th Parliament. In the 18th Parliament elections in 2016, the Commission announced the detection of four cases related to corrupt money when the National Center for Human Rights mentioned a widespread practice of buying votes. This was done in exchange

(99) Election Law: <https://ibit.ly/mbMS>

for sums paid directly by the campaigner or through vote brokers.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ The European Union delegation also presented its own report, which confirmed the act of buying votes in the 2016 elections.⁽¹⁰¹⁾

In all the stages of the 2020 elections, the electoral process witnessed the detection of 51 cases related to vote buying and the use of corrupt money, of which 9 were transferred to security services while 42 cases were transferred to the Public Prosecutor. Some cases were resolved, and some people in those resolved cases were sentenced to prison. The Independent Election Commission provided evidence in all the cases that were referred to the Public Prosecutor, and some of these were not resolved. This has truly contributed to weakening the citizen's confidence in punishing the perpetrators of these cases and limiting this phenomenon.⁽¹⁰²⁾ According to the report of the National Center for Human Rights on the process of the 2020 parliamentary elections, cases of violations of the election law and against the executive instructions issued along with these were detected. These included impacting the will of the voters through the spread of the phenomenon of political money.⁽¹⁰³⁾

The ineffective mechanisms employed in confronting this practice and the lack of serious interest in tackling it have led to an increase in the use of corrupt money and vote-buying processes. Both candidates and voters are encouraged by the lack of effective mechanisms to combat this practice that would disrupt the outcome of the electoral process and influence it in a way that does not represent the true will of voters.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

(100) Report by the National Center for Parliamentary Elections, 2016: <https://ibit.ly/S2Nr>

(101) Report by the European Union on the 2016 Parliamentary Elections: <https://ibit.ly/iUoN>

(102) The Final Report on the Outcomes of Observing the 2020 Parliamentary Elections, available at t.ly/ufp0

(103) The National Center for Human Rights Report on the 2020 Parliamentary Elections Process, available at t.ly/5QmF

(104) The Social Impact of Jordan's Electoral System, available at t.ly/s28Z

The Impact of Money on the Outcome of the Parliamentary Elections

One: The political and legal framework

The results of many studies on the use of corrupt money in the 2013, 2016, and 2020 parliamentary elections show a set of factors that contribute to the emergence of the phenomenon of the use of corrupt money. These include legal factors related to election campaign caps. The Independent Election Commission made it clear that the spending cap for electoral districts in the capital, Zarqa and Irbid were set at 5 dinars for each voter while in the rest of the electoral districts it was set at 3 dinars for each voter.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ This limit would give a wide range of spending that could be in the form of unlawful money in elections such as buying votes. The number of voters in some districts raises the spending limit. For example, the first district of Zarqa has a spending cap of 2,533,020 dinars while the limit in Zarqa's second district is 743,135 dinars. This shows a large variation in spending limits even within the same governorate. Therefore, the criteria for determining the spending cap must be reconsidered.

It is necessary to talk about the mechanisms of using corrupt money that some candidates can practice by paying cash directly to the voters to influence their electoral freedom and to direct their votes to the actual candidates. Similarly, some candidates pay cash to other candidates, either with the aim of sabotaging other candidates or with the aim of attracting them to certain lists. All of these practices appeared in the last parliamentary elections without a real deterrent. In the recent elections, 42 cases were transferred to the Public Prosecutor, and some cases were resolved. Some people in those resolved cases were sentenced to prison. The Independent Election Commission provided evidence in all the cases that were referred to the Public Prosecutor, and some of these were not resolved. This has truly contributed to weakening the citizens' confidence in punishing the perpetrators of these cases and limiting this phenomenon.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

Each electoral list was also committed to opening a bank account in order to follow up on all the financial operations connected to spending on advertisement on election campaigns.

(105) The Independent Election Commission, available at t.ly/ouyb

(106) The Final Report on the Outcomes of Observing the 2020 Parliamentary Elections, available at t.ly/ufp0

However, despite the commitment of the lists to open accounts, we still do not see a commitment from the lists to spend money through these accounts. Some lists spend money without documenting it in the bank account. This leads to not showing this expenditure in the final report, which means that it is difficult to track the amount of expenditures of the electoral list. Thus, it is difficult to hold these accountable if more money than what is legally allowed is spent. Legislative frameworks lack punitive and deterring provisions if lists are not held to spending caps. This motivates the electoral lists to override these instructions.

On the other hand, Article (63) of the Election Law states, “All election crimes stipulated in this law shall be subject to a statute of limitations after three years have passed from the date of announcing the final elections results.” This article of the law has a legal loophole: It exempts the perpetrators of electoral crimes from the penalties stipulated in the election law in the event of non-determination or delay in ruling in the case of the three-year period stipulated as the statute of limitations in the article.

There are many legal penalties for electoral offenses in the Jordanian election law. Article (24) of the election law states, “It is prohibited for any candidate to give gifts, donations, cash or in-kind assistance, other benefits, or promises to an individual or corporate person, whether directly or through an intermediary. It is also prohibited for any person to ask for any gifts, donations, aid, or promise for himself or for others from any candidate.”⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Article (59) A also states, “Whoever gives a voter a sum of money or benefits⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ by lending these, by making offers, or pledges directly or indirectly shall be punished with hard labor for a period of no less than three years and not exceeding seven years.” These articles clearly and directly stipulate penalties against perpetrators of electoral crimes, but they require real political will in order to implement and enforce the penalties. Such political will is also needed to achieve the principle of fairness and transparency in dealing with issues related to all aspects of the electoral process, to ensure the integrity of the elections and to protect the independence of the will of the electorate.

(107) The 2016 Election Law, available at t.ly/w6bR

(108) *Ibid.*, available at t.ly/hHQ3

Second: The economic framework in the Jordanian society

Economic challenges and the decline in the standard of living, in income and services have all been declining over the last ten years. Jordan's debt reached 46.4 billion dollars,⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ and by the end of 2020, the unemployment rate in Jordan had reached 22.7%.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ This greatly contributed to the emergence of an environment that is favorable to illegal practices and which formed a pressure factor in the emergence of the phenomenon of buying votes.

The 2020 parliamentary elections were held under the conditions of the Coronavirus pandemic and the resulting deterioration of the citizens' financial conditions. This led to the exploitation of the difficult economic and financial conditions of citizens by some candidates or through their agents to use corrupt money in order to buy the votes of the electorate and manipulate their electoral will. The 2020 parliamentary elections witnessed the phenomenon of buying votes on a wide scale and by various means, including providing money directly or by providing food and medical aid or making promises to the voters with the aim of providing them with jobs after the end of the elections. The spread of these practices coincided with the neglect of the Independent Election Commission and its failure along with the concerned entities to ensure the integrity and the transparency of the course of the electoral process. They also failed to protect the will of the voters to prevent hijacking it by the candidates who took advantage of the difficult economic needs of the voters.

Third: Attracting voters and the level of participation

There is no doubt that the level of participation in the 2016 and 2020 parliamentary elections did not reach 40%. In 2020, this decreased to 29.9% of the total number of people eligible to vote compared to 36.6% in 2016. This created obstacles for candidates in attracting voters to participate in the voting process, especially since many citizens do not believe in the usefulness, importance and effectiveness of parliament. Some, however, are satisfied with the direct financial gain when they sell their vote.

(109) Ministry of Finance Bulletin: <https://ibit.ly/5rHf>

(110) General Statistics and Figures in Jordan: <https://ibit.ly/7PyU>

Fourth: The outcomes of the electoral process lead to losing confidence very quickly

The Jordanian street is witnessing a decline in the level of citizens' confidence in the political process, in its outputs and in community leaders. This is evident through the continuous calls to dissolve parliament and change governments, and this would negatively affect the general political atmosphere. Statistics and opinion polls support this; a report issued by Al-Hayat Center-Rased on the government's performance after 6 months showed that 70.4% of Jordanians believe that the ministerial team is not capable and is weak in its capability to carry out its responsibilities. A survey also showed that only 31% of Jordanians trust parliament, which means that more than two-thirds of Jordanians do not trust the Lower House only 3 months into parliament's life. This in itself is an indicator that must be examined to focus on how and why people lose confidence in the outcomes of the electoral process so quickly.

This can be answered through the performance of the current parliament or previous parliaments, which were mostly inconsistent with the requirements and aspirations of citizens. There is a development in the supervisory and legislative performance of the 19th Lower House during the first 100 days compared to the 17th and 18th parliaments. Indicators of supervisory performance showed an increase in the percentage of supervisory work days, which was 47% in the 19th Parliament: This percentage during the first 100 days of the 18th Parliament was 14% while it was only 12%⁽¹¹¹⁾ in the case of the 17th Parliament. Most other indicators are not consistent with the aspirations of the electoral rules, and this is the reason for the lack of participation of citizens in the electoral process.

(111) Rased Report on the Performance of the 19th Parliament during the first 100 days: <https://ibit.ly/WyP4>

Recommendations

Success in reducing and combating the phenomenon of using corrupt money in parliamentary elections is a fundamental challenge that would ensure the integrity of the electoral process. It requires an effective response by the Independent Election Commission and all the entities concerned with ensuring the integrity of parliamentary elections alike. We will discuss the most prominent alternatives that can be adopted to tackle the widespread problem of the phenomenon of using corrupt money in parliamentary elections.

Legal and legislative amendments:

Legislation that includes setting times and specific timeframes should be developed in order to examine and decide on all cases and crimes related to the use of corrupt money in elections. This would also ensure transparency of litigation procedures and achieve the principle of fairness and equality.

Establishing an electoral judicial body:

A judicial body should be developed and affiliated with the Independent Election Commission to look into cases related to electoral crimes during the stages of the electoral process as a matter of urgency. This entity should be given a broad authority to decide on all cases related to violations that take place during all stages of the electoral process in order to ensure the integrity and fairness of the elections. It should also ensure that corrupt money or any electoral crimes do not impact the independence and impartiality of the electoral process as a whole.

Strengthening mechanisms for monitoring campaign spending:

It is imperative to amend the instructions related to the spending cap on electoral campaigns issued by the Independent Election Commission. The value of the sums that the list is allowed

to spend during the election campaign should be reconsidered as these sums are greatly exaggerated. The Independent Election Commission should enhance its oversight over the spending of the electoral lists on campaigns. Realistic and reasonable spending caps should be set in order to ensure effective control over the process of spending money legally and for the purpose those funds were allocated.

Devising tougher legal penalties for those who exceed the specified spending cap:

In order to anchor the concept of electoral fairness and ensure neutrality in all stages of the electoral process, penalties stipulated in the election law should be more aggressive so that they are sufficiently deterring. It should affect all those who exceed the election campaign spending cap over the limit stipulated by law, and it should guarantee fairness and equality among all candidates.

Adding a sense of urgency to deciding on cases of corruption:

It is imperative to lend urgency to cases related to corrupt money, as this has a positive effect on restoring citizens' confidence in the electoral process. It also constitutes a deterrent to anyone who uses this illegal practice in the electoral process.

**The Coronavirus Pandemic
and its Impact on the Level
of Participation in the 2020
Jordanian Parliamentary
Elections**

Executive Summary

The Coronavirus pandemic clearly led to a decrease in the voting rate in the 2020 Jordanian parliamentary elections. The Independent Election Commission took many precautionary measures to protect voters and reduce the possibility of contracting the Coronavirus during the voting process. These came after legislative amendments to the instructions governing the polling and counting process, including increasing the number of centers and ballot boxes. The number of cadres working within the polling and counting committees was also increased, and all voters were required to wear masks and were provided with gloves and a pen for each voter. This is in addition to amending the executive instructions on electoral advertising and campaigns. The fear of voters of going to the ballot boxes to avoid infection with the virus was evident. The high number of infections and deaths before polling day was an additional reason for this fear.

The popular participation rate in the 2020 parliamentary elections reached 29.9%, which is a decrease when compared to the 2016 parliamentary elections when the popular participation rate was 36%. The Coronavirus pandemic was not the only reason for the decline in this rate.⁽¹¹²⁾ The reasons varied between the loss of citizens' confidence in the performance of successive parliaments and the belief of some that the 2020 elections would not make a difference in performance and public policies. This is especially relevant after the successive parliaments failed to curb the reign of governments in increasing administrative slack, increasing tax rates and prices. The paper also shows that the current election law is a reason for the low voter turnout because of the deputies who ran on narrow foundations and affiliations without allowing a fair opportunity for political and partisan competition.

(112) The Final Report on the Outcomes of Observing the Jordanian Parliamentary Elections 2020, <https://tinyurl.com/yglt35fr>

The paper explains that the measures taken with regulations on the advertisement campaigns for elections were the reason for the decrease in the voting rate. Even though these abided by health recommendations, they imposed conditions that led to an increase in the trend of electronic electoral campaigns. This is due to the imposed conditions of not allowing the opening of headquarters and electoral festivals and reducing the number of voters in direct meetings held by candidates. This impacted the standard of fairness in the implementation of electronic campaigns due to the varied experiences of candidates in this type of campaign, in addition to the great advantage of some districts over others where the use of technology and social media is not as common.

The paper presents a set of long-term and short-term recommendations that the decision maker can benefit from to overcome any challenges that may be appear in the future.

Introduction

This paper reveals the extent of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the decline in the participation rate in the 2020 parliamentary elections held as the pandemic was spreading. It also studies the impact of applying social distancing measures on the levels of popular participation in the elections. The paper is important because it provides alternatives and practical recommendations to develop the electoral process in light of the health conditions caused by the Coronavirus pandemic and its effects. These recommendations will ensure that the rates of popular participation in the elections in general are not affected. If adopted by the institutions concerned with the electoral process and decision-makers, these alternatives and recommendations would constitute an appropriate foundation in the process of increasing the rates of popular participation in the elections.

The paper examines the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic over the stages of the electoral process. It also dwells on the challenges that accompanied the electoral process and their effect on the levels and rates of public participation in the elections. It analyzes whether the pandemic was the only reason that contributed to the decline in the public participation rate or if it is one of the causes.

In its analysis of the problem of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, the paper proposes the possibility of using alternative means of participation in elections that are options for traditional methods used in normal circumstances. This comes as part of a global trend aimed at developing methods of popular participation in elections. The paper will also contribute to finding reliable alternatives and options when conducting any elections in exceptional circumstances, such as those represented by the Coronavirus pandemic in the last parliamentary elections in 2020.

In this paper, the Rased team focused on the process of monitoring the parliamentary elections for the year 2020, carried out by the Rased coalition for monitoring the elections run by Al-Hayat Center-Rased. 3000 observers from all governorates participated in directly observing the course of the electoral process and filled out forms dedicated to this process. The methodology of holding direct interviews was used with a set of groups, including young men and women. Questions were raised about the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the electoral process, and this was done by targeting random representative samples. The paper will answer a set of questions the Coronavirus pandemic has raised: These include the necessity of responding to and preparing an environment that provides ways and means for electoral participation in an advanced and unconventional manner. It also asks what the impact of the pandemic is, and how the electoral administration and official institutions responded to it. Additionally, it explores the extent to which procedures are in line with international standards and best practices in elections.

Background

On 2 March 2020, the first case of infection with the Coronavirus appeared in Jordan, and the infections began to gradually increase until they reached 40 cases⁽¹¹³⁾ by 3 March 2020. This prompted the council of ministers to take the decision of announcing the enforcement of Defense Law No. (13) of 1992 throughout the kingdom. A royal decree was issued to approve the decision,⁽¹¹⁴⁾ provided that the defense law is applied at the narrowest limits.

The number of Coronavirus infections continued to increase. There analyses about the fate of the parliamentary elections for the 19th Parliament and the 18th Parliament, which was supposed to complete its constitutional term on 28 September 2020 also increased. This is in accordance with Article (681/) of the Jordanian constitution which stipulates that “The term of the Lower House is four years, starting with the date of announcing the results of the general election in the Official Gazette. The king may issue a royal decree to extend the term of the parliament to a period not less than one year and not more than two years.”

On 29 July 2020, a royal decree was issued to hold parliamentary elections in accordance with the provisions of the law⁽¹¹⁵⁾ to resolve the debate surrounding parliamentary elections and whether or not they could be held in light of the epidemiological conditions in the kingdom. On the same day, the Board of Commissioners of the Independent Election Commission decided that 10 November 2020 would be the date for holding parliamentary elections.⁽¹¹⁶⁾

(113) The Jordanian Ministry of Health website, available at <https://corona.moh.gov.jo/ar/MediaCenter/31>

(114) Official Gazette, t.ly/Keta, A Royal Decree Approving the Enforcement of the Defense Act

(115) Al-Mamlaka, Royal Decree to Hold Parliamentary Elections, t.ly/IOOv

(116) Petra, the Independent Election Commission sets the 10th of November for Parliamentary Elections, t.ly/PhhZ

On 27 September 2020, a royal decree was issued to dissolve the 18th Parliament as of that same day.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ A new constitutional process was due stipulating that the government must submit its resignation within a week in compliance with the provisions of Article (74) of the constitution. This states, “The government during whose reign the Lower House is dissolved shall resign within a week from the date of the dissolution, and its head may not be assigned to form the next government.” On 3 October 2020 Prime Minister Omar Al-Razzaz submitted the resignation of his government before the king who accepted it and assigned the same government to conduct its business until a new prime minister was chosen and a new government was formed. On 7 October 2020, a Letter of Designation was issued to assign Dr. Bisher Al-Khasawneh to form a new government to be sworn in to perform constitutional duties as of 12 October 2020.

Jordan is not the only country that held elections as the Coronavirus pandemic was raging. The 19th parliamentary elections in 2020 were held under exceptional circumstances while facing the threat of the Coronavirus pandemic and in light of the application of defense laws, social distancing measures, wearing masks and gloves. All these impose fundamental changes on citizens’ lives: The measures to confront the pandemic leave an impact on the nature of the candidates’ campaigns, the methods of communication between voters and candidates, and on the process of voting.

Globally, general and sub-regional elections were postponed in at least 70 countries and regions due to fears of the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. At least 33 countries and regions postponed referendums and general elections. On the other hand, general and sub-regional elections were held in 55 countries and regions at least on the specified dates, despite fears of the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. At least 37 of these countries held general elections or referendums on their constitutions. Elections were held in 20 countries and regions where

(117) Petra, Royal Decree to Dissolve the Lower House of Representatives, t.ly/s7im

they had been previously postponed due to concerns related to the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. Of these, at least 12 countries held their general elections or referendums on their constitutions.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

The countries that held elections as the pandemic started to spread include South Korea, which held its legislative elections in April 2020. The voting rate in the elections reached 66.2%, and this percentage has been the highest in the Korean legislative elections in 28 years⁽¹¹⁹⁾ despite the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic. Elections were held according to health controls, limitations and procedures commensurate with the circumstances that arose due to the pandemic.

In addition, a number of elections and referendums were held on their scheduled dates during April 2020 despite the spread of the Coronavirus. These include the partial local elections in Japan in April 2020; the second round of municipal elections in Geneva, Switzerland on 4 April 2020 through postal voting only; the Democratic Party primaries in Wisconsin, the United States on 7 April 2020; the special congressional elections for the state of Maryland, the United States on 28 April 2020; the presidential primaries in Ohio, the United States on 28 April 2020; and the second round of parliamentary elections in Mali on 19 April 2020.⁽¹²⁰⁾

In the US presidential elections that took place in November 2020, voter turnout reached its highest level in more than 100 years. This reached more than 66%, compared to 59.2% in the 2016 elections, 54.9% in 2012 and 57.1% in 2008.⁽¹²¹⁾

(118) The Covid-19 Pandemic and Its Impact on Elections, The Independent Election Commission: <https://ibit.ly/tD5M>

(119) Monte Carlo, t.ly/DOPP

(120) Ibid

(121) Akhbar Al-Yawm, Despite Corona, the US elections 2020 Record the Highest Turnout in 100 Years, t.ly/BohF

Official Procedures in Light of the Coronavirus Pandemic

Official efforts to prepare for the election of the 19th Lower House started when King Abdullah announced that Jordan is on the verge of a constitutional requirement to hold parliamentary elections in the summer of 2020.⁽¹²²⁾ The Independent Election Commission amended a group of executive instructions governing the electoral process in order to align these with safety standards and conditions due to the pandemic. These include:

Amending executive instructions No. (9) of 2016 for polling, sorting and vote collection. Most prominent of the amended instructions⁽¹²³⁾ include:

Article (2): A member of the polling and counting committee handles:

Item No. (4): Asking the voter or the companion, if present, to take off the gloves and to put them in the trash.

This amendment shows that it is compulsory for all voters and their companions, if present, to wear gloves before exercising their right to vote. The Independent Election Commission provided gloves and a pen for each voter who takes this home after voting.⁽¹²⁴⁾

Item No. (5): Spraying the index finger of the voter's left hand with the election ink approved by the commission and spraying the index finger of the right hand of the companion, if present, with electoral ink.

This text allows for replacing the process of dipping the voter's left index finger and the companion's right index finger, as was the case in previous elections. Spraying the ink material would help to avoid any follow-up contact among citizens through the election ink.

(122) Petra, The King: On the Verge of Constitutional Fulfillment to Hold Parliamentary Elections This Summer, t.ly/dWfR

(123) Official Gazette, Issue 5655, 16 August 2020, t.ly/bu7W

(124) Ammun, Al-Kalaldeh on the Elections: Pens and Gloves for Each Voter, t.ly/61g0

Article (5) of the instructions has also been amended by adding Clause No. (3), which states: A candidate who has been isolated or quarantined due to the Coronavirus is treated according to the directives or instructions issued by the Epidemiology Committee. The person has the right to authorize any voter whose name is mentioned on the voters list in the candidate's electoral district to act on his behalf in monitoring the voting process.

Article (9 repeated) was added to these instructions to guarantee the right to vote for people quarantined and isolated in their homes, those who wear electronic bracelets and people quarantined in hotels. The article states:

“Despite what is stated in these instructions and to ensure that voters quarantined and isolated due to the Coronavirus can exercise their right to vote, the following procedures are followed:

- A. With regard to voters who are quarantined or isolated in their homes and those who wear electronic bracelets, the following procedures shall be followed:
1. A special list containing the names of voters quarantined or isolated in their homes and those wearing electronic bracelets shall be prepared. This list includes the polling and counting center and the number of the ballot box in which the voter is registered shall be determined and posted at the entrance to the polling and counting room 24 hours before the date set for the polling.
 2. After the polling period ends, the council takes a decision to extend this for a period not exceeding two hours to enable voters quarantined or isolated in their homes and those wearing electronic bracelets to vote.
 3. The voter arrives at the polling and counting center according to procedures and a special protocol that is prepared in coordination with the Epidemiology Committee. This includes specifying all requirements for the voting process, including protective materials and supplies, clothes for voters and workers in the polling and counting rooms, and the means of transportation necessary for this purpose.
 4. Voters quarantined or isolated in their homes and those wearing electronic bracelets are obligated to abide by the procedures specified for the voting process.

- B. With regard to persons subject to quarantine in hotels and at the borders, the following procedures shall be followed:
1. A room or a hall for polling and counting shall be prepared so that it contains one or more boxes for each electoral district for 23 districts in the kingdom. Three days before the day of polling, the Commission shall prepare a schedule with the names of quarantined persons published on the final lists of voters. These names shall be published on the Commission's website a day before polling day.
 2. A schedule bearing the same name and number of the ballot box is prepared by the electoral district. Voters' names are highlighted in the electronic schedule, and they shall also sign the paper copy."

In the 2020 parliamentary elections, the Independent Election Commission used scanners to identify the voters' and escorts' identity cards without direct contact with the polling and counting committee.

Executive instructions No. (6) for the year 2016 on running for the electoral district were also amended to allow⁽¹²⁵⁾ candidates quarantined or isolated because of the Coronavirus to delegate a representative to submit the candidacy application, to attend with the other candidates on the list, and sign on his behalf. This is in addition to the possibility for the candidate who is quarantined or isolated to appoint a representative to have him withdraw from the list. In an attempt by the Independent Election Commission to reduce overcrowding at polling stations, the commission announced that voters were distributed over 2,500 polling stations⁽¹²⁶⁾ containing 8,080 ballot boxes, which is a 100% increase over this number in the 2016 parliamentary elections.⁽¹²⁷⁾

(125) Official Gazette, Issue 5661, 21 September 2020, t.ly/wF

(126) Al-Ghad, 2,500 Polling Stations for the Upcoming Parliamentary Elections, t.ly/Yhvv

(127) Al-Ghad, Al-Kalaldehy: 8080 Ballot Boxes during the 2020 Elections, t.ly/sWvV

Coronavirus and its Impact on the Rate of Participation in the Elections

The Coronavirus pandemic conditions did not hinder the turnout in candidates' in the 2020 elections. On the contrary, figures show an increase in the number of candidacy lists in the 2020 parliamentary elections. These reached 30% compared to the lists that ran for the 2016 parliamentary elections with a total of 226 lists⁽¹²⁸⁾ compared to the number of final electoral lists that were registered for the 2020 elections with 294 lists. The number of candidates for the 2020 elections was 1674⁽¹²⁹⁾ compared to 1252 candidates in the 2016 elections although both elections were held under the same law.

Despite the noticeable increase in the number of candidates, this did not increase the pace of the electoral campaign phase. A decision was issued by the Board of Commissioners of the Independent Election Commission prohibiting the opening of electoral headquarters,⁽¹³⁰⁾ and this greatly reduced the ability of candidates to attract the electorate. Electoral campaigns moved from reality to virtual social media sites which witnessed a remarkable increase in electoral campaigns and became the only tool through which candidates could attract their audience and present their programs. This procedure will be discussed in detail in this paper.

The number of voters who participated in the parliamentary elections in 2020 appears to have reached 1,387,711 male and female voters⁽¹³¹⁾ while this number in the 2016 parliamentary elections reached 1,492,400 male and female voters.⁽¹³²⁾ This shows that the number of voters decreased by 105,000. There is no doubt that the impact of the Coronavirus mainly led to the decline in the number of voters, especially in the category of the elderly whose participation

(128) Rased, The Final Report on the Outcomes of Observing the 2016 Parliamentary Elections, available at t.ly/4666

(129) Rased, The Final Report on the Outcomes of Observing the 2020 Parliamentary Elections, available at t.ly/d90F

(130) Jordan News Agency, Petra: <https://ibit.ly/Y3X4>

(131) Previous reference

(132) Previous reference

rate decreased by about 12% according to the statements of the Minister of Political and Parliamentary Affairs.⁽¹³³⁾ This can be attributed to the fact that this group is the most vulnerable to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, according to global health protocols.

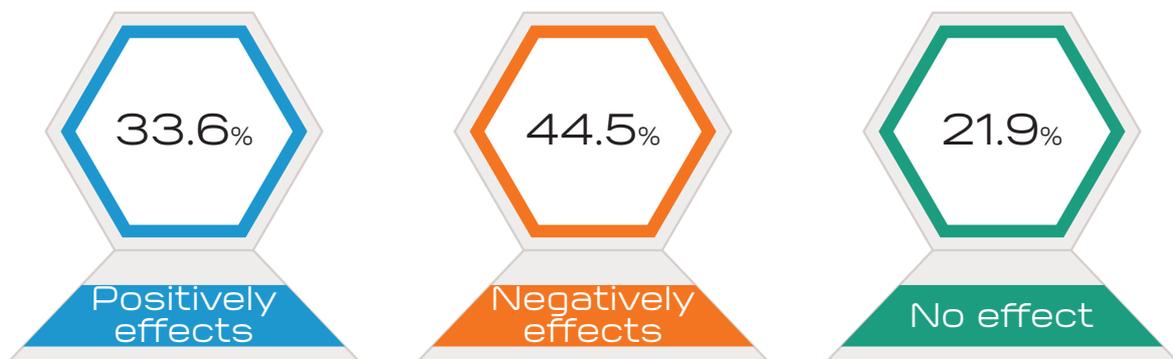
A study prepared by Rased during the 2020 parliamentary elections showed that 47.4% of Jordanian youth believe that the Corona measures would negatively affect their participation in the elections. This affects the rate of participation in the elections in general in a major way.

The influence of facing the Covid19- pandemic on the percentage of youth participation in the elections



Additionally, 44.5% of Jordanian women said that the Corona measures would negatively affect their participation in the electoral process, and this would reduce the number of Jordanian women voters. This was proven true later, as 28.7% of women eligible to vote actually participated in the voting process.

The effect of the Covid19- pandemic measures on the percentage of women participation in the election



(133) Statement by the Minister of Political and Parliamentary Affairs: <https://ibit.ly/jjEm>

Coronavirus is Only One of the Causes

Voters feared going to polling stations and ballot boxes due to fears of contracting the Coronavirus, and this was a major reason for the decline in the participation rate in the 2020 parliamentary elections. The number of infections in the kingdom on the day before polling day on 9 November 2020 reached 5665 cases and 62 deaths. This brought the total number of infections to that day to 114,986 and 1295 deaths. Fear of infection controlled the scene in particular among the elderly and women due to the lack of the Coronavirus vaccine in Jordan during that period.⁽¹³⁴⁾

Prior to polling day, and in parallel with the increase in the number of Coronavirus infections, some trained polling and sorting committee members apologized for their inability to help. The reasons varied either because of infections or because of fear of infection, and this extended to the Rased team: A day before polling day, we received many apologies because of infections or for fear of infection. This negatively affected the electoral process and the ability of Jordanians to participate due to the large number of infections during that phase.

Additionally, infection or the fear of infection was not the only reason for the absence of more than two-thirds of those eligible to vote. The comprehensive curfew⁽¹³⁵⁾ decision issued by the government at 10 pm on polling day for a period of four days had a negative impact and was a major cause in keeping reluctant voters away from the polls. Instead, they headed to the markets to prepare for the comprehensive ban. This was a major reason for the apology of a large group of observers within the Rased team, especially since the counting process extends beyond 12 am. The Commission announced that whoever had an official permit had the right to complete the work without being subject to the comprehensive ban. However, this was not

(134) Ministry of Health, Daily Media Summary on 9 November 2020, t.ly/NsXf

(135) Comprehensive curfew decision: <https://ibit.ly/Bfsl>

sufficient, especially given the lack of public transportation and the inability of some families to violate the comprehensive ban to transport their children to the polling stations and back. This also applied to the representatives of the candidates and the lists as well.

The Independent Election Commission took a set of preventive measures on polling day. As mentioned in this paper, the number of polling stations was doubled, pens and gloves were provided and masks were mandatory. However, the sight of long queues outside the walls of the polling stations made voters hesitate to go to the polls because they did not want to wait for long periods of time. The announcement of the news at different times on polling day reinforced the voters' fear of going to the polling stations. This announcement alternated between the suspension of polling in some centers due to the discovery of cases of corona infections among voters who came to the polling center to sterilize them and then the continuation of the voting process.

The government has the general mandate in managing the country and in maintaining public safety: The confidence of citizens in the government's ability to deal with the Coronavirus crisis also had an impact on the voting rate. A study conducted by Al-Hayat Center-Rased showed that only 33% of citizens trust the government's ability to deal with the Coronavirus crisis.⁽¹³⁶⁾ The government acted individually in taking decisions to confront Corona and did not involve some experts who could have acted like references. Their experiences could have been beneficial in issuing decisions related to combating the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic and its impact on citizens and society. They could have been made partners in making these important decisions. Calls on social media by some influencers grew to boycott the elections because of what they thought was the government's inability to maintain the health of citizens and that participation may cost some people their lives, or they would contract the disease.

(136) A Crisis of Confidence: The Government over the Corona issue, t.ly/xQvy

The cumulative performance of parliament and the confidence gap are also two factors that contributed to influencing the voters' decision about heading to the ballot boxes. A study by Al-Hayat Center-Rased indicates that 46.5% of voters did not intend to participate in the 2020 parliamentary elections. 57% of them justified this by saying that the 19th Parliament would not be effective and 17% of them said that they did not find suitable candidates.⁽¹³⁷⁾ Analysts deem that many believe that the ballot boxes would not make a difference as Jordan would not be different than what it looked like before the elections. There are no fundamental changes that may be reflected in government policies or formations. The practices of some representatives in successive councils also led to the reluctance of some voters to cast their vote.⁽¹³⁸⁾ Some explained that the election law in force in Jordan and the proportional open list system was a major reason for the decrease in the voting rate because it re-produces members of parliament in the same way, weakens the opportunities of political parties and allows political money to expand.

(137) Rased, 33.7% of Jordanians Intend to Participate in the Elections, t.ly/XEFW

(138) Al-Ghad, Coronavirus, the Ban and Distrust of Parliament Are Reasons for Low Participation in the Elections, t.ly/8awM

Electoral Campaigns Move to the Virtual Platform

Amendments on the executive instructions for the electoral advertisement campaign rules No. (7) for the year 2016 were issued in the Official Gazette No. 5646, dated 16 June 2020, and Article (8 repeated) was added as follows:

In order to preserve public health and safety, upon opening their electoral headquarters, candidates shall adhere to the following:⁽¹³⁹⁾

- A. Provide sterilizing materials inside the election headquarters and not allowing anyone to enter the election headquarters without adhering to public health and safety requirements, including wearing masks and gloves.
- B. Not to call for a meeting with a number of attendees that exceeds the area of the headquarters specified and approved by the Commission.
- C. Not to provide food or drinks of any kind, including water, inside the election headquarters, except in cardboard or plastic containers that are compatible with the requirements of public health and safety.
- D. Spacing electoral headquarters so that the distance among these is not less than two hundred meters and in a manner that ensures that there is no crowding in front of the electoral headquarters.
- E. Not to open the election headquarters before obtaining approval from the head of the election committee on the form prepared by the commission for this purpose. This has to be accompanied by a written commitment signed by the candidate to abide by the requirements of public health and safety as specified by the competent authorities.

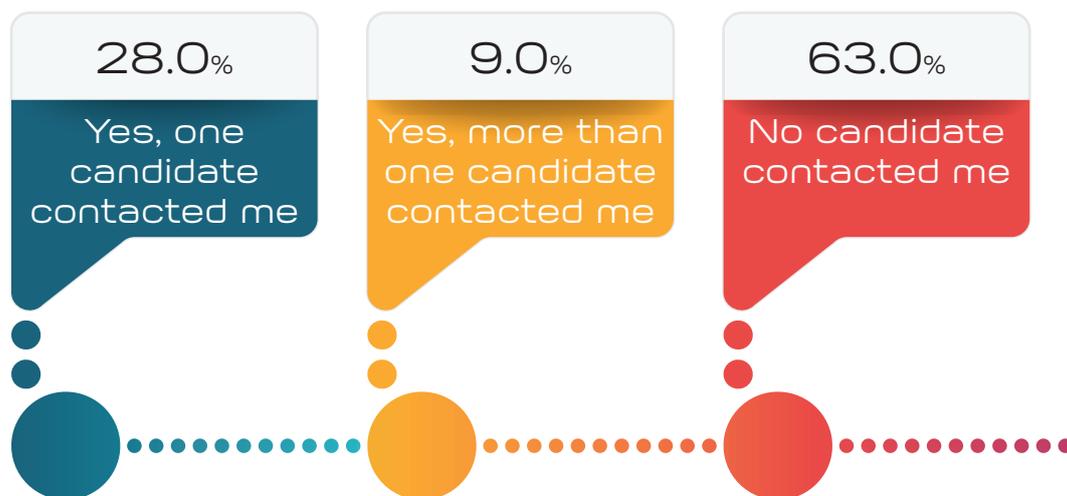
Subsequent to these instructions, practice showed that the challenges facing the candidates became more difficult, especially as technology became an important factor in the candidate's communication with the voters. The election advertising campaign in its new form was no longer sufficient because the face-to-face meeting between the candidate and the voter could

(139) Official Gazette, t.ly/qKDV

change the attitudes of voters and push them towards the candidates they met and conversed with in person. The Independent Election Commission stated that these instructions did not prevent candidates from meeting voters and conversing with them, but they prevented the holding of election festivals in large numbers.

The results of a study conducted by the Rased team during the election advertising campaign period showed that 63% of respondents indicated that the candidates did not communicate with them directly.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ This is an indicator of the weak opportunity for candidates to reach voters directly due to the procedures followed in light of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Candidates' communication with electors of the upcoming 2020 parliamentary elections



After the decision of the Board of Commissioners of the Independent Election Commission to ban the establishment of electoral headquarters, the electoral advertising campaign phase moved to social media platforms only. This led to the lack of enthusiasm associated with electoral campaigns and impacted the ability of candidates to reach the electorate to change their convictions and attitudes.

(140) Hayat Center, Rased, previous reference, t.ly/4xGL

Electronic advertisement campaigns were not a sufficient substitute for traditional campaigns, which weakened the opportunity for candidates to influence voters and thus weakened the percentage of those going to the ballot boxes. Advertisement campaigns created an imbalance in the principle of electoral fairness due to the disparity in the candidates' ability to use them. According to experts, influential electronic campaigns may be more expensive than some traditional average campaigns. In light of the great development in electronic promotional methods and their high costs, there are huge disparities among regions and villages in Jordan in using social media tools and modern technology. This is due to the disparity in the abilities and interests of voters in these media among cities, villages, camps and the deserts.

Recommendations

First: Developing the application of electronic voting in the polling center. This option is defined as direct voting in the polling stations but by using electronic technologies that aid in the voting process. The voter uses an electronic device to vote for the candidate, and this is done directly via the electronic device. A magnetic card or a printed paper may be issued from the same device for the voter to use. This option requires that an electronic infrastructure be prepared in a manner that achieves fairness and provides opportunities for all voters. It would also lead to inflating the financial costs involved in equipping the polling stations.

Electronic voting is easier and more convenient than voting by paper because it helps in counting votes quickly and immediately. The option of electronic voting can reduce the numbers of human staff members working in the elections, especially if voting is adopted via the electronic device directly without the need to issue any cards. The option of electronic voting has been applied in a group of countries around the world, but it is not widespread compared to traditional direct voting. In October 2001, Australia applied electronic voting at the polling place for the first time. In its PDF report to the Legislative Assembly of the capital's government on electronic voting in 2001, the Australian Elections Commission recommended that electronic voting should only take place in polling places that use secure local Internet Networks.⁽¹⁴¹⁾

In 2003, the Internet Rights Forum, a private body supported by the French government, published its recommendations about the future of electronic voting in France. The recommendations included that electronic voting should not be offered remotely, except for French citizens residing abroad who should be able to elect delegates to AFE via the Internet. In any case, the forum recommended that every voter should be able to use electronic voting in the designated polling station. In 2004, France used electronic voting in the polling station in the political elections, and 18 municipalities conducted 18 electronic polling tests during

(141) Election knowledge network: about Electronic Voting, <https://ibit.ly/2jnH>

the European Union elections held on 13 June 2004. In the 2017 presidential elections, France adopted the paper ballot system.

This option was used in the United Arab Emirates when Emiratis voted in 2015 to elect members of the Federal National Council, which is the legislative authority in the country. They did not use boxes in which they put papers bearing the names of the people they chose, but rather voted through smart machines known as “voting machines.” The machine was adopted to collect and count votes, and this was done through direct voting on the machine as in the Emirates, or by counting the votes cast by voters via a punched or colored card.

The electronic voting option at the polling place has the disadvantage of high financial costs that the electoral administration will need in order to equip the polling centers and rooms. This option also requires a training system completely different from the Jordanian context. There will also be a need for human cadres with experience and skill in using the devices and in verifying the extent of their effectiveness and their ability to withstand the possible pressure caused by the voting process, especially as it is done in one day. In the electronic voting process, it is more difficult to detect and determine the source of errors and technical failures than in traditional contexts. There is a possibility that the entire electronic system might crash in counting and sorting out the votes. This might lead to the cancelation of the whole elections, especially that there are no reserve paper records that can be resorted to. Electronic systems can also be hacked easily if they are not made and protected in a safe and previously tested manner. This would limit the integrity of the voting process and would reflect in the poor acceptance of voters of the results of the electoral process.

Second: Enhancing confidence in the electoral administration: There is no doubt that enhancing confidence in the electoral administration contributes mainly to enhancing citizens’ confidence in the outcomes of the electoral process. Thus, the commission can apply procedures that are consistent with international best practices, and this would gain the acceptance of the Jordanian voters.

- Third:** Reviewing and developing the system of legislation related to the electoral process to enhance democratic development and electoral reform and enhance competition on programmatic and partisan bases. This increases voter confidence in the electoral process.
- Fourth:** Strengthening the independence of the Independent Election Commission and strengthening the coordination and support provided to it by the government in its capacity as the holder of the general mandate. This would enable the commission to take further measures that enhance the guarantees provided to voters on the fairness and integrity of the electoral process.
- Fifth:** Amending the Independent Election Commission law to give it more space to run general elections under the defense law or in emergency situations if they exist.
- Sixth:** Promoting participation among the Independent Election Commission, the government and civil society organizations to activate their role in implementing awareness programs that enhance voter participation and their confidence in the electoral process.
- Seventh:** Increasing the level of confidence of voters in the performance of the Lower House by building the capacities of members of parliament, and especially the newcomers, on legislative principles and monitoring tools to improve their performance.
- Eighth:** Creating new and innovative methods and means for the voting process during the upcoming elections.
- Ninth:** Benefiting from technological development in order to find easier and safer methods for voters to exercise their right to vote.



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